

A Critical Approach to the Tourism Management

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Abstract

Tourist destination and, generally, tourist activities not only represent an extraordinarily important economic factor, but also an instrument of knowledge and personal empowerment. Therefore, we can state that it is essential to ensure access to the tourism experience to all citizens, regardless of personal, social, economic conditions and any other nature which may limit the fruition of this asset. The role of tourism management is to develop effective strategic plan in order to guarantee a possible growth of a destination, without having a negative impact on the resources, either natural or civilian of the destination itself. Tourist destinations follow a life-cycle (evolution cycle) based on a price factor (a greater attractiveness of an area means a greater willingness to pay of the tourists) and a trend factor (related to the fame of the area and to the evolution of tourists' tastes and habits). These factors mark the tourism in the contents and in the methods of production and consumption, related to the concepts of supply and demand, two dimensions that must be always connected with the principles of growth, accessibility and sustainability. This research paper aims to deepen the life-cycle approach of a tourist destination, underlining the option that the tourism management could offer to relaunch an area, however considering the principle of supportable growing.

Keywords

Tourism Management, Tourism Development, Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism, Performance Analysis, Life-Cycle

1. Introduction

The tourism management deals with the promotion and the relaunching of a territory (destination); it should optimize the use of natural and financial resources available in order to develop the cultural or environmental peculiarities

forming the tourism destination attractiveness. Attractiveness has long been considered fundamental for both understanding and improving tourism destination competitiveness and it is often defined with reference to the features or attributes of a specific destination, *i.e.* those attributes of a tourism destination which, with their specific features, attract or motivate tourists to visit [1].

Each destination has a life-cycle, from the discovery to the necessity of re-launching. Therefore, a strategic plan must be done by the tourism management in order to offer new attraction and services to tourists in order to prevent the decline of a destination itself [2].

We can state, therefore, that a strategic plan for a tourism destination shall, however, be balanced between the motivations of the tourist and the characteristic of the sites.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the definition of tourism and its primary characteristics. Therefore, in this section, also the classes of goods and services in tourism have been deepened. Section 3 introduces the tourism demand and supply, analyzing the role of the marketing mix as an essential instrument to have an effective and successful approach to tourism management. Section 4 then combines accessibility, through a quantitative and a qualitative index, and life-cycle of a tourism destination, since we can state, thus, that there is a correlation between accessibility and the amount of tourists in each locality. Finally, Section 5 presents our conclusions, explaining the link between life-cycle of a tourism locality and the principle of sustainability.

2. Definition of Tourism

Tourism is the set of relationships that determine people's temporary and not habitual displacement, including at least one overnight stay in a location other than the usual residence.

What is tourism? This is not a question as simple as it seems, because generally the tourism is considered as, free time, leisure, recreation, travel and all these terms tourism are used synonymously and are often almost interchangeable.

One of the oldest conceptual definitions of tourism was given by two pioneers of tourism research, Hunziker and Krapf (1942), who defined tourism as: "a sum of relationships and phenomena derived from the trip and stay of non-residents, insofar as a stay does not lead to permanent residence and is not connected to any permanent or temporary gains activity" [3].

For a considerable time, this definition was generally accepted, until 1981 when Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme, discussed the definition once again on its annual congress in Cardiff. This Congress accepted the following definition:

"The totality of interrelations and phenomena that are derived from people who travel and stop in places that are not their main permanent domiciles – neither jobs nor for leisure or in the context of business activities nor the study" [4].

Another important definition of tourism is given by Burkart and Medlik (1974): “Tourism is considered to include any activity related to the temporary movement of people to destinations Short-term out of the places where they usually live and work, and their activities during their stay in these destinations”. This definition includes, therefore, those activities that intervene in the stay or visit to the destination [5].

Thus, we can state that tourism has five primary characteristics:

- Tourism is a combination of phenomena and relationships rather than a single one.
- These phenomena and relationships occur from a movement of people and from a stay in different destinations; there is a dynamic element (the trip) and a static element (the stay).
- The trip and stay are directed to destinations outside the usual place of residence and work, so that tourism gives rise to activities other than those of the resident and working population of the places visited by tourists and their destinations.
- Moving to destinations is temporary in the short term.
- The destinations are visited for purposes not related to paid work.

For this reason, the tourist basket is identified as a pool of goods and services. This mixture of goods and services is requested by the visitor on vacation.

The goods and services are accumulated together by the purpose for which they are applied, *i.e.* holiday. Thus, we can state four classes of goods and services in tourism: transports, accommodation (including catering), business and shopping.

Tourist products should be studied with respect:

- heterogeneity: the list of goods that make up the tourist product. Vertical diversity of tourism products;
- plurality: the diversity of the lists that characterize different forms of tourism. Multiplicity of tourist product.

Tourism, in fact, represents the complexity and diversity of the tourism product and these two dimensions of heterogeneity and plurality justify the use of a matrix to identify the tourist product of the following type.

3. The 7 P's of Tourism Marketing Mix

Tourism demand is the combination of goods and services demanded by tourists. Understanding and developing the tourism demand, means analyze the movement of people from an area of residence to another area of vacation. In this context, we must analyze: the type of consumer, the reasons, the methods, the locations, the average time of stay and especially the price.

Among the features of tourism demand, the instability has a particular relevance, since the demand varies over time due to a number of different factors, which alter its trend with significant quantitative consequences quantitatively. Also the seasonality has an important relevance, particularly regarding the tour-

ist flows' oscillation within a time interval considered. As a rule, in fact, the number of tourists is not constant but may vary during the year, the month, the week or even the day.

The tourist offer, instead, is the combination of goods and services needed to meet the demand expressed by tourists. It manifests itself through the quantitative measurement of the accommodation business structures (*i.e.* for the purpose of lodging, such as hotels, self-catering units, open-air facilities, historic buildings), related activities (*i.e.* for the purpose to serve food) and complementary activities (*i.e.* for the purpose to satisfy other needs of the tourist, such as shopping, culture, relax, sport, etc.). Main features of the tourism supply are the rigidity, since the offer cannot be adapted to the changes of the demand in the short term and complexity, because several companies are needed in order to provide all services required by tourists for their holidays.

Tourist demand and supply are closely related to each other and it is important that actions are always taken to support these aspects and to encourage, at the same time, the tourist destinations, for this purpose the tourism management should, firstly, preserve the tourism industry because it is synonymous of development and wealth and can be a force for economy.

Analyzing the tourist destinations, it is important to underline the role of the marketing. The tourism marketing follows the same rules of the marketing and it can be defined as simplistically defined as putting the right product—in this case the destination in the right place, at the right price, at the right time.

The marketing mix is a crucial tool to help understand what the product or service can offer and how to plan for a successful product offering.

The marketing mix, in fact, is most commonly executed through the 4 P's of marketing:

- Product, *i.e.* a tangible good or an intangible service that is seem to meet a specific customer need or demand;
- Price, that covers the actual amount the end user is expected to pay for a product;
- Promotion, that represents the marketing communication strategies and techniques (these may include advertising, sales promotions, special offers and public relations);
- Place, *i.e.* how a product is accessed by the end user also needs to complement the rest of the product strategy.

Thus, the objective is to package the product, to set a price, to invest in advertising, to get customers in the store to buy the product, in this case to get them in the destination. Related to the tourism management, it means also knowing the rules of political power, the legislation and the local development plans and also developing effective public relations in order to get the stakeholders' consensus [6]. We can state that at the classic approach, due to the market developments, a broader the definition shall be added, defining the 7 P's of the marketing mix (Table 1).

Table 1. Tourism marketing mix.

MARKETING MIX	PRODUCT	PRICE
	PROMOTION	PLACE
TOURISM MARKETING MIX	+ PEOPLE PROCESS	PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Specifically, in fact, we add:

- People, *i.e.* a greater focus on the target when entering the marketing operations, understanding whether the target is really profitable and establishing the marketing efforts to seduce the customers;
- Process, that must be clear and efficient because it reflects on customer experience, when using a service or a product.
- Physical Evidence, *i.e.* planning tools and actions in order to let customers acquiring a proof and a real perception of the product/service delivered.

Robert F. Lauterborn in early 1990s proposed, with a view to achieving a complete customer orientation, this new approach, able to integrate at 360° with the traditional 4 P's marketing mix.

This approach, in fact, is based on the consumers: in the 4 P's model, in fact, the central concept is always the product, while in this model the attention is focused on the consumers, considering the target market and moving the strategic plan on them.

The 4 C's model analyzes therefore the following variables:

- Customer need, that means, through an analysis of the target, to impersonate a potential buyer and to determine which services are needed and which services are not currently provided by the competitors, in order to get an advantage;
- Cost to the consumer, *i.e.* understanding the price the consumer is willing to pay; that, once you know it is necessary to know the price at which the customer remains satisfied even financially;
- Convenience, *i.e.* choosing the strategies analyzing the real needs of the consumer instead of the corporate structure;
- Communication, (oriented to consumers) that means building a brand, a name and a lasting connection with the client and not simply advertising or merchandising [7].

4. Accessibility and Life-Cycle of a Tourism Destination

Along with these bases, it is necessary also to consider that, among the main factors that determine the success or the failure of a tourist region, there are the distance and the cost, or rather the accessibility.

The cost of travel, in fact, is one of the main components of tourism expenditures; but distance is only one of many factors influencing the choice of destination. Many tourism areas have developed considerably despite their relative distance from competitors, because the cost to reach them was more affordable [8].

Even if the problem of accessibility may thus be relevant only for destinations with similar characteristics—for example the sea and sun or the mountain and snow model of tourism—accessibility could represent a source of competitiveness.

This model should consider, therefore, four indicators, *i.e.* the potential and effective average travel-time to reach the locality and the necessary costs to reach the destination.

The first indicator is expressed in travel-time (hour) while the second is expressed in money.

We can state, thus, that there is a correlation between accessibility and the amount of tourists in each locality.

Accessibility has thus an influence on the distribution of tourism flows; tourists seem, in fact, to choose their destination with reference to accessibility and travel-times. We can state, moreover, that the accessibility modifies the distance. It means that a destination is not simply far or near but the distance is connected with travel-time and travel-cost.

Accessibility means also products and services (*i.e.* attraction functionalities and facilities) of a destination; so it represents a quantitative and a qualitative index [9]. A tourist product, in fact, changes and modifies as time passes, because customers' needs change and so do the tourist attractions.

Each product has a life-cycle that is an economic theory stating that a product, exactly such as a human being, is born, grows and finally dies. Also for tourist regions, we can therefore speak of a life-cycle; a destination in fact goes through a series of stages: discovery and exploration; development and consolidation; maturation and stagnation; decline and finally renewal.

Each destination, big or small, evolves over time.

The first stage coincides with the birth, *i.e.* the discovery of a site as a tourist destination. The stage tourists are not many and they can be considered as pioneers. The second phase is normally characterized by a rapid increase in tourists. It is certainly a stage full of vitality marked by significant investments. The third stage sees a phase of maturation or stagnation of the tourist presences, the number of tourists in fact increases in a slower trend until the last stage, *i.e.* the decline. In this phase the arrivals and the presences of tourists decrease and it is necessary a renewed strategic plan to boost competitiveness and growth. This last phase is the most delicate, but destinations, unlike men, are not meant to die. These could in fact decline and perish or be renewed and be reborn. It might be possible, in fact, to enlarge the tourist offer adding to natural resources, for example amusement parks, casinos or sports areas [10].

Otherwise, it might be possible to valorize until neglected or forgotten (such as monuments, or natural resources, etc.) or focus on different targets of potential customers.

5. Conclusions

This life-cycle model is however connected to the principle of sustainability that

could become a factor of impossibility of renovation. As more regions and countries develop their tourism industry, it produces important impact on natural resources, consumption patterns, social systems and pollution.

Tourism, in fact, has a significant impact at the local levels, particularly considering the cumulative effects produced by tourism businesses in a specific area. It will not always be possible, therefore, to define a different strategic plan, because a destination could not always attract an uncontrolled number of tourists.

Thus, we can state that management policies to restart a tourist destination may not make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy.

The goal, in fact, shall be to balance core aspects of sustainable tourism using best practice management techniques.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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