

## Marketing aspects of tourism development in Balkan Region

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### Abstract:

*Environment is factor that is related to the Tourism. The purpose for use of marketing concept in tourism activities is to stimulate and to help the development of Tourism in Kosovo and wider in region of Balkan. Without successful application of Marketing in today's globalization circumstances and surrounds for development of international business, Tourism and the other business branches would be convicted in failure. Although, the activity of Tourism is of a seasonal character, marketing concept with its advantage firstly will help the country to become acquainted by its Tourism product, then to create provisions pertaining for use of available Tourism capacities. In this contexts with this given framework of research, this paper indicates the importance of a marketing concept in the long term strategy of tourism in region as intensive economic activity in case where the Tourism has distinctly economic function in countries in which are developing the Tourism as strategic designation. The hypothesis is that for development of tourism it has to impenitent different marketing activities and management methods. There are analyzed the characteristics of tourist product and destinations in hospitality and tourism, in general. Standard forms, indicators and matrices are used for comparison and analyses of various factors influencing on the tourist destinations.*

**Key words:** Marketing concept, tourism product, promotion, distribution, globalization, development and competition.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Application of the Marketing concept in Tourism industry is one of the pillars that will give impetus to the development of Tourism offers which will also have its effects in overall economy. The impact will be seen mainly using Marketing elements such as Promotion and Distribution of Tourism product. Marketing mix, is a term that is in use introduced by Jerome McCarthy, represents a set of marketing activities, or instruments, that the organization combines and implements, in order that the target groups positively accept her business. Usually involves 4P: Product (product), Price (price), Place (place or distribution; refers to the physical handling of the product and the product distribution channels) and Promotion. [Kotler & Keller 2006]. Tourism and Catering in some states as well as in USA, is one of six sectors that have led to increased employment [McKinsey Global Institute 2011]. In this paper there is a hypothesis that marketing expands its activities in all areas of tourism, but also creates its specificity, depending on the particularities of the tourism product that consists of services, provided by different companies to tourists, with the purpose of fulfilling tourist needs. This complexity arises from the marketing operations, and the complexity of the tourism product, which consists of several elements. As a result of a data analyses it is concluded, always bearing in mind the importance and the uniqueness of tourism industry of

Kosovo, and its tourism product, the marketing concept that will be used will have a unique compilation, and should adapt to the specifics, but also be adaptable on the present domestic and international environment, in order to be able to meet and fulfill the needs of many different segments of consumers-tourists.

## **2. MARKETING ACTIVITIES IN TOURISM BRINGS IMPROVMENTS**

It is necessary to align and coordinate activities at the level of enterprises and of the state, with the intention to introduce the marketing orientation in the development of tourism, we identify two levels where activities will be developed, and these are macro and micro level. Marketing at the state level, or macromarketing is implemented by local and central institutions in charge, and responsible for tourism and catering, tourist associations, etc... Mainly will focus in creating a global tourist offer, the image of the state as a tourist destination, exercise marketing in foreign tourism markets, encouraging and monitoring the marketing activities, one by one, within the individual companies. Marketing at the level of individual companies, or Micromarketing, is to be implemented individually, and is based on capabilities and interests of enterprises, and mandatory all activities must be adapted and integrated with activities that are conducted in macromarketing [Hanic, 2005]. Marketing concept is based on the fact that the realization of goals of all forms of enterprises depends on the determination of the needs and desires of the target market in first instance, then supply the desired product, effectively and more efficiently than possible competitors. In the market began a competition run amongst the majority of Hotels offering information and reservations, via web services such as the media (Coyne 1995), this happens to hotel chains and not only to them in the touristic offer. So the basic premise of marketing activities is a continuous understanding of the fickleness of the market and responding to the changes. Marketing in tourism when identifies and evaluates its offer, focuses and concentrates on the selected clients (tourists), a selection of appropriate markets, and the creation of specific features and advantages of its tourism product compared to the competition. So far, based on previous experience and practice in tourism and hospitality, Kosovo and its geographic regions, should build a concept based on the creation of the identity "tourist country" which would be a discern sign for customers-tourists of existing tourist offer and refreshment of content with new elements, which would be based on cultural and historical heritage and natural beauty, available to the regions and Kosovo as the tourist destination. Compulsory introduction of marketing concept in tourism activities would have the aim to encourage and assist Kosovo tourism, all regarding to their well known instruments of marketing mix, which would serve for the presentation of tourist potential of the Kosovo regions individually, and tourist offer of Kosovo as a whole. Region of Kosovo with its cultural sites, such as for example, the Peja region with its old Carsija (city market), 10 archaeological sites, oldest from the II century BC until the new epoch. Buildings called "Kulla"(stone castles), as distinctive buildings, mosques in the city and 23 other Muslim shrines, Patrikana and 12 Christian encompassing shrines, including monasteries, and so on. In the same region it is possible to enjoy-visiting the cultural heritage, in urban ethnographic museum, the exhibition in Kulla, drama events, poetry meetings, music concerts and other suitable events that are organized in various time and annual seasons. "Sharr Mountains" Region is just a peculiarity of the tourist offer of Kosovo, which provides experience of the traditional ways of living in rural areas, people with different speech-language, dress, weddings, and unique cultural and sports activities, which can be combined with mountain tourism during the spring-summer season and winter tourism during the long winters of five and more months. Cooperation and coordination within different regions in Kosovo and beyond on the level of the Balkan countries in the area of tourism is imperative and inevitable, because of the need to complement the tourist offer, aiming to provide tourists a unique opportunity to experience during their vacation and enjoy the benefits of unseen variety of tourist offers in a relatively small geographic area such as Kosovo or the Balkan countries. In this sense, marketing of the tourist offer, should be planned and coordinated for a better presentation, and approaching visitors and tourists before they make

decisions, during the use of touristic services, and of course continue monitoring the reaction of users-tourists, even after consuming services, in order to improve the level and quality of offer in the future. When we are looking to have increase of the visitors, apparently they will look for professional services from all participants in tourist industry of Kosovo, starting with organizers of the tours, intermediary agencies and hospitality offers from Hotels and Motels overall Kosovo. Each of them in his way is: organizing, facilitating and promoting country touristic offer.

### **3. APPROACH TO CREATION OF TOURISM PRODUCTS BASED ON MARKETING CONCEPT**

Specific activity as it is tourism, which implies the existence of tradition and development in the past, and which serves as a basis for improvement of the offer and the creation of specificity of the tourist offers of a region, country as a whole or the wider region such as Western Balkans, i.e. Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Kosovo has a tradition in tourism, which must be recognized comes from the 80-s, and that because of the twenty-year period of political turmoil in the country and beyond has stagnated and could not follow the world events in the tourism industry. It turns out that the existence of the tourist product of Kosovo cannot be ignored, but it is necessary to examine the resources recorded and categorized and with the help of marketing and its instruments makes a plan and a strategy for the best performance of available offer in the domestic and international tourism market. Marketing is not all-powerful in shaping and presenting the tourist product, but it is effective because it uses the knowledge, the achievements of other disciplines, such as economical, political, environmental, biological, and others in his analysis[Ukaj,2008] Marketing in tourism, uses the advantage that the tourist activity has with the fact that it brings together several branches of the economy and has the multiplicative effect on them, such as agriculture, industry, food products and beverages, shops, entertainment industry (showbiz), traffic etc. Touristic product Kosovo, seen from the aspect of the carrier of the tourist offer, is a set of different material goods and services that are offered to meet the touristic needs of those who choose Kosovo as a destination to fulfill their touristic needs. In its offer of its tourist product, Kosovo is offering inter alia, Cultural-historical tourism, Continental Tourism, Winter Tourism, Health Tourism, etc. Tourist workers, companies, institutions of Kosovo, should be aware that the tourists are very sophisticated consumers today, they are looking for a variety of tourist products, but also must be noted that they are very conscious, and environmentally responsible on the issue of nature and cultural historic heritage. This gives a hope or optimism about the future of tourism industries and its effects in the overall economic development of Kosovo. Modeling of tourism product, when we look at a case of Kosovo, can and should be done and executed at least on two levels. The first level is in companies that "produce" specific elements of the tourist product, the second level is the level of the country as a "tourist destination". This shows that the tourist product is composed of more than one element, and any time needed they remove or add different elements, depending on the tourists, time period, season, and influence of the environment, all this in order to meet the demands of consumers. Normally, in addition to the dedication for the better presentation of existing tourism product attention should be paid to monitoring the news in the tourism activities and development of new tourism products. Therefore, factors of the tourism industry of Kosovo should create and replace certain elements of its tourism offer accepting new ideas and products.

New ideas about the tourist product can be initiated by key players in the tourist industry of Kosovo, then the internal incentives for the news, or external influences, taking and accepting news in the creation of tourist product, influenced by external factors or the global touristic trends. If the key players of tourism industry, including country institutions, will rely and be leaded by marketing concept, then it steams that the marketing departments in companies, or professional marketing agency engaged by the government, must be concerned about the state of the tourist product of Kosovo, about his future, working daily to improve touristic offer adjusting or adapting to new demands of tourists-consumers.

### **4. MARKETING ELEMENTS TO BE USED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TOURIST OFFER**

Total incorporation of marketing orientation, in tourism development in Kosovo requires that all elements are implemented with the same care, as we have explained the creation of tourist products. In the first place means to implement marketing research before and after use of the tourist product, by the tourists, then create suitably, and adjust the price that corresponds to the

level and standard of tourism products, competition, the season when the product is used, the appropriate promotion of tourist products and tourist destinations, mode and place of the distribution of tourism products, bearing as the guideline requirements of tourists. Price is one of the marketing mix instruments used alone or in combination with other instruments of marketing mix, can facilitate realization of business goals [Milisavljevic, 2003].

**Price tourist product-**Having as a basis the fact that Kosovo with its tourist offer is under the influence of the free market way of price formation, without the influence of government institutions, can be confirmed that the price of tourism products is determined by the tourist market where supply and demand meet. It would be all right, if in this clash of supply and demand, it does not involve a specificity of a market in Kosovo such as:

-monopolistic position of some companies offering tourist services (to mention hotels in Prishtina, a travel agency that are organizing airport traffic, it)

-the lack of institutional organization in monitoring the quality of services, that are relatively in the disproportion in the negative reflection, of the higher price level in relation to the quality of services provided.

-political factor, taking into account the stage where is now the situation over the status and future of Kosovo in the Balkan region, and its opportunities for full participation in international institutions such as regional tourist associations, and broader integration into the European Union, etc.

Price for the products and services in tourist enterprises must be done under the influence and in accordance with marketing objectives that are implemented in companies and in the entire tourist destination. Based on research in the region of Peje, tourist companies their prices usually are forming on the basis of competitive, because their offer mostly is the same level, without a rebound in the specificity and quality, therefore price is not considered as a scheduler for quality of provided products and services, and therefore it is not recorded any cases where they apply price reduction in a certain period of time, whether it is the entry of new companies in the market or as a goal to conquest greater part of the market. In determining the price of hotel accommodation was noted that it is normal for providers not to take into account the possibility existence of mediators (i.e. agencies) in their branch. This is one of weak points that could be eliminated, greater cooperation with agencies would be beneficial for the providers and the agencies as intermediaries and associates who would help in improving and increasing the levels of other elements of the marketing mix, which would be reflected the increase of the market share and consumers.

**Distribution of tourism products-**knowing market trends and particularities of tourism, where the tourist product cannot be delivered to the consumer- visitors directly at any time, it comes to the expression the existence of the problem about the place and role of distribution channels. There are two ways to deliver the tourist product from "manufacturer" to the final consumer, namely: through direct channels, i.e. from manufacturer to consumer, and indirect channels, with the help of intermediaries. It is normal that in the tourist destinations in Kosovo, and at the country level, is used one of this two ways, but it is also expected to perform a combination of this two methods to achieve better results, but it is influenced by various factors such as, how much will cost providers if they will use a mediator, the level of objectives targeted to be achieved by the company, the ability to meet the requirements of intermediaries in respect of price, quality of the products and services, etc. Factor that determines the use of the direct or indirect distribution method is that the Kosovo market is characterized with an offer that consists mainly of smaller hotels, a small number of specialized tour operators, smaller tourist destinations for holidays, which are mostly oriented "sell" directly their products and services to ultimate consumers. Here we would add, the mentality of the domestic tourists, that are not used to reserve in advance and they prefer to directly persuade and achieve the agreement for the use of products and services, leaving comfort to them to control over their own plans about travel and vacation. In the future, should more be forced and invested to strengthen of the intermediaries in the tourism market in Kosovo in order to primarily conducted specialization of a intermediary agency, that based on the specific combination of tourist products and the way it offers to the consumer-tourist, could increase participation in the tourist turnover

and increase its profits, were they are travel agencies, tour operators, and specialized distributors for traveling (holidays, fairs, conferences, etc.). If we give more importance to the distribution of tourism products, as an element of marketing mix that is used in tourism and hospitality companies, should be expected that it will be reflected in greater choice for tourists, increased competition in prices, on improving services and expanding the scope of supply.

**Promotion of tourist products**-depending on the type, quality, price and method of distributing the products and services it depends on the way for appliance of the promotion in tourism. Promotion is the process of communication between companies and consumers, who aims to stimulate sales. Carriers of production and services, as well a distribution and promotion in Kosovo, when they determine the manner of communicating with customers rely on two strategies for marketing their offers on the market as follows:

- Strategy "Company to Consumers", and
- Strategy "Company to the Company".

Marketing Strategy "Company to Consumer" - from the providers of touristic products and services, is used to draw the attention of consumers to their offer. It now relies on the use of different Medias, including the use of various databases that are used for sending messages via the Internet. This strategy has the advantage because it provides possibility for more control, type and content of messages to be sent, also the ability to select groups or individuals to whom they wants to send promotional messages. Marketing Strategy "Company to the company" - by the companies that have hotel services to offer in Kosovo, they have possibility to do it through agents who assume responsibility for sales and marketing of their offer. Hence, brokers are concerned about preparing and sending promotional messages to the furthest consumers. The advantage of this strategy lies in the fact that the agent carries obligations and costs for marketing, but also the risk of success or failure. But contrary to the direct communication with this strategy is losing ability to control over the type and content of promotional messages that are sent to consumers-tourists. Promotional instruments used by tourist and hospitality companies are numerous and varied, all in an attempt to attract a larger percentage of market and consumers. Communication with the public is conceived as extremely important way to win a place on the tourist market and this is reflected in activity in the use of instruments such as they are advertisements in the media, public relations, promotion on sale points, printing catalogs and brochures, creating web pages -website, sponsorship of various events, etc. During the research it was found that promotional activities are not always enforced as coordinated on, but from time to time, when the owners-management see as necessary and appropriate. The fact is that in most tourist companies, marketing is not implemented in the organized form, however it is determined that no activities such as promotion is budgeted particularly, like it should be. Participation of governments and institutions to promote Kosovo as a tourist destination has grown in the last year, but it is observed a great interest in government organizations (GO) of Western countries, to help on matter through assistance to local companies and tourist associations, at the level of regions and the central level, such as GTZ, AER, UNDP.itd. This initiative is evident in the provision of support in the form of consultancies, about the organization and promotion of tourism products and tourist capacities of Kosovo. One of the objectives of tourism development in Kosovo is the creation of linkages and cooperation with regions and neighboring countries, in order to fit the tourist offer of Kosovo in higher possible level in offer of other countries, even as a complement to their offerings. Promotion should be one of the most important investments, along with investments to the creation and development of tourist products of Kosovo, but the promotion also has the task to create the better and positive image for the country and its tourism in general. The promotion, which needs to be done with all its elements in the case of Kosovo should be focused on the markets of countries in the region, and further in European countries where is measured the interest in visiting the countries of the Balkans. Target segments of the tourism market, toward which should be directed promotional activity should be: market of historic and cultural tourism, market of the mountain and winter tourism, the market for transit tourism, etc. It should be used the chance that visit, of tourists from Albania, Macedonia,

Montenegro and further enhance and extend the number of days spent in Kosovo. For the realization of this plan it should be insistent with the involvement of Kosovo tourist enterprises and the tourism associations in visiting, tourism trade fairs in region and worldwide, where they will promote tourism of Kosovo. With neighboring countries it is possible to make joint promotion of the border region, as is the case with the massif "Albanian Alps", where the cooperation of Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro could yield unique tourist product offer, consists of tourism in the mountains, lakes, adventure tourism winter tourism, etc. The same common interests, in developing tourism, Kosovo has with Macedonia in the part of Shar Mountains, and with Serbia in the part of Kopaonik and Pomoravlje.

*Table 1. List of countries and number of visitors accommodated and registered at Hotels of Kosovo.*

Country of origin	Visitors	Nr of overnight stay
Albania	7.778	10.515
Germany	4.259	6.497
U.S.A	5.302	9.315
Turkey	4.949	8.237
Italy	3.704	5,280

*Source (Ask 2014)*

Natural resources that Kosovo tourism has, should remain and be preserved, as pictures of attractive elements in Kosovo, stated clearly in the mountainous regions, the old town center, natural spa, culture-historical heritage, the site for hunting, a typical rural village. For tourism development, are of important further investments, in the first place from the private sector, and encourage the arrival of foreign investors, which are expected to invest in raising major tourist capacity and higher quality offer for tourists.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Conclusively it has been determined that the development of tourism now and increasingly in the near future relies on a combination of different types of offer including cultural and historical treasures inherited from a past glorious times, which have been preserved or are present only in the discovery phase as is the case with the excavation of ancient cities and old castles in Kosovo, Taking into account the fact that the world faces a financial crisis, it is not expected to radically change the situation, increase the capacity of tourism and the number of visits to our country, but still it should be hastily prepared to present the tourist offer of Kosovo, throughout the targeted markets. To achieve this it should harmonize and do the following: to identify the tourist potentials and determine its strengths and weaknesses, adoption and implementation of systems for the development of sustainable tourism, selecting and highlighting specific tourist destinations, applying standards and respect for nature protection, sets the marketing strategy for the promotion of tourism, compilation and application of the master plan for tourism development in the Kosovo regions and the country as a whole. Certainly the development of tourism can be viewed from different angles, but cannot escape the reality that there is potential for development. Development does not come by itself but it should be well planned and conducted, in a professional manner planned by the host use of existing resources with respect for environmental standards and restoring ecosystems. Inevitable that once again emphasizes the importance of building infrastructure with coordination with neighboring countries, particularly Albania and Montenegro. In this paper has been identified the actual situation in Kosovo tourism and fact that actual struggle in the development of Kosovo, make marketing is one of the instruments to be used and exploited for

the purpose of developing tourism, of course marketing in combination with other factors may result, with the obligatory inclusion country in developing this industry, that has a future.

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