

Sustainability of the Cross-country Approach and the Role of Destination Management Organisations in Creating New Tourism Products: the Case of Siauliai, Joniskis (Lithuania) and Jelgava (Latvia)

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INTRODUCTION

Destination is used as a synonym for attraction; destination can also be defined as a specific brand or product, or a product package or selection of products and services compiled according to climate, infrastructure, natural and cultural features. Destination is defined as a place where tourists can rest, walk, spend their time in nature, see historical monuments, attend festivals, events, taste local cuisine and be part of unique events. Combining the last approach with traditional geographic or administrative aspects, we may define a destination as an administrative or geographically defined area where tourists can rest, walk, spend their time in nature, see historical monuments, attend festivals, events, taste local cuisine and be part of unique events. With a new trend of local travel, the promotion of regions that were not among top visited destinations becomes essential in trying to attract local travellers in the short term. The objective of this study was to identify the effects of promotional and organisational factors on travellers' intentions to visit two destinations in Lithuania and one in Latvia.

HYPOTHESES

Key hypothesis of this study – can sustainable cross region or cross border cooperation initiate higher tourist interest in formerly less visited destinations and what steps do we need to take to create valuable proposals.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Analysis of scientific literature and secondary data, descriptive statistical analysis.

Destination management has historically placed emphasis on the management of demand and supply, visitor experience and maintenance of competitive advantage. This has been enhanced through the application of modern marketing techniques (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Gretzel & Scarpino-Johns, 2018; Kabadayi, Ali, Choi, Joosten, & Lu, 2019; Polese, Botti, Grimaldi, Monda, & Vesce, 2018). Our study shows that many destinations lack a clearly stated value separately, as they are mostly too small to attract the attention of experienced travellers.

RESULTS

We have collected all the possible sights, historical background and created 20 different routes that combine the object of project stakeholders – Siauliai, Joniskis and Jelgava districts, bearing in mind that enhancing greater cooperation might help to create better stories, use a historical element, and attract the attention of experienced travellers.

We clarified that DMO's are still heavily focused on the classical promotion of their attractions. This is why this first stage of research implemented a new methodology based on which regional DMO's can create cooperation and develop easy-to-use products. The authors put a content orientated approach and not infrastructure created experience at the forefront.

Justifying our hypothesis, we found that any less visited destination can acquire additional interest by combining objects from more than one district or well-known country.

But the most important question that we were solving is how to satisfy all the stake holders and not to benefit one partner.

We have tested our offered model by creating an actual product.

CONCLUSIONS

Destination resilience is becoming an important area of research, with DMO's becoming the key players in the development of more adaptive strategies, managing the risks, and furthermore, attracting visitors to most of the local objects. DMO's lack appropriate models that can help them to market their destination more. A ready-to-use and tested model can become a good example for any DMO that is eager to attract more visitors by creating products that reflect a modern traveller's needs.

KEYWORDS: Travel industry, Destination management organisations, Innovations, Travel products

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