

## The development of Tourism and Seaports marketing in the Region of Vlora

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### **Abstract**

The services are very important in the economy and the businesses are focused in this form. The marketing of services has the same elements as the marketing of products, but has some differences. Marketing have a special role in the performance of tourism and maritime ports. The elements of marketing mix play the important role in tourism and port services, price is an important element, it remain important element, but also complex element about the high competition and service offered, recalling here the service features regarding services in general.

In this study will examine the available literature related to marketing of services, tourism, marine ports, high competition of their, the role of tourism in the economy, the role of marketing to improve port services, the role of the ports and tourism for development of the economy.

This paper will conclude with a marketing aspect of the marketing mix elements and in particular with the trend for development of marketing seaport and in the other hand the development of Vlora region. The study aims identifying the role of elements of mix marketing for the development of the tourism and the sea ports, the role of infrastructure and the price element, their point of connection for the developing of them and their role in the economy.

Questionnaires are used for gathering data. The questionnaires included both open-ended and closed questions.

**Keywords:** *marketing, ports, competition, tourism, price, marketing mix*

JEL Classification M31

Marketing strategy, as being an indication of how each element of the marketing mix will be used to achieve the marketing objectives. This definition gives a complete reliance on the mix and therefore the utilization of the elements is the strategy. These give us strategies relating to products, distribution, and sales promotion and pricing. These elements of the marketing mix are sufficient for non-service businesses but services' marketing requires additional elements different from manufacturing. An expanded marketing mix presents a more appropriate model and reflects the traditional elements plus three new ones.

Product or service being offered- Buying the service product is really buying specific benefits and value from the total offering. A service product is a complex set of value satisfaction.

Price charged and terms associated with its sale. Pricing decisions are of great importance in determining the value for the customer and play a role in creating an image for the service. Price also gives a perception of quality.

Promotion - the communication programme associated with marketing the product or service.

Place is the distribution and logistic function involved in making a firm's products and service available. People are an essential element in both production and delivery of most services and they are becoming part of the differentiation by which service companies seek to create added value and gain competitive advantage.

Processes are all the procedures and routines by which a service is created and delivered to the customer including policy about some of the customer involvement and employee discretion issues.

Physical evidence, also known as provision of customer service, is more demanding, requiring higher levels of service provided and the need to build closer relationships with customers.

Each of these marketing mix elements interacts with each other and they should be developed so that they are mutually supportive in obtaining the best possible match between the internal and external environments of the organisation. In developing a marketing mix strategy, service marketers need to consider the relationship between the elements of the mix.

Port marketing - Even though service marketing has been developing dramatically in the past few decades the port industry have been largely neglected as far as marketing is concerned.

In order to understand a port as a commercial enterprise which is offering services to international markets, it is necessary to define its role in the chain of transport as well as the macroeconomic function of a seaport for the national economy and the geographical region where the port is located. As far as influence upon the region and national economy is concerned, a port has a double function, employment and transport.

A seaport has an important direct and indirect employment function in the region. The high value added which is produced in the port creates on the one hand a substantial income and on the other revenues in form of taxes for the government. The macroeconomic function of the seaport has to be taken into account mainly in terms of transport and port policy.

As far as the transport function is concerned, this plays an important role as link in the international chain of transport. In this respect port services are part of the logistics costs for international trade. As a general rule it can be stated, that in the chain of transport 5 to 10 percent of the overall costs are port related.

Not with standing the direct cost benefit ratios in the port, external economies and diseconomies can affect the national foreign trade depending on the efficiency of the seaport.

Characteristics of Port Services -Compared with other industries port services are characterized by some typically unique aspects:

1- The most important aspect of port investment as compared for example with other transport investments is that capital allocated in seaports is very largely immobile. That means if there is a misallocation of capital for investments, a correction is only possible after the depreciation period of the investment.

2. Another typical characteristic of port investment is that most of the capital is used for infrastructure and that the depreciation period and the lifecycle is usually very long.

Therefore long-term planning is needed for these long-term investments. In this planning normally all main departments of the seaport have to be involved. The marketing section is therefore of utmost importance.

3. The product of ports, i. e. port service, cannot be stored if there is overproduction nor can it be sold from stock if there is an underproduction. This is the most important reason why planning and market research activities in this service industry are integrated compared with other industries.

4. The demand for port services is always a derived demand. It is mainly derived from foreign trade. Therefore a seaport offers its services on various markets which differ very much in terms of elasticity of

demand and supply. The elasticity of demand is the main reason for the intensity of competition between seaports.

5. The port's service is only a minor part in the transportation chain from the shipper's premises to the receiver's premises. This argument became very obvious after the implementation of container services. Containers enabled long distance journeys of cargo both by sea and land and the cost is much higher than the cost of port services. In the new logistic dominated reality, this fact has become more important for just-in time concepts of the industry.

This latest argument, in particular, shows that the market position of a port is to a high degree dependent on the prices and services of the shipping lines calling at the port and the services and prices of the hinterland transport system serving the port.

Factors Determining Port Choice - According to that study the factors that mainly influence port choice are:

- Frequency of the number of departures of regular lines,
- Available transshipment facilities;
- Special facilities for the handling of specific cargoes.

Another analysis, which was made on request of the port of Dunkirk by Lesourne and Loue (1978), was published in 1979. Four hundred and fifty industrial concerns were consulted on the elements that they thought to be important in the choice of ports. Most important to them were the following factors:

- Total cost,
- Port equipment,
- Number of regular lines, volume of traffic;
- Accessory costs,
- Quality of port services.

The conclusion of this research was that in many cases the industrial concerns did not have substantial knowledge about port facilities but they were mostly interested in the number of regular lines and in the total cost involved using the port.

Interport competition can no longer be considered in terms of hegemony. Port traffic is determined more by cost and service advantages. However, there is some evidence that non cost factors play an important role in the general cargo trades. Reliability, speed and quality of service are more important than price. The most important factors appear to be elements concerned with the transport and handling of containers in the port. The elements regarding the security and the size of the port nowadays do not seem to be of a great importance. Port competition is of a very complex nature and has also changed considerably since the introduction of multimodal transport. There is no longer a direct cost relation between a customer and a port as all port expenses are matters that are under control of the ship-owner. Shippers need not be interested in a specific port or its handling capabilities as the multimodal transport operator relieves them of this concern. The port has simply become a point passed on the way to final destination.

The Functions of Port Marketing -An active marketing attitude of a port means that it does not wait for potential buyers of its services but conducts careful market research and makes production, trade and investment decisions based on it. It also means that the port maintains relationships directed to potential customers in order to encourage them to buy services offered by the port.

In order to support this attitude the main aims of port marketing strategy should include the following:

1. Creating port services in such a way that they meet requirements and expectations of the customers or marketplace. To be able to fulfil this aim the marketing department should conduct an analysis of the

situation of the port in the marketplace. This analysis should indicate what services potential customers require, what services are offered by competitors and what can be done to increase attractiveness and competitiveness of services offered.

2. Influencing the market by advertising, public relations, and acquisition, in other words creating demand for port services. For this reason the port customers' preferences and tastes, trade customs and legal regulation typical for a particular market must be identified.

Sensitive issues such as investigating possible promotion conditions, defining potential competitors and their marketing methods, market segmentation according to possibilities and the opportunities to function in it should be of a great importance in every marketing department.

3. Maintaining an active sales policy. Achievement of this aim depends on conducting effective market activities. They should lead to creating and enlarging a group of loyal customers and enhancing their relationships with the port, initiating their needs by creating new port services and differentiation and finally introduction of new methods of distribution (Nesztal, 1996).

4. The last thing, which needs to be considered in this section, is the control and analysis of the effects of marketing activity. It mainly means evaluation of the changes that appeared in the market as a result of marketing activities and the change of customers' opinions concerning port services and image. Very important is also information about the changes in the volume and structure of sales and generated profits and losses. The analysis results not only provide evaluation of the position in the market in comparison to major competitors but also enable the making of conclusions regarding up to date marketing activity and plans for future activities.

Marketing Research in Seaports- Methods and techniques of marketing research in ports do not vary very much from methods used in other types of industry. One of them is the well-known SWOT analysis, which is normally the starting point of decision-making process. Strengths and weaknesses of the port in comparison to the main competing ports should be analysed.

Another very popular type of analysis of port marketing research is analysis portfolio, designed by Boston Consulting Group. The portfolio model, presents in the form of a matrix the internal and external environment of the port. The BCG matrix is based on the assumption that two factors, market growth rate and relative market share, are the critical factors in determining business success. The BCG portfolio model uses market share as a proxy for competitive position, and growth rate of a business as a proxy for market attractiveness. This analysis allows appropriate financial assets allocation between various groups of services in such a way that guarantees long-term profitability.

Marketing Management in Seaports -The process of marketing management in a seaport is of a complex nature. It consists of a number of stages appearing in strictly defined order and dependent on each other.

Marketing activity plays a key role in the process of port development and for that reason should be considered equally important with other functions of management. In this context marketing is one of the factors of economic development of a port and therefore all port activities should fulfil its requirements.

The success of marketing management depends very much on precise implementation of the mission, which should be understood as the present and future role of the port In national and international goods' exchange via sea transport, and also in the national and international transportation system. The management of the port's mission should have a clear vision of the port's future development.

The Importance of Logistics- The borders between the industrial nations continue to open for more sophisticated goods; the result has been divisions of labour with competition among all those participating in production and trade.

Today's ports seek to gain the position of logistics and distribution centres. Their position on the market is no longer solely determined by the quality of the products. A decisive co determinant is the quality of logistics with which the position of the product is supported in the market. The supply of goods will only be accepted if just-in-time delivery that can be assured without a large capital commitment in local inventory stock and expedited by smooth-running logistics over the entire chain of operation and information. It is hardly ever possible for one organisation to undertake the construction of these interconnected logistics chains with both worldwide dimensions and the required logistics services.

Productivity in logistics means using the combined resources of all participants in the supply chain in the most efficient way to provide high quality cost effective customer services (Byrne and Markham, 1991).

### **The maritime sector in Albania**

Albania is a small country of 28,748 km<sup>2</sup> situated in south-eastern Europe at the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. 1/3 of its border is extended on the sea side, about 440 km, making it a coastal country with favorable natural conditions which have not been properly assessed for the development of the Maritime Sector.

Even though, the Maritime Transport Sector, responding to the economic development of the country has a long history of development after World War II. The years 1979 – 80 were marked by an important economic development, especially in the minerals industry which determined a significant development in the Navy and Commercial Marine. The state decided to buy transatlantic ships from 12,500 to 16,000 TDW, with a total processing capacity of approximately 90,000 TDW, for the transportation of export - import.

Albanian owners continue to buy ships, especially general cargo but in general they are old and damaged with many technical problems lowering the standard of Albanian fleet in general. Inland Transport as a subsector of Maritime Transport includes not only transports in rivers and lakes, but also the transport of goods between the ports of Durres, Vlora and Saranda Shengjin.

Nowadays, according to the modern world development model, the maritime traffic and maritime issues is considered as a crucial factor for our country's economic activity. For all coastal areas, sea has been a source of benefits for further economic development and international reputation. Infrastructure routes do not require funds to be built and maintained, but ports needs to be built, as points of departure and arrival of the maritime routes and of connection with the land shipping.

Although Albania is a coastal country with a favorable geographic position, the maritime sector is in the process of development in the following areas: Legislation and the National Maritime law, Implementation of the requirements of international maritime conventions, sea ports, shipping, port safety and navigation security and environmental protection.



The Albanian Sea Ports are located from North to South along the Coast. In order to localize both existing port and landing facilities along the coast, as well as future prospective locations, the Consultants have placed a Kilometre Identification line along the

Albanian Coast, as presented on the map in Appendix I, starting at the River Mouth of the Bunës River in the North, at the Border with Montenegro. Ports and Locations are referred with their Coastal Kilometre as reference.

The most Northern Albanian commercial port is the Port of Shengjin, at Coastal Km 18. Traditionally the port was used for the import of building materials and petroleum products, as well as the export of small volumes of copper ores. After the government decision to concentrate the handling of liquid bulk, such as the petroleum products in the two ports of Porto Romano, near Durres, and Petrolifera, near Vlora, the only recent cargo activities in this port have been mainly related to the import of cement for the regional construction industry. Small ferries are coming in from Bari in Italy since 2009. Fishing vessels are crowding the port, as adequate facilities are still to be developed, which may occupy space currently used by the Navy.

Expansion possibilities to this port are limited. The land side is surrounded by hills and the narrow access road crosses the small town through a rapidly expanding tourist area. The present depth of the entry channel and port basin is limited to around 5.00 meter, and would need dredging work for the accommodation of larges vessels, which will subsequently require annual maintenance.

The oil terminal of Porto Romano (Km 88) is located in the Southern section of the 2.5 Km long Porto



Romano Bay, North of Durres. The terminal is built as a privatized concession, as part of the Government decision to concentrate the handling of the petrochemical liquid bulk in two locations outside the traditional ports. The management of this terminal is at present in the process of completing the construction of a breakwater South of the terminal jetty for protection against the South-West waves during the winter period. A similar Northern breakwater is planned. Depths in the access channel to the terminal are in excess of 13 meter.

No other construction activities are planned along the coast of this bay. However, on the land side there is a vast area of limited habitation and use, on which the location of an Industrial Zone and an Energy park are projected. Road construction is under way to link the terminal and its tank farms to the national road system.



The Durres Port is the main port of Albania and located on the sea front of the city of Durres, where it has historically developed as a city port. In recent years the port has been handling over 75 % of the country's imports and exports of commercial cargo, of a total of about 3 million ton per year. This comprises of containers, general cargo, cereals, and dry bulk, such as chrome ore, steel scrap, cement, clinker and coal. Ferry services arrive from Bari and other ports in Italy.

In 2008 a Port Master Plan was developed, which foresees handling of a maximum throughput of around 9 million ton per year, which, depending on the estimated scenario, will be reached sometime between 2020 and 2030. For this capacity the port will need a substantial expansion through reclamation on both sides of the Eastern pier and dredging of the channel from the present 9 meter draft to 13 meter depth. Furthermore expansion is hindered by the presence of the old shipyard and tank farm as well as some wrecks in the port basin. The only component of the new master plan layout being implemented till today is the ongoing construction of the new ferry terminal.



The Petrolifera Oil Terminal (Km 205) is located 5 Km North of the Vlora Port. The terminal is built as a privatized concession, as part of the Government decision to concentrate the handling of the petrochemical liquid bulk in two locations outside the traditional ports. The terminal jetty is protected by two rock breakwaters, reaching deep water access. The area between the bases of the breakwaters is laid out as the terminal and tank farms. Nevertheless a significant space is vacant, and the Consultants were informed that this area is not needed for future terminal development and is free for other commercial commodity handling, if required.



The Vlora Port is considered the second largest port of Albania, but handles a substantial smaller volume of cargo (around 15 % of country total), mainly consisting at present of importing cement and other building materials. The predominant function of the port is the ferry service from Brindisi in Italy. It is, as all existing ports in Albania, a traditional city port, with limited space for port area expansion.

With funding from the Italian Government a new port development plan was prepared and the tender procedure for the construction of the new ferry terminal and one commercial berth is ongoing, as well as an improved road link of the port area with the national road system.



Saranda is the Southern most port city and is fast becoming a centre of tourist development on the Albanian coast. This city port traditionally served to import the goods, mainly building materials, needed in the city and environs.

Under World Bank funding a port restructuring project is under way, which will turn the city port into a facility

for ferries and cruise ships.

A condition of the financiers was that the port city would be fully dedicated to tourism and people friendly activities, and consequently all commercial goods handling is being moved to the small port in the Limion Bay, originally used for the Navy, which will now provide space for the fishing fleet and one jetty for transfer of general cargo.

Albania is set to become a major entry point into the European Transport Corridor VIII, which is considered vital for the economic growth of the South Eastern European region. Furthermore the landlocked neighbour countries, Kosovo and Macedonia, will largely rely on a maritime entry point for their import and export flows. However, to achieve optimum economic benefits for these corridors, as well as for the developing Albanian National Industry and Trade, full use must be made of Economies of Scale to reduce transport unit rates. Considering the relative short, 350 km, Albanian coast line, one major and modern port will be effective. Such "Balkanport" can be the "Europort" for South- East Europe.

### **Tourism and marina development**

Coastal Tourism Development in Albania is in its infancy. The present restriction on small motor crafts in Albanian coastal waters has till today blocked the development of marina facilities along this coast. But this is all expected to change rapidly in the near future, as it has in recent years in the neighbouring countries along the Mediterranean. Tourism will become one of the major sources of income for the country.

All coastal cities have significant tourism potential and will be an attraction to both national and international tourists. Furthermore, the various marine entry points into the country will in the near future become the gateways to tourism into the inlands with mountain resorts and eco ventures

The beach areas cater at this moment mainly for national holiday makers and the Consultants have observed seemingly uncontrolled development along certain sections of coast and beach line, of small and medium size hotels and apartment blocks catering for these temporary guests. However, there are still large coastal sections untouched, which provides opportunities for international resort developers to implement large scale integrated tourist resorts, such as 1000 room resort hotels, with extensive facilities including golf courses and marinas, catering for the affluent regional and international tourists. Tourists will first arrive by air and road, but in increasing numbers from the Mediterranean, by ferry, cruise liner and soon by private yachts.

During recent years and till today Albania does not allow the use and operation of motor yachts in its coastal waters due to security reasons and illegal transport of goods and persons. However, with significant increase of the government border security enforcement and the impending opening of borders, this restriction is expected to be lifted in the near future.

Due to the lifting of this ban on yachting, the restrictions on travelling of national residents and the development of Albania and its beaches as a Foreign Tourist Destination, a strong demand for Marina Facilities along the coast is expected. Several applications for concessions to build and operate such marinas have already been received by the Albanian Government.

In order to benefit most from the economic opportunities of the influx of foreign tourists, those tourists should be concentrated in the areas where entertainment outlets are present and where they can spend their money. At the moment, and still in the foreseeable future, these locations will be the existing traditional coastal cities. It is therefore strongly recommended to develop the first marinas at those locations, as it is less economically attractive to have the tourists spend their time in isolation. This may happen later, when further development of tourist facilities along the rest of the coast is progressing, but in the interest of the economy, and the development of employment opportunities in the coastal cities it is recommended to "cream off" this market first.

At present the traditional city ports do not provide for marina and yacht landing facilities and space, but it is foreseen that in the coming years these ports will be flooded with pleasure vessel arrivals and berthing, and this is difficult to prevent. Space and facilities will have to be planned in each of the city ports, apart from other dedicated marina and resort developments along the coast.

Tourism will be an important component of the future Albanian economic growth. In order to make full use of the benefits of coastal tourism, as well as providing efficient corridors for tourists to visit the Albanian hinterland resorts, the Traditional City Ports are vital. These are not only ideal for this purpose, but will certainly rapidly develop as such in the medium term, when Albanian waters are opened up for yachting. This significant "green" tourism pressure will be an impediment to operation and development of commercial port activities.

Commodities and the transport corridors -Albania is set to become a major entry point into the European Transport Corridor VIII, which is considered vital for the economic growth of the South Eastern European region. Furthermore the landlocked neighbour countries, Kosovo and Macedonia, will largely

rely on a maritime entry point for their import and export flows. However, to achieve optimum economic benefits for these corridors, as well as for the developing Albanian National Industry and Trade, full use must be made of Economies of Scale to reduce transport unit rates. Considering the relative short, 350 km, Albanian coast line, one major and modern port will be effective. Such "Balkanport" can be the "Europort" for South-East Europe.

### Conclusions

Ports as traditional transit points play an emerging role in the new global era. Port managers forced to deal with new competitive environment by adopting strategies such as profit or revenue maximization in order to reach their goals. Marketing in services has been developing very rapidly, first in services such as travel, leisure and food industry, progressively dominating every domain of life. The countries were able to operate independently and implement principles of the free market. The emergence of the market economy brought the need and desire for marketing. In Albanian marketing efforts were first noticed in consumer goods and services but as the state owned enterprises were exposed to reconstruction and privatisation, marketing became an important part of their economic activities. This also affected heavy industry, transportation and of course the maritime economy including ports.

The Consultants recommend the development of the Albanian Marina capacity with great caution and careful planning. In order to optimize the income of new tourism initiatives and local enterprises, Marina Facilities are first proposed to be provided in the Green Ports, as detailed in this Port Strategy Concept. These Green Ports are located in the existing coastal cities with excellent opportunities for commercial income and employment.

Vlora has a very favorable geographical position and a large sum of natural and cultural assets. Tourism is the economic future seen for the region developing. Tourism industry is a promoter of sustainable development but it will bring better management and stewardship that have appropriate effects and provide a long-term development, canned and preserved natural and cultural resources. Tourism development will help in employment and total income per destination; accelerated social and economic development throughout the destination; Improvement of living conditions at the destination; beginning of economic activities; Creating a positive international image of the country as tourist destination; increase foreign currency income and tax revenues for the government; social tourism development, and sustainable environment.

However the challenges that face in front of sustainable regional development are numerous like Control of the territory, territory management, and territory regulation. County of Vlora Region should develop a research project for the Region of Vlora, anticipating the development of the region for a long period of time.

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