

Factors Determining the Leadership of Tourist Destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos on the Global Market

Miglena Temelkova¹, Iliyan Bakalov²

¹ Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”
Varna, Bulgaria
Email: megitemelkova {at} abv.bg

² Ministry of Economy and Energy
Sofia, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT— *The factors determining the leadership of tourist destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos on the global market issue both from the conditions of the external environment, and from the specific characteristics of each of the tourist regions. The study of these five leading destinations points out the interrelations between the factors determining tourism demand and the factors leading to the application of innovative management strategies and approaches. Nowadays, destinations’ leadership is not only a result of the availability of favourable resources, infrastructure and superstructure. Necessary also is a management policy in the field of tourism, which should be adequate to the realities of life, as well as flexible and adaptive management techniques.*

Keywords— Leadership, Management, Tourist destination, Tourist resources, Factors in Tourism, Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes, Kos

1. INTRODUCTION

The leadership of tourist destinations is a specific strategy, whereby they are identified, and the tourist products and services offered by them are differentiated from the tourist packages of their competitors. Leadership in tourism is not only a result of a flexible, adaptive and creative strategy. It is related to and issues from the specific conditions of the environment where a tourist destination exists and develops.

The use of a standardized service package is characterized by intertwined competences and overflowing of activities in a wide range of opportunities for creating added value in tourism industry. In respect to the specificity of supply, there are two models of behaviour outlined on the contemporary tourist market, leading to tourist destination’s leadership, namely:

- competitive opposition or
- integration in view of gaining competitive advantages.

The leading tourist destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos nowadays should take into account the ever more pronounced processes on internationalization and trans-nationalization in tourism, which are combined with diversification, expressed through the service activities and the variety of the offered products. Leadership in tourism is ever more noticeably becoming a result of the trend of the interdependence of the tourism chain elements in view of adding higher value.

The leadership of the five studied destinations is related to certain basic and secondary factors, which become strategic or tactical competitive advantages. Those advantages have been realized on the global tourist market, which is evident in the offering of a differentiated or focused tourist product.

The research shows that, the leadership position of Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos on the global market comprises two major cumulatively available elements:

- factors determining leadership and
- distinguishing characteristics of the tourist product.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH THE FACTORS DETERMINING THE LEADERSHIP OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS MARMARIS, BODRUM, FETHIYE, RHODES AND KOS

The research of the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos is prompted by the need to outline the specific leadership characteristics of the tourist products offered in one and the same geographical region – the Aegean Sea with relatively similar nature and climatic conditions. The toolset employed by the research is a questionnaire among 620 tourists, who visited any of the five destinations during the period May 2011 – September 2013. The leadership of Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos is a result of their ability to create and offer tourist products and services, which win and maintain strong positions vis-à-vis their competitors. Therefore, the present study defines destinations' leadership on the basis of the comparative analysis between the number of the tourists, who have visited them and their accommodation capacity:

- In 2013 Mugla Province, which comprises the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos received more than 3 million tourists.
- The Greek islands of Kos and Rhodes, which attracted more than 2,5 million of tourist flow in 2013 are positioned as direct competitors of the Turkish district in the Aegean region on a global scale.
- The accommodation capacity of Bodrum, Marmaris and Fethiye amounts to around 200 000, where the entire accommodation capacity of Mugla Province is about 255 000. [6]
- Rhodes and Kos also have available approximately 200 000 beds for accommodation.

The synthesis of the factors determining the leadership of the tourist destinations in a global aspect can be defined as fundamental impacts, which quite noticeably set forth the development of certain activities, processes and phenomena in the tourism regions. According to some authors, the factors are critical or particularly active conditions. [1]

The factors determining the global leadership of the tourist destinations are well-established circumstances, conditions, prerequisites and elements of the environment, which actively and in a focused way influence the well-defined in a structural, hierarchical and process aspect systems of the tourist regions, and on that basis, they define the trends of their future evolution.

The factors in the tourism systems are active conditions or prerequisites, which have specific and active impact on the development of tourism and the tourism process. [2], [3] Those conditions do not influence tourism directly. They are part of the external environment and are a prerequisite for the existing of the tourism system.

A conclusion can be drawn that the studied Turkish and Greek destinations are relatively on an equal standing in respect to both their accommodation availability, and the tourist flow that they receive on an annual basis. Therefore, the leadership of the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos is determined by their ability to uphold their positions on the market and improve their share over time, while adding value not only financially, but also in respect to its own brand. Those are destinations, which efficiently and profitably safeguard their place in the global competition by creating and integrating tourist products with added value. The leadership of the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos is a result of two cumulatively available strategic conditions:

- the destinations observe the environmental and social sustainability of their tourist resources;
- destinations' market position vis-à-vis the competitors provides a high standard of living for their residents, which is determined by the economic, social and environmental characteristics.

The leadership of the five studied destinations is related to certain basic and secondary factors, which become strategic or tactical competitive advantages. Those advantages have been realized on the global tourist market, which is evident in the offering of a differentiated or focused tourist product.

3. A SYNTHESIS OF THE TYPES OF FACTORS DETERMINING THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP OF MARMARIS, BODRUM, FETHIYE, RHODES AND KOS

The quality of the offered tourist product is in a direct ratio to the quality of the components that compose and define it.

The quality of the tourist region is defined by nine characteristics:

- water resources,
- flora,
- climate,
- topography,

- history,
- aesthetics,
- attractions,
- servicing centers,
- route network.

The tourist perception of the tourist region is related to the number of attractions and region peculiarities that are unique to some extent. Uniqueness is an indicator for the quality of the tourist region but it should not be separately considered from the services and standards of the means for tourist accommodation and stay. Six factors determine the attractiveness of a tourist travel:

- desire – revealed in the human impulses and strivings that stimulate travel;
- inertness – it is related to the negative subjective human moods that can spoil the travel;
- distance – this is the real geographic distance and to overcome it we need time and the choice of a suitable means of transport and also the transport during the stay;
- subjective distance – this is the distance defined by the internal disposition of the person and with the increase of the subjective distance the attractiveness of the site grows;
- remoteness – a feature of the travel that defines the level of untraditionality and attractiveness;
- expectation – it also has a positive character and is the motive power in undertaking a tourist travel.

The quality of stay significantly depends on the conditions of the accommodation, the room, the offered basic and additional services. The quality of stay shall be assessed by the following main criteria:

- swiftness of service;
- the form in which the product is offered;
- cleanness;
- order;
- aesthetics;
- personnel politeness;
- sanitary requirements and indicators set by various normative acts;
- level of comfort availability;
- functionality;
- location of the accommodation place;
- climate;
- transport provision.

The quality of the tourist product is inextricably bound up with the criteria and indexes for the quality of material products in tourism. The material products used in tourism should meet the requirements for:

- applicability;
- reliability;
- transport suitability;
- manufacturability;
- ergonomics;
- safety;
- design;
- unification and standardization;
- right of patent;

- eco-friendliness;
- economy.

The study of the five seaside leadership destinations – Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos, outlines five different groups of factors by their type, which determine their leadership in a global context. Those factors also have an impact on the tourism system and are classified according to:

- nature and origin:
 - ✓ nature-and-climatic – issuing from the uniqueness of the natural and climatic conditions;
 - ✓ socio-economic – based on the infrastructure, the housing conditions and utility services in the respective country or region, standard of living, social and health care system, level of education and culture, economic stability;
 - ✓ production-and-economic (technological) – allowing to take into account the specific production-and-technological and organizational-and-economic conditions in the process of analysis on a wider and deeper scale;
- place of origin:
 - ✓ external – there are part of the external environment and are not in any immediate relation to tourist destinations;
 - ✓ internal – there are part of the destination systems;
- level of influence of people’s will and preferences:
 - ✓ objective – they exist irrespectively of the human will and intervention;
 - ✓ subjective – they are related to the human activity;
- scope and level of distribution:
 - ✓ general – typical for tourism;
 - ✓ specific – they are operating only in respect to certain tourism activities;
- duration:
 - ✓ permanent – they have an on-going impact on the tourist destination systems;
 - ✓ variable – they are manifested occasionally and sporadically;
- nature of the activity:
 - ✓ intensive – they have a strong and noticeable impact of the destinations;
 - ✓ extensive – they are related to the quantitative and not to the qualitative dimensions in the tourism regions;
- properties of the described processes and phenomena in tourism:
 - ✓ quantitative – they describe the quantitative reflection of the facts and phenomena in the destinations (number of tourists, number of accommodations).
 - ✓ qualitative – they depend on the specificities (features) of the analyzed tourist sites, i.e. on their qualitative characteristics (type of accommodation facilities, image of the hotel, brand of the resort);
- composition:
 - ✓ complex (comprehensive) – they are comprised of several elements;
 - ✓ simple (elementary) – there is no subdivision into constituent elements with them.
- hierarchy of action:
 - ✓ first level factors – they have a direct impact on the result indicator;
 - ✓ second level factors – they have an indirect, circumferential impact on the result indicator.

4. FACTORS DETERMINING THE ADDED VALUE IN THE LEADERSHIP IMAGE OF THE DESTINATIONS MARMARIS, BODRUM, FETHIYE, RHODES AND KOS

The tourist product is characterized by several cumulatively present essential features which distinguish it mainly from the other products on the market. These features are:

- expectation – part of the product which after its usage turns into experience element;
- psychological needs - imposing the usage of a certain tourist product – they are mainly related to the desire for health and vital powers recovery and to the peculiar differentiation from the every day life and the usual environment;
- social contacts – providing a certain tourist product – they give opportunity for informal communication between different people connected via a common tourist experience;
- knowledge about the places and regions – an element of the tourist product – accumulated throughout the travel in the form of impressions, experience, information about other cultures, ethnicities, geographical and historical places;
- shopping – very often it is the motivating factor for both undertaking a certain type of travel and for preserving the memories from the rest and the experience in the form of souvenirs and other purchases.

The tourist satisfaction from the received tourist product is determined by:

- their personality that forms the motives and the expectations and is influenced by the social belonging, the way and stage of life, the motivation, the different social and psychological values and notions;
- their wishes that define the necessity for staying, transportation, food, entertainment and cause the undertaking of actions for their satisfactions;
- the demand which is an external form of manifestation of the need for a specific type of tourist product in concrete quality and quantity limits and reflecting the ability to pay.

Criteria and the indicators, however, in defining the level of tourist satisfaction are formed on the basis of the impressions of several factors that are powerful satisfaction determiners:

- expectation and perception (expectation forms the behaviour, behaviour changes the perception) – it is of significant importance that the tourists' expectations are realistic and that they receive the relevant product quality service;
- service – it is related to the care, quality, correctness, accuracy and efficiency of the service as well as to the traffic, land control, transportation schemes, delays, comfort, easiness and way of access to the place, the standard of the accommodation place where the tourist will stay, the main and additional services provided by the tourist product, the attitude of the local population towards the tourist, legislative or administrative disorders during the stay;
- the impressions for the tourist destination during the supply and provision of the tourist product – they are related to the reaction of the staff while providing the tourist product, to their responsiveness towards the clients' needs and demands, to their spontaneous and voluntary actions connected to the quality of the offered product.

The brand in tourism is kind of a tool, which identifies the destinations and differentiates the tourist products and services offered by them from the tourist packages of the competitors. [4] The research of the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos outlines the image and brand as key tools, fostering leadership positioning. 68% of the questioned tourists recognize the studied destinations, and the analysis indicates that this is a result not only of their competitive product, but also of the national branding, which in its turn is related to the national policies, advertising campaigns and legal framework in the field of tourism, as well as to the investments, infrastructural projects, the political and economic stability, the living standards and the quality of life. It is exactly on that basis that when a destination develops leadership, it becomes a bearer of financial value, although leadership strategy by itself is not a tangible asset. Therefore, with the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos there are high level intangible assets to be identified (such as rating, reputation, economic benefit, market value), which add value to their leadership image. That is a result of the trust of the tourists and investors in the capability of the leadership destinations to also offer in the future high quality and attractive tourist products and achieve economic profitability.

The brand of the studied tourist destinations has evolved over the last 10 years from a targeted choice into tourist products with their respective quality characteristics. Tourist destinations' leadership develops in response to the expectations of both the tourists and investors. Fostering leadership in tourism is focused not only on the tourist products, but also on the process of staff formation. Therefore, 83% of the questioned 620 tourists point out service as a primary factor determining leadership of a tourist destination, and adding value to its image.

The availability of certain tourism resources is a motive or reason for nearly 76% of the tourists – respondents of the questionnaire, to select a particular destination, while the sites and phenomena, which have acquired tourist popularity and attract a large number of tourists, form a tourist resource fund and are an undisputable factor determining the leadership of a tourist region. The main task of the destinations – leaders on the global tourist market is the creation of intangible added value and turning the intangible into material profit. Therefore, in the leadership positioned tourist regions there is an emphasis on the preservation of the tourism resources as well as on the development of tourism in line with the principles of sustainable development. That requires from the leaders on the global tourist market to find an optimal balance between revenue and tourist flow, and achieve sustainable and predictable results.

Tourism superstructure is leading with the choice of destinations for about 75% of the questioned tourists. Bringing together the specific material conditions for production and delivery of all the core and additional services, the specialized tourist infrastructure lies in the basis of the overall tourist product and is a major factor for its leadership positioning in the market.

The leadership positioning of the tourist destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos in a global aspect is focused on tourists' preferences and expectations and guarantees that the leadership destinations add value not only to

their own image, but also for the users of their tourist products. Leadership acts as a mediator for the link between tourist destinations' internal and external environment.

The infrastructure and price accessibility of the destinations and of their tourism resources, as well as the condition of the infrastructure in the tourist regions are factors, determining leadership for some 60% of the responding tourists.

On the background of the economic crisis in Greece over the recent years and the political instability in Turkey in 2013, the tourist flow to the seaside resorts of those two countries did not register any decline. The standard of living and the economic and political development in the tourist regions are among the factors with less importance for the leadership image of the studied destinations.

Alongside the factors determining leadership of the tourist destinations, the tourist products of Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos have their distinctive and unique characteristics, which also add value to their leadership image. Besides its relatively close in price and quality respect mass tourist product of the all inclusive type, its countryside and nature with unique beauty, and its clean and transparent sea, Marmaris is also famous for its proximity to the Cleopatra's beach, which sand is under the protection of the Turkish tourism police, Bodrum – with its thermal springs and opportunities for spa-tourism, Fethiye – with the hang gliding and the proximity to the symbol of the Turkish tourism – the Blue Lagoon. Rhodes and Kos as sources of history and unique background are cradles of the cultural-and-exploration tourism. If to the uniqueness of the studied destinations' tourist products we add also the cuisine, the customs and colourful lifestyle of the local population and their traditions, the luxuriousness of the bazaars and noise coming from the local taverns and restaurants, then, each of the destinations, although located in an immediate vicinity to each other, has its own specificity, image and brand. Therefore, the research of the five leaders on the global tourist market - Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos, shows that each of them has developed its leadership on the basis of the diversification of its tourist product.

5. CONCLUSION

Leadership is a result of a high level of efficiency and a good level of awareness – a guarantee that the tourist destinations have the capacity to satisfy tourism needs and enjoy positive reputation within a wide market segment.

The tourist destinations realize added value on the global market, based on a brand, by maintaining the competitiveness of the tourist products and services offered by them. Global advantages of the destinations today are based not only on quality and servicing, but also on :

- innovation;
- creativity;
- flexibility and
- swiftness in offering and realizing tourist packages.

All this leads to sustainable business results, allowing reinvestment in strategies for development and growth. [5]

The studied five Turkish (Marmaris, Bodrum and Fethiye) and Greek (Rhodes and Kos) destinations are relatively on an equal standing in respect to both their accommodation availability, and the tourist flow that they receive on an annual basis.

On the modern tourist market is emerging behavior leading to leadership of tourist destinations, namely competitive opposition on the basis of differentiation, focus or diversification.

The leadership position of Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos on the global market comprises two major cumulatively available elements: factors determining leadership and distinguishing characteristics of the tourist product.

On the basis of the conducted research in the five leading regions, it can be summarized that there are two main groups of factors influencing global leadership of tourist destinations: factors determining tourism demand, and factors determining the attractiveness of tourism supply.

The strategies of the destinations Marmaris, Bodrum, Fethiye, Rhodes and Kos towards developing leadership on the tourist market are based on a number of factors, which determine their leadership and image in a global aspect. If a model of the factors determining the leadership of studied five destinations in the global environment is to be suggested, then of primary priority will be the role of the service, tourist resources and the specialized tourist structure. The global leadership positioning, however, is impossible without the availability of efficient tourist products satisfying the requirements of the target audience, as well as without an awareness of the qualitative characteristics and advantages of the destination.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Бъчваров, М., Ц. Тончев. Основи на туризма. Тилиа. София, 2000.
- [2] Воденска, М., М. Асенова. Въведение в туризма. Матком. София, 2011.
- [3] Темелкова, М. Управление на туристическото предприятие. Колор принт. Варна, 2010.
- [4] Temelkova, M. Bakalov, I. Studying the relation „brand – leadership” on the international market of seaside tourist destinations. Istanbul International Conference on Business and Economics. 2013.
- [5] Temelkova, M. The leadership in tourism – investment in strategy and growth. XI International scientific Conference “Management and Engineering”, 2013.
- [6] Turist sayısı Aralık'ta arttı. Sabah. 23.01.2013.