

The Influence of Tourism Policy on the Management and Development of the Destination

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Abstract: The paper investigates the role of tourism policy in the management of the tourist destination of the city of Makarska, which is one of the most important tourist destinations on the Croatian coast of the Adriatic Sea. Focusing on the complexity of managing a tourist destination enabled an analysis of the importance of an integrated approach in tourism development, with a special emphasis on meeting the needs of all stakeholders and ensuring the destination's sustainable future. The subject of this paper is to analyse the theoretical framework of tourism policy and to investigate how tourism policy affects the management of a tourist destination on the model of the Makarska tourist destination. The goal of the work is a deeper understanding of the complexity of tourism policy and the identification of key factors that contribute to the sustainable development of tourist destinations. Through the analysis of the tourism policy, the possibilities of improving the tourism of the mentioned destination with the aim of long-term prosperity were investigated. Special importance is attached to examining the attitudes of the local population on the impact of tourism and tourism policy. The analysis of the perception of the local population provided a deeper insight into the positive and negative aspects of tourism and the identification of key areas for further action. In the paper, empirical research was conducted through an online survey questionnaire to analyse the views of the local population on the impact of tourism and tourism policy on the specified destination. Primary data were collected through a one-time descriptive survey on a targeted sample (N 1332). The general conclusion of the research is that based on a detailed analysis of the tourism policy of the city of Makarska, key aspects of business and investment in tourism were investigated, including demand monitoring, innovation, tourism promotion, investment in employees, raising the quality of business and environmental protection. The results of the average scores of the respondents show a moderately good degree of agreement with the mentioned aspects, while a certain variability in the scores can be observed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a key factor in modern economic development around the world, representing a vital component of the economy of many regions. Due to the increase in the number of tourists and the growing demands for a quality tourist offer, the management of tourist destinations has become a challenging area that requires an integrated approach, careful planning and implementation of strategies to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the destination. Through the analysis of key aspects of tourism policy, management of the tourist destination and planning of the development of the tourist destination, this paper explores the possibilities of improving tourism in Makarska with the aim of long-term prosperity. Managing a tourist destination becomes a complex process that requires continuous adaptation and reflection in order to meet the needs of all stakeholders - local residents, tourists, business entities and institutions. In this context, tourism policy plays a



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key role in directing the development of tourist destinations according to the set goals and purpose. Special emphasis in this paper is placed on examining the attitudes of the local population of the Makarska destination on the impact of tourism and tourism policy, with the aim of better understanding the perception of the local community and identifying key areas for further improvement.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TOURISM POLICY

Tourism policy is part of the economic policy of a certain country. Economic policy directs the direction of development of various activities for the sake of overall economic and social development. In the context of the economic policies of a certain country, a whole series of sectoral and branch policies is formed, among which is tourism policy. Tourism, as a multi-functional activity, is subordinated to the economic policies of various tourist and complementary sectors, such as catering, industries, transport, agriculture, trade and others. According to Bartoluci (2013), the application of tourism policies is becoming more and more important, both in Croatia and in other countries around the world (p. 58). Although tourism policy is a key factor for the development and improvement of tourism, maintaining competitiveness and achieving economic and non-economic goals, it is important to emphasize that state intervention plays a key role in achieving these goals. Krce Miočić et al. (2016), emphasize that different countries apply different strategies, but they all have in common that the development of tourism cannot be completely left to the private sector (p. 104). Dwyer et al. (2009) point out that tourism policy is the essential relationship of the state towards tourism, and it is shaped by a series of complementary activities, that is, their economic policy (p. 65). Sectors such as catering, transport, trade, communal services and others make up an important part of tourism, which justifies the need for a tourism policy. According to Petrić (2011), tourism policy represents a set of measures that the state consciously applies in order to influence tourism through special instruments aimed at developing, improving and maintaining the competitiveness of tourism (p.83). The goals of the tourism policy include the achievement of economic and non-economic goals and the preservation of the sustainability of tourism. The importance of tourism policy is manifested in directing desirable and acceptable activities in tourism and in setting development guidelines and goals. It provides the necessary support for the implementation of projects and measures aimed at encouraging the development and ensuring the competitiveness of the destination. According to Silvar and Golja (2016), tourism policy can avoid unwanted forms of destination development and direct efforts towards the creation of new tourist products that meet the needs and interests of contemporary tourists and the local community (p. 127). The formulation of tourism policy begins with the recognition of the different needs of regions or countries through appropriate research techniques. Dias et al. (2024) state that tourism goals are key because they reflect these needs but are limited by existing external and internal factors (p. 4). For example, the lack of air-conditioned spaces can repel American tourists, therefore a policy aimed at attracting such guests can provide financial incentives for the modernization of accommodation facilities. According to Mill and Morrison (1992), excessive use of tourism facilities by local residents can also limit tourism development (p. 256). In addition, the lack of free land and investment capital represent current challenges, especially in less developed countries. Before a conscious and active tourism policy can be implemented, it is necessary to clearly define the goals to be achieved. According to the above, defining clear goals enables the selection of the necessary instruments, because the available instruments are key to achieving the desired goals. According to Blažević and Peršić (2009), this means that tourism policyholders have at their disposal various instruments through which they can achieve the desired results (p. 83). According to Kahlenborn et al. (1999), tourism policy instruments include concrete measures implemented by tourism policy holders in order to influence the tourism sector, tourist flows or the structure of tourism in accordance with the set goals (p. 47). These instruments stem from various government

and private policy initiatives. Their use is not static but adapts to the current situation and prevailing social and economic conditions. According to the same authors Kahlenborn et al. (1999), from an economic perspective, individual instruments can be aimed at supply or demand, but they can also affect the tourism market as a whole directly or indirectly (p. 53). The goals and purpose of tourism policy represent an essential foundation in shaping the sustainable development of tourism, playing a key role in achieving a balance between economic profit, preservation of cultural heritage, social responsibility, and environmental protection. According to Vukonić and Čavlek (2001), through strategic goal setting, tourism policy directs efforts towards increasing the competitiveness of destinations, attracting a diverse tourist population and creating a positive socioeconomic impact on the local community (p. 283).

Cardena-Garcia and Alcala-Ordonez (2023), analyze the differences in the impact of sustainable tourism policies on the development of destinations in developed and developing countries, with an emphasis on long-term economic, social and ecological effects (p.3). Authors Dredge and Jamal (2015) in their article, consider contemporary approaches to tourism planning and policy, including a critical review of how knowledge is produced in this area and how it shapes the development of destinations (p. 287). At the same time, improving the quality of the tourist experience requires investment in infrastructure projects, education of tourist staff and maintaining the ecological sustainability of destinations. Kahlenborn et al. (1999) point out that stimulating the local economy, through support for small entrepreneurs, cultural events and preserving the authenticity of destinations, becomes crucial for the long-term success of tourism policy (p. 61). Ultimately, tourism policy goals not only shape the tourism sector but also have a profound impact on broader socio-economic aspects.

2.1. Management of Development in the Destination

In the world of tourism, planning the development of a tourist destination is key to successfully guiding the destination towards sustainable growth, improving the tourist experience and preserving the natural and cultural environment. Planning begins the destination management process in which goals are set and then measures are taken to achieve them. According to Vukonić (2010), in the planning phase, the vision is first defined, then the mission, goals and guidelines (p. 143). The organization regulates the roles of individuals and groups. Human resource management is the direct influence on people within the organization, while control is the monitoring of all system activities. According to Magaš (2008), the responsibilities of the overall management of a tourist destination include defining the ultimate goals of the entire tourism system, identifying resources and determining the skills needed to achieve general goals, and defining procedures and strategies (p. 17). The same author, Magaš (2008) emphasizes that after defining management, the question arises as to what the purpose of destination management (p. 31) is. One of the key factors affecting the success of a tourist destination is the regulation of tourist arrivals. Although regulatory frameworks are intended to protect community interests and conserve resources, they face challenges in adapting to rapid changes in tourism trends and technology. One of the challenges facing destinations is mass tourism. An increase in the number of tourist arrivals can lead to negative impacts on the environment, cultural heritage and the quality of life of the local population. Destinations often struggle with the balance between attracting tourists and maintaining authenticity and sustainability. According to Marušić and Prebežac (2004), the challenge is to develop strategies that will enable sustainable tourism, while at the same time minimizing negative impacts on the destination (p. 135). Digital transformation also poses new challenges to the management of a tourist destination. According to Aflić (2019), online reservations, social networks and technological innovations are changing the way tourists plan and experience travel (p. 111). Destinations face the need to adapt their marketing strategies, communication with tourists and information management. According to Zadel and Cerović (2013), in cooperation between stakeholders in the destination, the challenge lies in achieving a balance of public and private sector interests and involving the local community (p.401). Accordingly, cooperation is essential to create sustainable policies and strategies that will meet the needs of all stakeholders, including tourists, local residents, entrepreneurs and authorities. Given the challenges mentioned, destinations must establish a comprehensive approach to tourism management that includes integrated strategies, the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders and the active participation of the local community. According to Feige (2000), the central principle of the destination management process is to bring stakeholders together to clearly define strategic directions and actions for the future development, marketing and management of the destination (p. 110). Križman Pavlović (2008) emphasizes that planning should be based on analysis to ensure that all relevant knowledge is included in the strategic direction of the development of the tourist destination (p. 113). The author Dujmović (2014), in his work, concludes that in the last few decades, the effect of globalization has not only dominated different spheres of social life, but has also had a significant impact on the tourist market (p.30). Here, supply and demand changed drastically, partly due to competition and more and more demanding tourists, which resulted in a greater diversity of supply, various forms of tourism and significant development of tourist destinations. The improvement in the living standard of tourists was reflected in the change of traditional needs and value systems. Pike and Page (2014), indicate that tourist destinations, in order to keep pace with new trends and tourist preferences, had to adapt their offer to an increasingly demanding market (p. 7). The modern tourist is looking for vacation design according to his own wishes, individualized and non-standardized service and simpler travel booking. His need for dynamic and authentic experiences creates a profile of tourists who expect high quality experiences and rich content for the money invested. Mitchell (2007) indicates that the interpolation of global tourism trends represents the future of high-quality tourism offer (p.10). The fundamental trends in global tourism today are socio-demographic changes, globalization processes, ecology and new technologies. The following table shows the classification of tourism trends, which should not be viewed in isolation but as a complete interconnected system. In particular, these trends can be quantitatively or qualitatively analysed and examined in the context of supply or demand at different levels, from local to global. Each individual trend can represent different types of tourism trends at the same time.

Table 1. Types of trends in tourism

According to place emergence on the tourist market	Trends tourist demand
According to prace emergence on the tourist market	Trends tourist offers
According to type tourist markets	Trends on emissive tourist markets
	Trends on receptive tourist markets
According to content studies	Quantitative trends
	Qualitative trends
According to strength actions	Local
	Regional
	National
	Global (megatrends)

Source: Hendija (2013)

3. ANALYSIS OF TOURISM DESTINATION MAKARSKA

A tourist destination like the city of Makarska represents an intriguing example for analysis, since it combines a rich cultural heritage with attractive natural beauty. In this chapter, the key aspects of Makarska will be analysed in order to see its current status, challenges and opportunities for further development. SWOT analysis for the city of Makarska provides an in-depth insight into the current state of the destination, identifying key factors of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats. This analysis helps in shaping strategies for the sustainable and successful development of tourism in Makarska.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of the city of Makarska

FORCE (WITH)	WEAKNESSES (W)	
• Favorable geographical position • Natural beauty,	Lack of off-season content and marked seasonality	
clear sea • The length of the coast with numerous	tourism • Too big crowds on beaches • Overloading	
beaches • Biodiversity • Proximity to the hinterland	of transport infrastructure during the summer	
and islands • Favorable Mediterranean climate •	season • City without a cinema hall • Construction	
Transport connections (Split, Brač, Hvar) • Long-	works in the pre-season and post-season • Poor	
standing touristic tradition • Large number hotel	promotion of events • Insufficient education of	
and restaurants • Park nature Biokovo • Rich cultural	employees in tourist facilities • Insufficient parking	
heritage • Numerous manifestations • Year-round	spaces • Lack of marking of paths with signposts and	
sports events • Growth tourist arrivals • Return of	guidelines	
permanent guests		
OCCASIONS (ON)	THREATS (T)	
• By withdrawing funds from the European fund by	The attitude that the valorised resources of the	
entering EU • Improvement tourist infrastructure	sea, beautiful beaches and hours of sunshine	
• Trends in tourism • Construction cable cars	are sufficient for the sustainability of tourism in	
Makarska – Biokovo • Construction new one's	destinations (Split, islands) • Excessive construction	
parking lots places or garages • Introduction of new	of residential areas that destroys the natural beauty	
bus lines in favor of better connectivity destinations	of the city • Insufficient environmental protection	
• Culturally education • Pedestrian arrangement and	and pollution must discharges from ships • Danger	
bicycle paths	from frequent fires • Climate change	

Source: Author's suggestion

Managing a tourist destination like Makarska requires the implementation of targeted policies in order to achieve sustainable and successful tourism development. The key aspects of managing the destination of Makarska through the prism of tourism policy include sustainability of tourism, diversification of tourist offers, cooperation with stakeholders, quality of service, promotion and marketing, infrastructure development, safety and environmental protection, event planning, continuous monitoring and evaluation. Crisis management, sustainable mobility, digitization of the tourist experience, management of tourism potential, and involvement of the local community. Tourism is a key economic activity in the city of Makarska, providing a significant contribution to the economy and the local community. One of the key strategic goals of the city of Makarska is to direct tourism towards sustainable development. This includes minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, culture and local community and promoting practices that encourage environmental awareness among visitors and local residents. Sustainable tourism is set as a fundamental principle that will guide the development of tourism policy, to ensure the long-term protection of natural resources and cultural heritage. Diversification of the tourist offer is also an important strategic goal of the city of Makarska. Instead of relying exclusively on the sun and the sea, the city strives to develop various forms of tourism such as cultural tourism, active vacations, gastronomy and rural tourism. The goal is to reduce seasonal dependence and create an attractive offer that will attract visitors throughout the year, which will increase the economic stability and sustainability of the destination. Improving the quality of the tourist experience is one of the key goals of the tourism policy of the city of Makarska. This includes improving services, infrastructure and authentic visitor experiences to ensure their satisfaction and loyalty. Through continuous investment in the training of tourist workers and improvement of infrastructure, the city strives to achieve high standards of service quality that will be recognized and appreciated at the international level. The protection of cultural heritage is also highlighted as a strategic goal of the tourism policy of the city of Makarska. The city undertakes to preserve historical landmarks, traditions and customs in order to promote the authenticity of the destination and enrich the tourist offer. By encouraging the interpretation and promotion of cultural heritage, the city wants to preserve its identity and heritage. Partnership with the local community is a key element in achieving the strategic goals of tourism policy. The city strives to ensure transparency, participation and engagement of local stakeholders in tourism planning and management, in order to ensure a balance between tourist needs and the interests of the local population. Through cooperation and dialogue, the city will be able to better understand the needs of its citizens and harmonize tourism development with the local context and values. Ultimately, setting clear strategic goals for the tourism policy of the city of Makarska reflects the city's commitment to sustainable and balanced tourism development. Through an integrated approach, the city strives to create a tourist destination that will be attractive, competitive and sustainable in the long term.

4. SURVEY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION ON THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM AND THE TOURIST POLICY OF THE CITY OF MAKARSKA

Understanding local residents' perceptions and attitudes about tourism and tourism policy is vital for developing sustainable strategies and destination management. This paper investigates the role of tourism policy in the management of the tourist destination of the city of Makarska, which is one of the most important tourist destinations on the Croatian coast of the Adriatic Sea. Focusing on the complexity of managing a tourist destination enabled an analysis of the importance of an integrated approach in tourism development, with a special emphasis on meeting the needs of all stakeholders and ensuring the destination's sustainable future.

4.1. Research Methodology

Empirical research was conducted through an online survey questionnaire as the main research tool, to analyse the views of the local population on the impact of tourism and the tourism policy of the city of Makarska. Primary data were collected through a one-time descriptive survey on a targeted sample. This method was chosen for easier access to a larger number of respondents and faster implementation of the survey itself. The survey process was conducted digitally through the Google Forms application, ensuring respondents' anonymity by accessing the survey via a link. A total of 1,332 respondents responded, which is about 10% of the total population of the city of Makarska. Survey research from January 1 to February 15, 2024. The survey questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, the first 3 questions included general demographic questions such as age, gender and education, which were closed-ended to facilitate later analysis. The other 7 questions explore the perception of investment in the city of Makarska and various aspects of tourism and related activities. The questions were expressed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated complete disagreement and 5 complete agreement with the statement. For the analysis of the average level of agreement, the arithmetic mean and the most common level of agreement, calculated as the weight of the most common answer (mode), were used. The collected data were coded and analysed using R Project, a programming language and software for statistical analysis and data visualization.

4.2. Research Results

The results of the conducted research are presented in graphic form together with the related questions. Due to the limited scope of the work, only the key results of the research are presented, which follow in the further description of the work. Therefore, answers to questions about age

indicate a significant difference in the representation of men and women among the respondents. The research shows that the majority of respondents were female, which is 53% or 700 female respondents, while male respondents make up 47%, or 632 respondents. This significant ratio between the number of women and men in the sample opens the door for a deeper analysis of the research results. Also, it suggests possible differences in behavior patterns or attitudes between the sexes, which is an important aspect of research. This balanced gender distribution provides valuable insight into diverse perspectives and potential variations in research results. Furthermore, the largest share of respondents, 42% or 558 respondents, has completed a bachelor's degree, while 432 respondents (32%) have a master's degree. 25% of respondents, or 333 respondents, completed secondary school as the highest level. It is important to point out that only 9 respondents (1%) in the sample completed a doctorate, which emphasizes the relative rarity of this highest level of education within the population of respondents. The results of the research related to the survey on the level of agreement of the respondents of the survey on the investment of the city of Makarska in various activities, the following can be observed: each activity in the survey had 1332 participants, which indicates the representativeness of the sample. The average scores for each activity vary, with "Marketing" receiving the highest average score (3.041), while "Educating your employees" had the lowest average score (2.608). Although all activities were rated according to the same rating module (3), which suggests that a neutral rating is most common among respondents, there is variability in ratings. The standard deviation, which is relatively low for all activities (varies from 0.877 to 0.983), indicates a relatively small variability of ratings among respondents. The range of grades is divided into three categories: negative (1-2), neutral (3) and positive (4-5). A larger number of respondents rated the activities as neutral, while a smaller number gave negative or positive ratings. The minimum and maximum rating for each activity is 1 and 5, respectively. Analyzing the distribution of ratings, we can notice that the respondents are the most neutral towards all activities, while there are variations in the perception of different investments, which may indicate different priorities or needs of the respondents. Considering these data, it can be concluded that the respondents are the most neutral towards all activities, but there are certain variations in the perception of different investments, which may indicate different priorities or needs of the respondents regarding the investment of the city of Makarska. The results of the research related to the survey on the level of agreement of the respondents of the survey on the investment of the city of Makarska in monitoring the current and future demand in certain areas of tourism, with special emphasis on the use of different resources such as the results of specialized research organizations, the services of consultants and the services of academic and higher education institutions, the following can be observed: the average ratings for each area vary, where the highest average score was recorded for using the services of consultants (2,764), while the average scores for using the results of specialized research organizations and the services of academic and higher education institutions are the same (2,595). All activities were evaluated according to the same rating module (3), which suggests that a neutral rating is the most common among respondents. However, there is variability in the ratings, as confirmed by the standard deviation varying from 0.929 to 1.029. The range of grades is divided into three categories: negative (1-2), neutral (3)and positive (4-5). A larger number of respondents rated the activities as neutral, while a smaller number gave negative or positive ratings. The minimum and maximum score for each area is 1 and 5, respectively. Analyzing the distribution of scores, it can be noted that a neutral score is the most common for all areas of demand monitoring, but there are variations in the perception of different ways of using resources, which may indicate different priorities or needs of respondents regarding with demand tracking. Considering these data, it can be concluded that the respondents are the most neutral towards all areas of demand monitoring, but there are certain variations in the perception of different ways of using resources, which may indicate different priorities or needs of the respondents regarding the investment of the city of Makarska in the mentioned area. The results of the research related to the survey on the level of agreement of the respondents of the survey on the investment of the city of Makarska in ways of promoting tourism, with an emphasis on different methods of promotion, such as market research, promotions, advertising and distribution. The following was noted: the average scores for each promotion method varied, with the highest average scores recorded for advertising (3.196) and promotions (3.122), while the lowest average scores were recorded for market research (2.723) and distribution (2.865). All promotion methods were rated according to the same rating module (3), which suggests that a neutral rating is the most common among respondents. There is variability in the ratings, as confirmed by the standard deviation varying from 0.898 to 0.998. The range of grades is divided into three categories: negative (1-2), neutral (3) and positive (4-5). Analysing the distribution of grades, it can be observed that respondents are the most neutral towards all methods of tourism promotion, but there are variations in the perception of different methods, which may indicate different priorities or needs of respondents in relation to tourism promotion. Considering these data, we can conclude that the respondents are the most neutral towards all methods of tourism promotion, but there are certain variations in the perception of different methods, which may indicate different priorities or needs of the respondents regarding the investment of the city of Makarska in tourism promotion.

Table 3. The average level of agreement of survey respondents on how much the city of Makarska invests in environmental protection

		Business processes and standards that contribute to	Technology and equipment that preserves the environment/	"Green marketing"
		environmental protection	reduces environmental pollution	
N	Valid answer	1332	1332	1332
Arithmetic mean		2,696	2,628	2,588
Module		3	3	2
Standard deviation		0.964	0.932	1,040
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5
Ratings				
1 -	- 2 (negative)	540	576	675
3	(neutrally)	540	558	396
4-	5 (positively)	252	198	261

Source: Own research

Considering the total number of respondents of 1332 and the absence of missing answers, this table provides relevant information about the attitudes and perceptions of the local community about the importance of investing in environmental protection. The average level of agreement of respondents varies for different aspects of investment in environmental protection. Business processes and standards that contribute to environmental protection receive an average score of 2.696, while technology and equipment that preserve the environment or reduce pollution environment evaluated as something lower with an average grade of 2,628. "Green marketing" was rated the lowest with an average rating of 2.588. The module (most common value) for business processes and technology/equipment is 3, suggesting that most respondents support a medium level of investment in these aspects of environmental protection. However, for "Green Marketing" the module is 2, which indicates that the majority of respondents chose a lower rating. The standard deviation varies from 0.932 to 1.040, which shows a relatively large variability of responses among respondents in some aspects compared to others.

5. CONCLUSION

The tourism policy for the management of the destination of the city of Makarska in the future should be directed towards sustainability, diversification of the offer, protection of natural resources, and improvement of the quality of the tourist experience. While the tourist offer seems diverse, there is a lack of concrete initiatives to preserve nature and promote ecological sustainability. Instead, the phenomenon of "greenwashing" is increasingly being noticed, which further complicates the perception of real efforts to protect the environment. In addition, the lack of transparency and communication with the local population further complicates the participation of citizens in initiatives aimed at preserving the environment. Sustainable development should be the main goal of all initiatives, with an emphasis on the protection of natural resources, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the improvement of the quality of life for the local population. To solve the above-mentioned challenges, it is necessary to strengthen concrete activities on the ground aimed at protecting the environment and improving the tourist offer. The city of Makarska needs to implement solid policies, programs, or initiatives that promote ecological sustainability and encourage an authentic tourist experience. In the research on the attitudes of the local population on the impact of tourism and the tourism policy of the city of Makarska, numerous limitations were identified that affected the process of data collection during the research. These limitations include self-report errors, incomplete information, seasonality of tourism activities, and social desirability. First, self-report bias refers to respondents' tendency to answer questions based on their tastes, preferences, or perceptions, which can lead to biased results. Second, the incompleteness of information suggests that participants may not fully understand tourism policy or the actual impact of tourism on their community, which may limit the validity of the results obtained. Third, the seasonal nature of tourist activities in the city of Makarska means that data collected outside the tourist season may be incomplete or may not adequately reflect the true impact of tourism on the local population.

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