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I. TOURISM AND HERITAGE

ROLE OF NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION (NTO) IN THE CREATION OF THE TOURIST IMAGE OF SELECTED DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

The image of a tourist area constitutes the sum of beliefs, impressions, thoughts, notions and emotions of an individual or a group of people concerning a given area. The image of a location is also the sum of beliefs, notions, opinions, feelings and impressions which the recipient possess in relation to it. It is the result of perception in two dimensions: the first one reflects what the recipient has contact with, whereas the other one presents how the recipient perceives and assesses what he/she experiences. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines the tourist image as impressions that are possessed individually or collectively concerning the destination. The main purpose of the article is among others to define the role of the National Tourism Organizations (NTO) in the creation of the tourist image of selected tourist destinations. A detailed analysis covered the promotional campaigns that are realized by the NTO in such states as Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Spain, Germany, Poland and Serbia. In the article, as specific objectives, the examples were presented among others of the use branded tourist products in the promotional campaigns. Furthermore, the notion of the tourist image was defined. The idea of the functioning of the NTO (the main objectives and tasks) was depicted as an institution which is responsible for the promotion of the state and the creation of its tourist image in particular. In the article, the following research thesis was put forward: an active promotional activity of National Tourism Organizations in the states analyzed contributes to a significant extent to the creation of their positive tourist image, and it thereby determines the development of arrival tourism. Branded tourist products constitute one of the more important elements of the promotional campaigns realized by NTO.

Key words: tourist image, National Tourism Organization, branded product, promotional campaign

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1. Introduction

An image is a subjective notion which takes into account both cognitive aspects: beliefs, and emotional aspects, i.e. emotions. To a smaller or greater extent, the image is modified by the previous personal experiences and emotions and also by the impact of social factors, including universal views concerning the social status, which position very high a given tourist area independently of the personal experiences of a tourist (Smoleński, 2010, p. 39).

National Tourism Organizations (NTO) are most frequently responsible for the creation of the image of national tourist destinations. The perception of a given destination by tourists depends to a significant degree from their activities. An essential role in this regard is played by promotional campaigns are realized by NTO, whose examples are presented in the further part of the article. A special role was attributed to branded tourist products, which constitute one of the chief elements of promotional campaigns in the author's opinion.

2. Idea of the image of a tourist reception area

The image of a tourist reception area constitutes a total of beliefs, impressions, thoughts, notions and emotions of an individual or a group of people concerning a given area. The image of a place also is a sum of beliefs, notions, opinions, feelings and impressions which recipients possess in relation to it. It is the result of perception in two dimensions: the first one expresses what the recipient has contact with, and the other one presents how the recipient perceives and assesses what he/she experiences. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines the tourist image as notions possessed individually or collectively regarding the destination.

The image is frequently equated with the notion of identity. This is not appropriate. The identity is understood as a set of features, a sum of elements which distinguish a given object of research from others. A presentation of the image of a tourist reception area must take into consideration the fact that an image is not generally created from nothing but it originates from the currently dominating one, which has been formed for a long period of time: it is the so-called primary image. It is created as a result of the process of an assimilation of information from magazines, books on history, geographical studies, magazines and publications, and as a result of the process of studies and acquiring of experience during journeys (especially those since the youngest years). The second layer of the image, the so-called acquired, conscious one, is created as a result of marketing activities including promotional ones, that are conducted by various subjects (including national institutions: National Tourism Organizations, tourism companies, local authorities or any other institutions that support the development of tourism). The following internal elements among others contribute to an image of a tourist reception area:

- tourist identity of the residents and their social awareness,
- system of visual identification,

- tourist values,
- tourist development,
- technical infrastructure,
- condition of natural environment.

The social and cultural identity of a place and its residents is primarily determined by the history, culture and the system of values and traditions of a given area (in some places, however, there was a split between the identity of a place from the point of view of history and the social identity of its residents: e.g. the areas of south-west Poland, where people settled down who came from those places which are historically and culturally different).

The system of visual identification serves to reveal the idea of the image due to the fact that the susceptibility to pictures is significantly stronger with an average recipient than verbal arguments. For example, 80% of impressions, opinions, views and values of people is formed by visual sensations! The basic identifying elements include among others the name, symbol (logo) and colours.

The tourist image of an area should also be adapted to the nature of the occurring tourist values and based on those types of tourism which can be pursued owing to them. For this purpose, a natural and landscape as well as anthropogenic valorisation needs to be carried out to enable one to properly identify the most essential resources and to compare them with competitive areas.

The spatial development plan constitutes an essential element of tourist image. It constitutes the main instrument of preserving the traditional landscape, particularly in rural areas (in many touristically attractive communes, the main objectives of plans is not an intention to organize the building development or an attempt to undertake a genuine protection of the valuable natural and landscape values of the village, but the generation of as many as possible building plots).

Nevertheless, the dominating image of a given tourist area in the environment remains under the influence of various external factors, i.e.:

- marketing activities of other competitive areas,
- influence of mass communication media,
- common opinions and views (informal information),
- elements of recipients' perception,
- current creation of the tourist image by a given state.

An important factor that has an impact on the tourist image of a given area is the recipients' perception, i.e. the process of selection, organization and interpretation of information by a given individual which reaches them, in order to create a certain image of the surrounding world. The recipients' perception includes the following among others:

- selective attention,
- selective deformation,
- selective remembering.

Selective attention consists in the fact that people perceive stimuli which are connected with their current needs, or they expect such stimuli, or these are such stimuli that will positively surprise

them by being different from the usual condition. Selective deformation is the recipients' tendency to such a transformation of information so that it can possess a specific significance to them. Selective remembering is a tendency on the part of people to remember the information which confirms the legitimacy of their attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, it is evident that psychological processes cause that the same object can be differently perceived by individuals or a group.

As mentioned in the introduction, the institutions known as NTO: National Tourism Organizations are responsible for the creation of the tourist image of many states. They play an essential role in the realization of the tourist policy of numerous states. They are chiefly responsible for the tourist marketing of tourist reception states. They contribute through their activities to the creation of their proper image. The idea of their functioning will be presented in the further part of this article.

3. Purposes, tasks of National Tourism Organizations (NTO)

The National Tourism Organization (NTO) is a national tourist policy entity of a public and private nature (central government and local government nature), whose most important tasks include the following among others:

- formulation and implementation of marketing campaigns,
- international promotional activities,
- managing the promotional activities of foreign branches,
- drawing up and production of promotional publications,
- acting as a "link of cooperation" between the government and the private sector

(Borzyszkowski, 2005, p. 49).

The remaining objectives of NTO (that are also realized by NTA: National Tourism Organizations) the following are to be included among others:

- licensing of tourist activities,
- taking care of appropriate legal regulations,
- organization of trainings within the framework of the so-called tourist education,
- development of tourist product,
- tourist market research,
- keeping tourist statistics

(Marczak, Borzyszkowski, 2011, p. 142).

It is commonly accepted that entrusting a national tourist organization with marketing activities is favourable to an increased effectiveness of the use of funds. It offers the possibility to concentrate funds that are at the disposal of the national and local government administration and to obtain a financial support for economic entities and the local government for the realization of specific undertakings. The idea of the functioning of National Tourism Organizations, that is institutions which are responsible for a widely understood tourist marketing (especially promotional activities) of target countries, is chiefly based on cooperation between public and

private sectors. It is estimated that cooperation of this type brings definitely larger benefits than the promotional policy of each sector individually (Marczak, 2011, p. 40).

4. Examples of promotional campaigns that are realized by selected NTO

Many authors (including Borzyszkowski, 2005; Fedyk, 1999; Łopaciński, 1999; Panasiuk, 2001; Zawistowska, 1999) are of the opinion that widely understood promotion of tourism is the main task of NTO. It is first of all promotional campaigns that are the main instrument of the realization of the most important goals of NTO. They are understood as a set of coordinated promotional activities grouped around one topic or idea and oriented on the achievement of a specific goal. They include a widely popularized and intensive promotional action, whose period ranges from several months to several years.

The subject matter of promotional campaigns can be diversified. Very frequently, a part of campaigns realized constitute a “response” on the part of the NTO to unfavourable phenomena that weaken the arrival tourism. Marketing actions may also include the so-called “campaigns of tourist awareness”, whose chief purpose is to increase the degree of the knowledge of the issues of tourist economy and local communities.

The promotional campaigns need to be carefully planned and, on many occasions, prepared several years in advance. This allows one to widely popularize them and at the same time gives enough time for all the partners, including local authorities, tourist, cultural organizations or travel agencies, to prepare attractive programmes of tourist events.

The final assessment of campaigns is an important element of the creation and realization of campaigns. It is difficult by nature because an increased tourist traffic and receipts from tourism can be dictated by other factors. Nevertheless, such an assessment needs to be conducted in order to determine whether an action that carried out proved to be effective.

As it was previously mentioned, the subject matter of promotional campaigns can be diverse. One also needs to pay attention to the fact that NTOs use increasingly frequently in their campaigns those tourist products which for many years have been recognized as branded products (cf. Table 1).

Table 1. Branded products in selected promotional campaigns of selected NTO

No.	Country	Name of NTO	Main purposes and task	Branded products in promotional campaigns
1.	Austria	Österreich Werbung	<p>Positioning, development and taking care of a strong brand known as “Holidays in Austria”</p> <p>Implementation of innovative marketing activities aimed at positioning of Austria as a holiday destination on the most important markets of arrival tourism</p> <p>Partnership of the Austrian tourist branch and systematic research of markets, professional knowledge management concerning the destination and development of marketing</p>	<p>Brand “Holidays in Austria”: Austria presents as an exceptional country in three respects i.e.:</p> <p>a blend of tradition and modernity which forms an unusual relation (chiefly a diversity of cultures)</p> <p>an Austrian style of life (warmth, nice attitude to guests, connoisseurship of tastes)</p> <p>varied topography and climatic conditions which are favourable to leisure activities</p>
2.	The Czech Republic	Česka Centrala Cestovního Ruchu (CzechTourism)	<p>Presentation of the Czech Republic on the international and national tourist market as an interesting destination for tourist trips, and also as tourist country with rich natural and cultural values</p>	<p>Marketing activities to raise the awareness in the scope of the potential of national tourism</p> <p>Tourism and an extension of the material cultural heritage</p> <p>“Czech Delicacies”: discover the taste of the Czech Republic: campaigns which promote the Czech cuisine (e.g. the year 2002: “Year of the Czech Cuisine”)</p>
3.	France	L’Agence de développement touristique de la France (Atout	<p>Taking care of the quality of tourist services at home</p> <p>Promotion of the destination on the</p>	<p>Promotional campaigns that use such branded products as for example:</p>

		France)	<p>international tourist market</p> <p>Market analysis and research</p> <p>Organization of trainings addressed to foreign representatives of the industry</p>	<p>Castles over Loara</p> <p>Eiffel Tower</p> <p>Louvre</p> <p>French Riviera</p> <p>French Alps</p>
4.	Spain	Instituto de Turismo de España (TURESPAÑA)	<p>Formulation and implementation of marketing campaigns</p> <p>International promotional activities</p> <p>Managing the promotional activities of foreign branches</p> <p>Support for the marketing of branded tourist products abroad</p> <p>Cooperation with local authorities and the private sector</p>	<p>1998: “Bravo Spain” campaign: an increase of the competitiveness of Spain on the international tourist market</p> <p>“Visit Spain, visit Madrid”: a campaign which uses the brand of the “Real Madrid” Club and its footballers to promote the country and its capital</p>
5.	Germany	Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus (DZT)	<p>Increase of receipts from tourist export</p> <p>Creation of the image of Germany as an attractive and diversified destination of tourist trips</p> <p>Increase of the number of tourists</p> <p>Strengthening of the German economy</p>	<p>Two main lines of products:</p> <p>tourism in towns: culture, events</p> <p>holiday tourism</p> <p>They are implemented with the aid of the so-called topics of the year, e.g.:</p> <p>2000: “Listen and experience Bach”</p> <p>2008: castles, parks and gardens</p> <p>2009: “Active holiday in Germany”: style of life, walking tours and cycling trips”</p>

				<p>2010: "European Capital of Culture: - Ruhr.2010, Towns of culture in Germany"</p> <p>2011: "Health holidays in wellness & spas in Germany"</p>
6.	Poland	Polska Organizacja Turystyczna (POT)	<p>Preparation and publication of promotional materials</p> <p>Organization of national stands on tourist fairs, exhibitions, shows, congresses and seminars</p> <p>Popularization of knowledge about Poland as a touristically attractive state</p> <p>Carrying out of statistical and marketing analyzes, expert opinions and prognostic studies in the scope of tourism</p> <p>Ensuring the functioning and development the Polish Tourist Information System at home and all over the world</p> <p>Initiation and provision of opinions concerning plans and long-term programmes of promotion</p>	<p>2010: a marketing campaign "Let Us Promote Poland Together": one of its elements included a voyage of the "Fryderyk Chopin" sailing ship to European ports, e.g. in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Great Britain. This campaigns was realized under the working title "Chopin The Course – Sea of Offers"</p> <p>2010: a national marketing campaign "Beautiful East: Discover How Near It Is" entitled „The Beautiful East”, which used a number of branded tourist products that function in east Poland</p> <p>2011-2012: activities to promote the organization of the EURO 2012 in Poland</p>
7.	Serbia	Turistička Organizacija Srbije	<p>Promotion of tourism in the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Coordination of the activities of local tourist organizations</p> <p>Preparation and implementation of annual plans and programmes of promotional activities</p> <p>Organization of market</p>	<p>Marketing campaign "Active on the Danube River": showing the Danube River as an all-European tourist product, demonstrating the natural, cultural and historical richness of the Danube Region</p> <p>Presentation of Serbia in many towns in Germany (to the representatives of</p>

			<p>research connected with tourism for the promotion of tourism in Serbia</p> <p>Market research of in the area of conferences, fairs, sporting and cultural events</p>	tourist industry
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Source: Author's own research on the grounds of www.austriatourism.com; www.czechtourism.com; www.atout-france.fr; www.germany-tourism.de; www.tourspain.es; www.pot.gov.pl; www.turizam.merr.gov.rs.

The analysis above demonstrates the fact that branded tourist products are used in the promotional campaigns that are run by many NTOs. The structure of these products is quite diversified. Those branded products are most frequently used as objects of promotion that are connected among others with the following:

- tradition (e.g. Austria: a blend of tradition and modernity),
- culture (e.g. Austria: a diversity of culture, the Czech Republic: a cultural heritage),
- historical artistic output (e.g. Germany: referring to the works by J. SS. Bach, Poland: referring to the works by F. Chopin),
- cuisine (e.g. Austria: connoisseurship of tastes, the Czech Republic: the Czech cuisine),
- famous people (e.g. Spain: use of the image of footballers from the Real Madrid Club),
- natural values (e.g. Austria: favourable climatic conditions, Poland: areas of east Poland, Serbia: values of the Danube River),
- anthropogenic values (e.g. France: castles over Loara, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre),
- elements of tourist infrastructure (e.g. Germany: spa and wellness facilities),
- organization of various events (including concerts, festivals, sporting events: e.g. Poland: promotion of the organization of EURO 2012),
- individual types of tourism (e.g. active tourism, hiking, cycling tourism: e.g. Germany),
- widely understood environment-friendly activities (e.g. Serbia)

5. Conclusions

To conclude the current deliberations, it is to be stated that promotional campaigns have been recognized for many years now as one of the most effective ways of promotion on the market of tourist services. The special role in this regard is attributed to branded tourist products. The development of branded products based on the most important tourist values contributes to an improvement of the tourist image of a given country and thereby an increase of the competitiveness of its tourist offer. Branded products help to strengthen and raise the so-called perceived attraction (Majewski, 2000). In a spatial perspective, the brand is defined as a notion of a value that forms the image of a country or a region. The "Brand of America" may serve as an example here; it covers such countries rate as England, France, Germany, Japan, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Italy and South Korea (Anholt, 2005). The method of the so-called branding (creation of branded products) proved to be useful in the promotion of many countries with diversified levels of the development of tourism; these states became tycoons of the tourist business.

Branding was recognized as a very effective way to obtain as quickly as possible an improvement of the rank, quality and effects of selected tourist sectors.

The analysis presented above seems to confirm the first part of the research thesis accepted in the article, i.e. the active promotional actions of National Tourism Organizations in the states analyzed contributes to a significant extent to the creation of their positive tourist images; hence, it determines the development of arrival tourism. Germany may serve as a good example here, where in the year 2009 as compared with the year 2000, the size of tourist traffic increased by almost 27.4% to reach the value of 24.2 m. of tourist arrivals. A similar situation concerning the same research period can be observed in the Czech Republic (27.1%), Austria (18.9%), Spain (12.5%) and Serbia (an increase by 42.4% in the year 2009 in comparison with the year 2005). A dissimilar tendency can be observed in the case of two states i.e. France and Poland. In the year 2009, in comparison with the year 2000, the number of tourist trips to these states decreased by 3.9% and 31.6% respectively (UNWTO, 2010).

The analysis carried out also appears to confirm the second part of thesis accepted, i.e. that branded tourist products constitute one of the more important elements of promotional campaigns realized by NTOs. This is proved among others by the activities undertaken by the NTOs examined (cf. Table 1), which are presented in this article.

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TOURISM IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the EU-supported e-TALIA project which developed from the need for raising cultural awareness in the Hospitality and Leisure as well as in the service sector in general. First, we will present the findings regarding language and intercultural needs of SMEs in the hospitality and leisure sectors. Then, we will explain the results of the e-TALIA survey from 2010/2011, collaborative national surveys based on a commonly devised questionnaires conducted in five partner countries, whose aim was to determine the needs of SMEs in the Hospitality and Leisure sectors concerning training in the areas of language skills and intercultural awareness and also, to inquire about previous experiences and future interests and needs of these SMEs regarding e-Learning. Finally, we will present the outcome of the e-TALIA project, a blended course which integrates both language training and cross-cultural issues.

Nowadays we are experiencing an interdependency among countries in which international trade exchanges are constantly decreasing. However, cultural differences remain and so, it is of utmost importance to take them into account for developing good marketing strategies (Usunier 2000). Different cultures reveal an obvious lack of homogeneity and it is this factor that causes disputes between different cultural communities. Consequently, stereotypes are usually an unfortunate and unavoidable issue: "We can't avoid stereotypes for several reasons, because cultures stereotype themselves – to sell popular culture, to sell tourism, to idealise themselves and to contrast themselves favourably with perceived enemies" (Trompenaars 2007, p. 107). And although we cannot avoid stereotyping, what we can do is to benefit from cultural differences by developing the capacity to manage them once we have become aware of their existence (Lewis 2006).

In our present globalized professional world, networking with people from other cultures means not only to be skilled at technical and language levels but it is also important to have the capacity to understand ways to behave, to think and to communicate with others which are different from our own. When one doesn't know about cultural differences, misunderstandings can easily arise which, on many occasions, can even lead to a lack of success businesswise. However, if those differences are acknowledged and managed in a profitable way, they may become a competitive advantage.

Behaviours can experience a radical change when interacting when someone from a different culture. Therefore, cultural awareness becomes essential, i.e. one should be skilled enough as to have the capacity for behaving in a suitable and efficient way during an intercultural exchange. Besides, it is very important to be aware of our own culture (including values and prejudices), if we want to understand others'. However, this capacity would not be achieved unless we possess a number of personal traits such as, being open-minded, flexible, empathic, and good communicators; also, knowing how to react to uncertainty, and having the willingness to learn and the capacity to adapt without losing our own values.

Different authors have dealt with, and created cultural models for, the way in which cultures shape individuals such as, Hofstede (1997) or Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1989). Other authors (Kim 1988) have provided indicators to assess the level of intercultural adaptation such as, language level, motivation towards adaptation, and positive attitude towards the country to be visited, among others. However, the most important factor is the fact that cultural awareness cannot be acquired unless companies themselves acknowledge and support intercultural competencies (Aneas 2005). Furthermore, these should be an indispensable requirement for employment in certain economic sectors (Aneas, 2003). Unfortunately, we can surely affirm this is not the case nowadays at least it is not in most countries worldwide. In particular, professionals in the Tourism sector are characterized by a general unawareness of cultural issues as well as by a certain lack of foreign language competencies.

Tourism is surely one of the economic activities which is fully involved in a predominant multicultural environment (Aneas 2006). This is the reason why culture should be understood as a valuable strategic asset that should take a predominant role in the organization of the tourist sector. SMEs, in particular, must raise their cultural awareness, since cross-cultural competencies become a key factor to survival. Incapability to manage these competencies correctly may surely affect, and damage, SMEs seriously.

Upgrading skills in the tourism industry in Europe

In 1999 a working group under the European Council was established. The aim of the working group was to investigate how to improve training in order to upgrade skills in the tourism industry in Europe.

In the working group's final report from June 2001 the following summary of the investigation was given:

"The main learning and training needs regarding the principle categories of workforce of the different stakeholders in tourism, especially workers and managers of SMEs, show that tourism is on the one hand still characterised by a workforce with a relatively low level of skill for the majority of jobs in the basic sub-sectors (e.g. Horeca), in particular regarding SMEs. On the other hand there exists a new demand for additional skills, for example ICT, and the big players and larger enterprises have normally found ways and means to develop a skilled labour force. The principle obstacles encountered in upgrading skills are: lack of labour force and high level of staff turnover; the low image and particular working conditions of the tourism industry as a place to work, including seasonality; lack of basic qualification that could be upgraded; reduced competitiveness in micro-enterprises due to lacking development of labour."

Source: Follow-up given to the Council Conclusions of 21 June 1999, *Tourism and Employment FINAL REPORT OF WORKING GROUP B JUNE 2001*,
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/working_groups/finalreportb_june2001_en.pdf

The Council working group also observed that the tourism industry, while experiencing increased competition on quality, most countries at the same time experience severe skill gaps resulting in a vicious circle. Even though the young people in the industry were more skilled in foreign languages and IT, there was still an important lack of qualified labour and the existing and potential labour lack the skills needed to be the key factor in the improvement of the quality and competitiveness of the tourism product.

Based on the observations done in the working group the following scheme of learning needs in the Tourist sector by labour categories was developed:

Table 1: Learning needs on the Tourist sector by labour categories

All categories	Managers	Supervisors	Skilled craft workforce	Semi-skilled
Tourism	Computer skills	Basic Computer skills	Personal skills	Personal skills
New technologies	Business Planning/strategic planning	Human Resource Management	Problem solving	Technical skills (bar, kitchen, restaurant, cleaning.)
Quality	Strategic Alliances	Hygiene/Haccp	Basic computer skills	
Customer Care	Management Skills	Accounting	Induction training	In-house-training
Reception skills	Management through vision and values	Supervision skills		House-keeping training
Communications	Yield Management	Training skills		Induction training
Languages	Accounting			
Cross-Cultural understanding	Product development, innovation			
Team work	Marketing			
Project work	Sales			
Sustainable development	-Human Resource Management			
Entrepreneurship	-Destination management			
Safety and security within tourism enterprises				

First Aid	Project management Management skills to cope with the globalization reality Train the Trainer - Change Management			
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*Source: Follow up given to the Council Conclusions of 21 June 1999, Tourism and Employment
FINAL REPORT OF WORKING GROUP B JUNE 2001*

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/working_groups/finalreportb_june2001_en.pdf

Approximately 10 years later, in 2010, a Leonardo project e-TALIA (www.e-talia.net) was accepted by the EU Commission.

The E-TALIA project

The project partners are:

- COVENTRY UNIVERSITY (UK). Project coordinator. www.coventry.ac.uk
- ZWECKVERBAND VOLKSHOCHSCHULE PASSAU (DE). www.vhs-passau.de
- FLORIDA CENTRE DE FORMACIO, FLORIDA EDUCATION CENTRE (ES). www.florida.es
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- GLOBAL VILLAGE SP. Z.O.O. (PL). www.gv.edu.pl

The objectives of the e- TALIA project are:

To identify the specific language requirements and cultural awareness needs of the two economic sectors targeted Hospitality and Leisure, across Europe.

To build upon the innovative blended e-learning training model being currently used in the coordinating institution and work collaboratively with European partners.

To increase employment opportunities and facilitate mobility for people working or engaging in work placements / training in the selected industries.

In this way the e- TALIA project addresses some of the training needs identified in the Council Report from June 2001: Learning needs on the Tourist sector by labour categories:

All categories:

- Languages
- Cross-Cultural understanding
- Managers / supervisors / skilled workforce:
- Computer skills

- Training skills (also semi-skilled workforce)

I. Identification of the specific language requirements and cultural awareness needs: The e-TALIA country report

The e-TALIA report from 2011 is based on a survey conducted in 5 countries. The aim of the survey was to determine the needs of SMEs in the hospitality and leisure sectors concerning training in the areas of language skills and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, the survey inquired about previous experiences and future interests and needs of these SMEs regarding e-Learning.

Language and cultural problems observed

The responses from Germany, Poland and Spain confirmed that there is a need for English language training in these countries, which was expected because this language is the international *lingua franca* in all economic sectors. In the case of Ireland, there is a recognition that English language training for non-Irish staff would be of value. The overall results indicate that German language training is also necessary in four of the five countries surveyed.

Language problems observed

When analyzing the companies' international scope compared with the language problems observed in the 5 countries, the following pattern is observed as indicated in table 2 and figure 1:

Table 2

Language problems observed – international scope

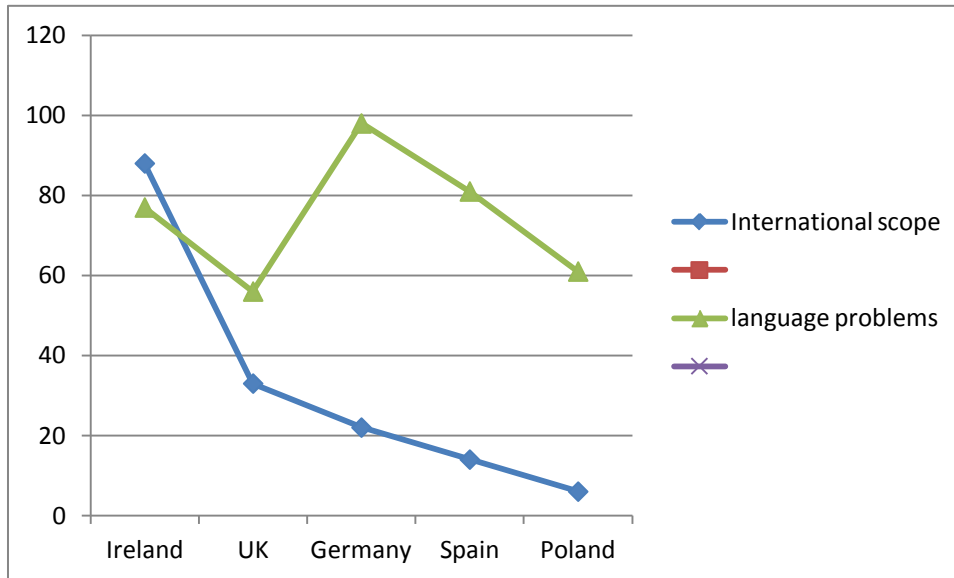
Germany	Ireland	Poland	Spain	UK
2% state that they never encounter language problems. A majority of 68% says that they sometimes encounter language difficulties and a mere 30% answer that they regularly have these problems	23% state that they never encounter language problems. A majority of 70% says that they sometimes encounter language difficulties and a mere 7% answer that they regularly have these problems.	39% state that they never encounter language problems. 61% says that they sometimes encounter language difficulties. 0% answer that they regularly have these problems.	19% state that they never encounter language problems. 65% says that they sometimes encounter language difficulties. 16% answer that they regularly have these problems.	44% state that they never encounter language problems. 49% says that they sometimes encounter language difficulties. 7% answer that they regularly have these problems.
Geographical scope	Geographical scope	Geographical scope	Geographical scope	Geographical scope

National 78%	National 13%	National 94%	National 86%	National 67%
International 22%	International 88%	International 6%	International 14%	International 33%

Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

Figure 1

Country: Language problems observed – international scope



Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

In Ireland, with high international scope – 88% of the companies - the survey shows that 77% of the companies experience language problems sometimes or regularly. This observation can be due to many foreigners working in the industry in Ireland or that the visitors coming to Ireland are from many non English-speaking countries. However, this observation needs to be investigated further.

In the UK, the international scope is lower, which might be due to the higher percentage of companies that never experience language problems. However, compared with the international scope (33%), 54% of the companies experience language problems. The reason may be either the fact that many foreigners work in the industry in the UK, or that there is a potential for international visits in the UK not yet taken advantage of. Surely, this is an interesting issue that deserves further research.

In Germany, the international scope is again lower, but only 2% percent of the companies in the survey never experience language problems. One reason might be the lack of language skills in the industry in general. Another reason might lie in the fact that a potential for international visits is not taken into the companies' scope considerations. Nevertheless, more thorough research would be needed to confirm these observations.

In Spain, the international scope is even lower, 14%. Despite this, the percentage of companies that experience language problems is 81%. Again, this observation can be due either to a lack of language skills in the industry in general, or to the fact that a huge potential for international visits is not taken into the companies' scope considerations, although further research would be needed.

In Poland, the international scope is more or less non-existing: 6%. But still, 61% of the companies sometimes experience language problems. The reasons that may be affirmed would match those already indicated above for Germany and Spain.

Cultural problems observed

When analyzing the companies' international scope compared with the cultural problems observed in the 5 countries, the following pattern is observed, as indicated in table 3 and figure 2:

Table 3

Cultural problems observed – international scope

Germany	Ireland	Poland	Spain	UK
78% stated that they had never experienced intercultural difficulties and 22% said that they sometimes had..	66% stated that they had never experienced intercultural difficulties and 34% said that they sometimes had.	74% stated that they had never experienced intercultural difficulties and 26% said that they sometimes had.	86% stated that they had never experienced intercultural difficulties and 8% said that they sometimes had and 5% reported regular problems.	69% stated that they had never experienced intercultural difficulties and 31% said that they sometimes had.
Geographical scope National 78% International 22%	Geographical scope National 13% International 88%	Geographical scope National 94% International 6%	Geographical scope National 86% International 14%	Geographical scope National 67% International 33%

Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

In Ireland, with a high international scope – 88% of the companies - the survey shows that only 34 % of the companies experience cultural problems (77% of the companies experience language problems) sometimes. This observation can be due to a rather low cultural awareness in the companies, so that language problems are blamed for most of the problems that occur. But this observation needs to be investigated further.

In the UK, with a 33% international scope, the awareness of cultural problems is higher (31 %) and very much in line with their international scope, but still lower than the 54% of the companies that experience language problems. The observed gap between the cultural and language problems needs to be investigated further in order to see if this gap is due to a lack of cultural awareness.

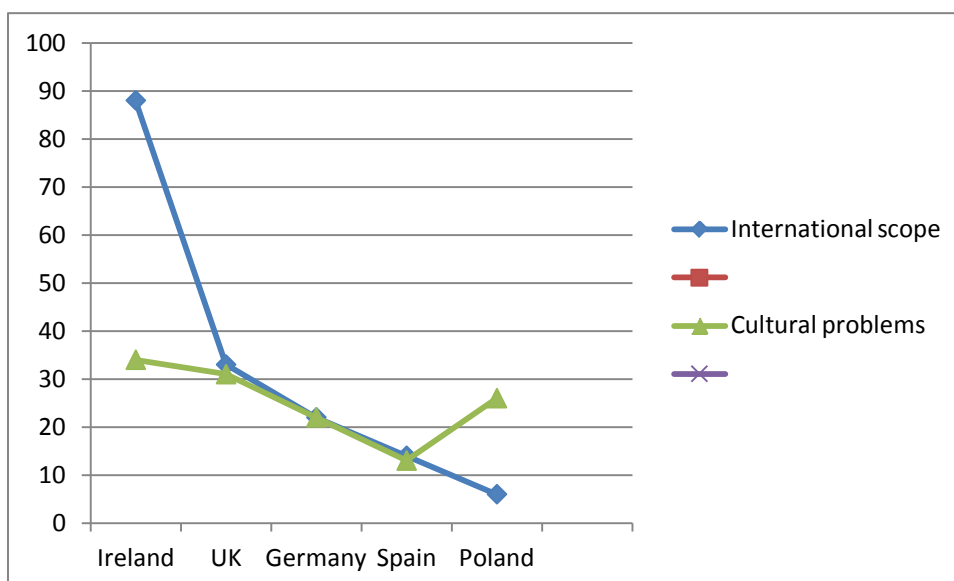
In Germany, the international scope is 22%, which corresponds to the results on experiencing cultural problems (22%). However, 98% of the companies report language problems. As with the UK, a more thorough research on this gap between language and cultural problems may reveal whether the lack of cultural awareness is the reason.

In Spain, the international scope is pretty low, 14%. The results on cultural problems show a corresponding percentage of 13%. However, as was the case in the previous countries, an important number of companies report language problems (81%).

In Poland, there is hardly any international scope: 6%, but the observed cultural problems percentage is 26%. Maybe the reason is that there is a higher cultural awareness in an area with low international scope compared to the other countries analyzed. But further research would be needed to prove this theory.

Figure 2

Country: Cultural problems observed – international scope

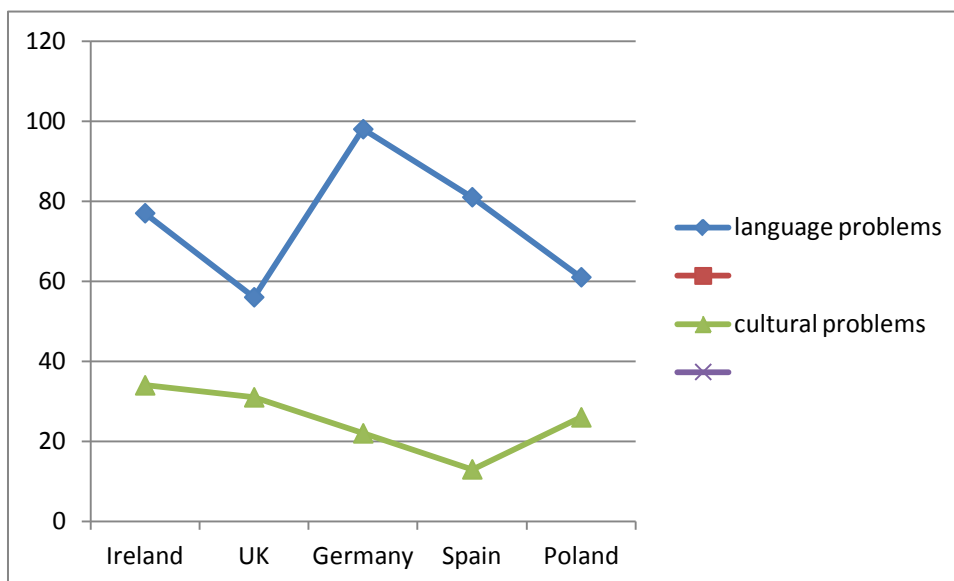


Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

As mentioned above, further investigation needs to be carried out in order to explain the differences between the observed level of language problems and cultural problems. This is also indicated in figure 3 that shows the differences between observed language and cultural problems in the countries listed after international scope.

Figure 3

Countries listed after international scope: The differences between observed language and cultural problems



Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

As indicated in figure 3, the gap between the level of language problems compared to that for cultural problems is shortest in the UK and at nearly the same level in Germany and Spain.

However, language is certainly organized through rules which are based on cultural use (Aneas & Sandín 2009). Consequently, a language cannot be learned isolated from the culture it belongs to.

II. ICT–skills (e-learning) and training modes identified: e-TALIA country report

In the EU Council report from 2001 the work group concluded that there still seems to be an important need for improving the general level of formal education in tourism to reduce the skills gaps identified. The learning needs are primarily treated for tourism in general and for the following labour categories: Managerial, Supervisory, Skilled/craft workforce, and Semi-skilled workforce.

The findings in the e-TALIA report show the following picture after 10 years:

Table 4

Training offered – e-TALIA country report

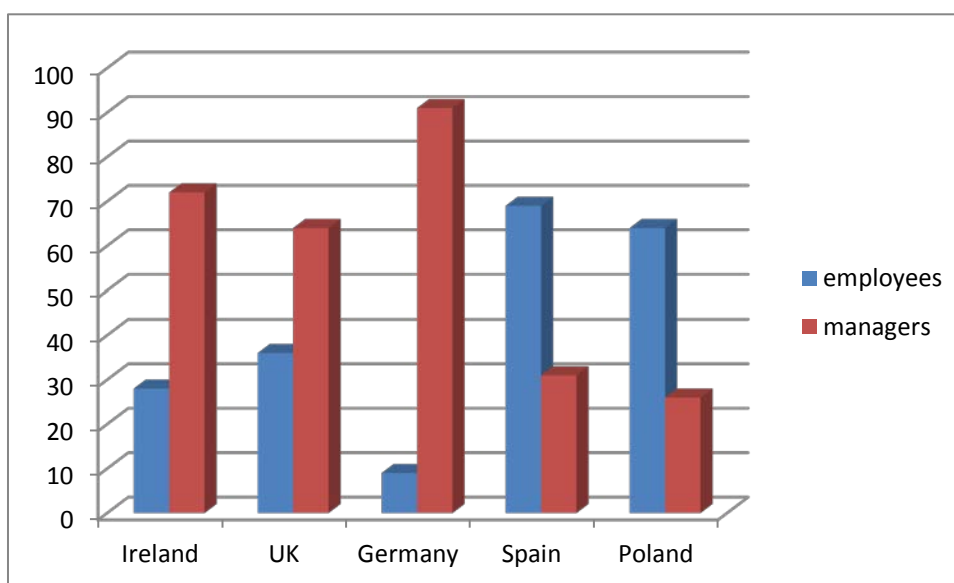
Germany	Ireland	Poland	Spain	UK
61% offered training	95% offered training	45% offered training	65% offered training	89% offered training
Target group: 9% employees 91% managers/owner	Target group 28% employees 72% managers/owner	Target group 71% employees 29% managers/owner	Target group 69% employees 31% managers/owner	Target group 36% employees 64% managers/owner

Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

As shown in table 4 and in figure 3, a rather high percentage of the companies offer yearly training. However, the main target group for training in Germany, Ireland and the UK is managers and owners.

Figure 4

Country listed after training offered: training participants – e-talia country report



Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

Table 5 below indicates the formality of the training (external/ in-house):

Table 5

In company / external training – e-TALIA country report

Germany	Ireland	Poland	Spain	UK
In-company training had been offered in 54% of the cases and 46% had been offered in external training	In-company training had been offered in 51% of the cases and 49% had been offered in external training	mainly in-company training 93% and merely 7% in external training	In-company training had been offered in 50% of the cases and 50% had been offered in external training	In-company training had been offered in 40% of the cases and 60% had been offered in external training
Target group: 9% employees 91% managers/owner	Target group 28% employees 72% managers/owner	Target group 71% employees 29% managers/owner	Target group 69% employees 31% managers/owner	Target group 36% employees 64% managers/owner

Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

E-learning could be a way to offer in-house formal training to both managers and employees, although this possibility is rather seldom used. The e-TALIA survey provides the following picture:

Table 6

E-learning experience – e-TALIA country report

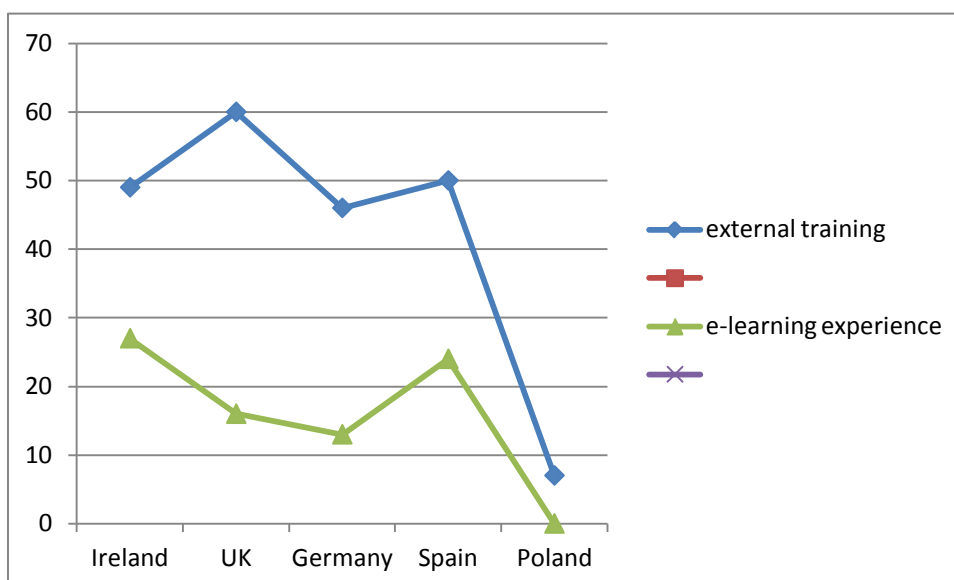
Germany	Ireland	Poland	Spain	UK
87% stated that they had no experience whatsoever in e-learning. 13% had some.	73% stated that they had no experience whatsoever in e-learning. 27% had some.	No e-learning or blended learning courses were mentioned. E-learning in this sector is still at a very early stage of development.	76% stated that they had no experience whatsoever in e-learning. 24% had some.	84% stated that they had no experience whatsoever in e-learning. 16% had some.

Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

This picture is combined with external training provided in figure 5.

Figure 5

Country listed after level of providing training: e-learning experience – external training offered



Source: e-TALIA country report own data processing www.e-talia.net

In the e-TALIA countries, the introduction of a formal e-learning language module could therefore be seen as a way to overcome some of the existing learning gaps in the tourism sector by combining in-house and external training.

e-TALIA project: Bridging the gap for SMEs

Over 10 years have passed since the European Council published their report on Tourism and Employment and unfortunately, we must admit that very little has changed on a general basis. The present economic crisis has magnified this problem, as SMEs are nowadays focusing all their efforts on both profitability and minimizing the risk of closing down their businesses. Consequently, lack of competencies or a qualified labour force don't seem to be a major issue, which goes against the conclusions of the above-mentioned report.

It is in this course of events that e-TALIA project was developed. A group of European institutions agreed on the need to help SMEs in order to bridge the gap between traditional tourist businesses and the new concept of international Tourism. The main goal was to develop flexible blended training in order to improve the language and intercultural competencies of professionals in the Hospitality and Leisure sectors.

As the e-TALIA survey confirmed, language barriers exist in all the countries analysed, especially when dealing with English as a foreign language, although German and French also seem to cause a number of misunderstandings in a few cases. As a result, and taking into consideration that English is the *lingua franca* of business exchanges worldwide, a language course was created that could cater for both English and German, as it was also mentioned by the surveyed participants.

In order to design this training programme, a number of constraints had to be considered. Firstly, we are dealing with non-formal learning and for this reason the course curriculum had to provide reasonable content for a short length of time. Secondly, SMEs may not have a reasonable availability of ICT tools that trainees could make use of. Thirdly, potential trainees may not be happy with learning through an online course, or may not even have the skills to deal with online learning and consequently, may show a rejection towards it. Finally, the language level targeted

should be basic so as to provide unskilled labour force with the minimum language tools that would help them overcome a number of barriers when dealing with clients and so, would help them develop their everyday tasks at work more smoothly. Therefore, the challenge was to create a blended course that at the same time would be attractive enough to appeal to the specific target; would be flexible enough for tight working timetables; and would integrate cultural and language issues.

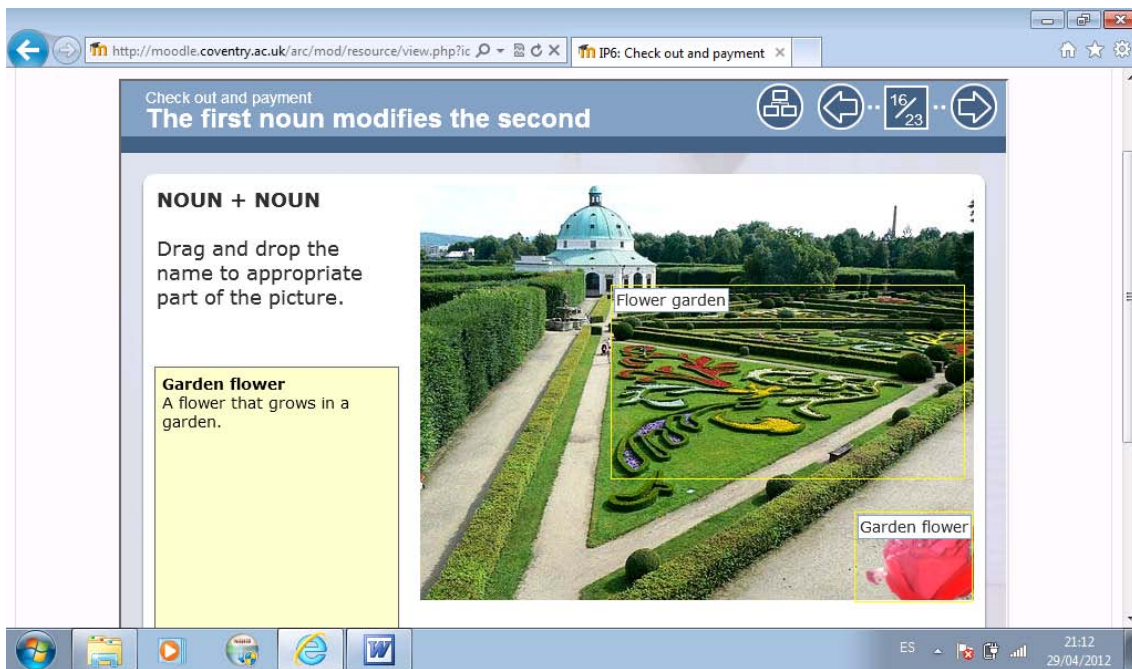
Language basics

The e-TALIA survey revealed that about 75% of the polled people have experienced language problems either sometimes or regularly. This is surely a decisive factor that led to opt for a language course developed at a very basic level (either A1 or A2 levels depending on the target trainee been addressed) together with the fact that SMEs may not get involved in training as actively as big concerns do. Therefore, the language objective is to focus on developing trainees' communication skills at a basic level, mainly listening and speaking, in both English and German.

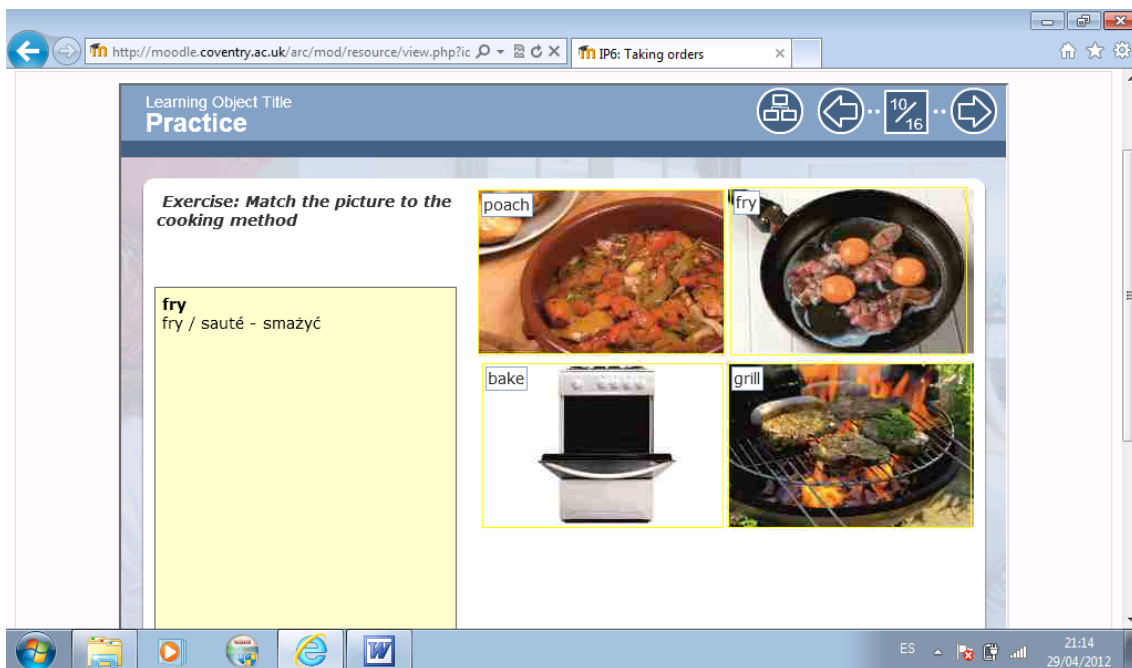
Being a blended course, a number of face-to-face sessions must be allocated so that trainees experience the challenge of communicating in the target language with their teacher. It is at these sessions when trainees are entailed to make the most of their online learning by putting into practice a number of learned phrases and specific vocabulary through role-plays and context-based tasks. However, it is not only during these sessions when trainees and teachers have a close contact. Throughout the online learning period, teachers take the role of facilitators and are available whenever problems may arise.

Concerning the structure and contents of the course, the main challenge was to make it as appealing and practical as possible, always bearing in mind that the target group consisted of people who don't have much free time – and so, would rather use their leisure time doing other activities –; and who may not have an extensive education background and for this reason, the tasks and especially, the explanations shouldn't be too grammatical. A number of examples will be presented below to show how the information was presented to the target trainees in a simple and clear way:

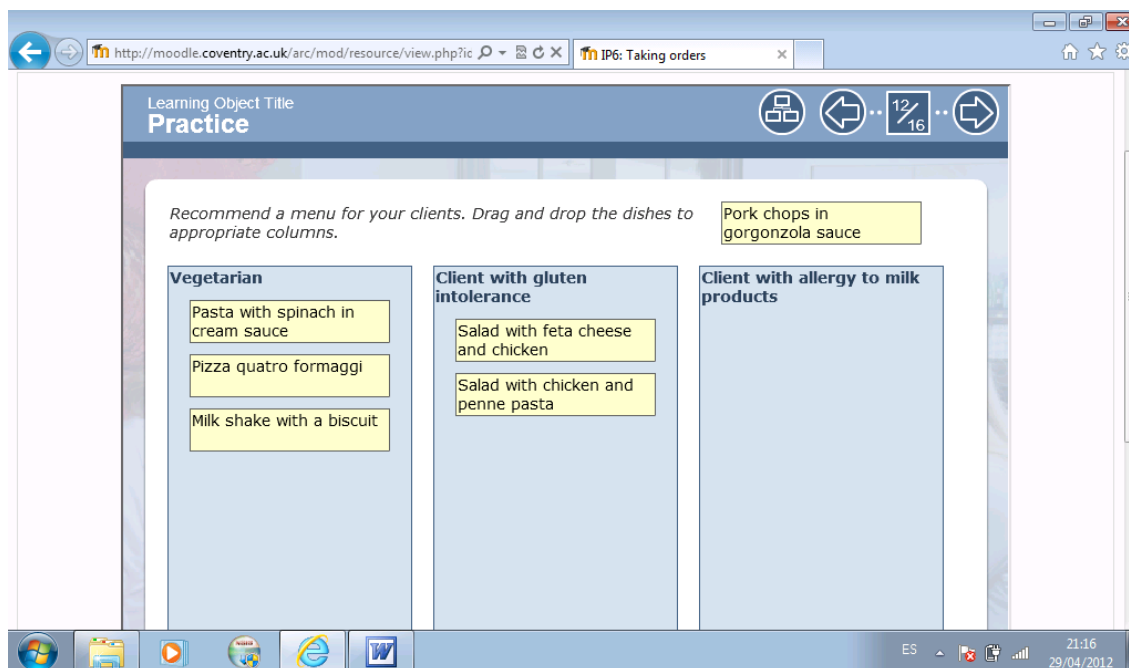
Making use of pictures to explain complex grammatical rules (target trainees are not language experts)



Making use of pictures to make them understand terminology that might become complex to explain at such a basic level, e.g. ways of cooking:



Making use of interactive practice in order to make them become aware of sensitive issues such as, special needs:



Making use of a short explanation is sometimes enough to supply the required information:



In sum, the objective was to put into practice the *learning by doing* pedagogy so that without resorting to complex grammatical explanations or long definitions, pictures and images would show it all.

The virtual learning environment

In our present ICT society it is shocking to find out that about 80% of potential trainees surveyed in the e-TALIA countries stated that they have never been involved in online learning and therefore, have no experience in this kind of courses. Furthermore, in some cases there is no availability of PCs or laptops for trainees to learn while at work. And besides, a major problem is their difficult working schedules. Therefore, trying to make those schedules compatible with learning programmes or allocating some hours of the trainees' working time to online learning could not be considered. Moreover, in a few cases, surveyed participants were reluctant to online training but instead, showed a preference for face-to-face learning (e.g. Spanish survey). As a result, a key issue was to design and implement an online platform that could be as simple and user-friendly as possible, apart from being appealing and interactive and also, efficient from a pedagogic point of view. At the same time the virtual learning environment – used for blended learning - can therefore be seen as a way of combining in-house and external training, which fits the competence development pattern in the tourism sector.

In order to design the learning materials, the authoring tool Xerte was used to create the various learning objects which every unit consists of. The learning object here must be understood as an independent element which can cover a specific topic, including activities, self-assessment, and many other tasks. The learning objects were then uploaded onto a Moodle platform based in Coventry University, which is the project coordinating institution.

Cross-cultural approach

Bearing in mind the results of the e-TALIA survey, two objectives are targeted concerning cross-cultural issues. On the one hand, to raise awareness of the term, and the need of, cultural awareness is a must. The results of the survey were conclusive: the polled participants were not able to establish the relationship between their language problems and their cultural unawareness. On the other hand, the course intends to help trainees become aware of specific interactive situations and challenges when dealing with clients belonging to other cultures. The result has been a course curriculum where cross-cultural issues are fully integrated within the language course so that students become culturally aware without realizing of those cultural issues they are actually dealing with.

By introducing cross-cultural issues throughout the course – and very important, without making a reference to them as such (the survey results showed that people didn't understand the term *cross-cultural*) – and integrating them in different tasks assigned to the course units, the focus is on making trainees comprehend diversity. Besides, it is a must to make them understand that cultural problems may arise not only through language barriers but also, through non-verbal communication, e.g. body language, talking distance, etc.


Different topics were thus presented throughout the course in a very visual way so that course users could become aware straight away of the intended concept and terminology in the targeted language. A few examples will illustrate this point:

Making use of pictures in order to acquire cultural knowledge (it is the easiest way to grasp a concept):

Check in and price
Vocabulary

Here are some useful words and phrases

ID
buffet breakfast
continental breakfast
English breakfast



One step further is also making use of pictures but introducing a short sentence with information:

Talking about dishes
National dishes

UK Spain Germany Ireland Poland

Most countries have a national dish. They form a part of a country's identity and tourists usually want to try them.

Learn how to describe your national dish to your international clients.



paella

It is made of rice with various ingredients: chicken, rabbit, vegetables or seafood.

Making use of videos both with native and non-native English speakers in order to inform on different issues, e.g. a national speciality:

http://moodle.coventry.ac.uk/arc/mod/resource/view.php?id=... IP6: Talking about dishes

Talking about dishes
Watch, listen and read

- Can you tell me what *bigos* is?

- Yes, it is a traditional Polish dish. It is a kind of stew. It consists of vegetables and meat. Bigos is made with sauerkraut and white cabbage, various kinds of meat and sausages, mushrooms and prunes. It is seasoned with pepper, bay leaf, pimento. It is eaten with bread, usually in winter. It is served hot. Bigos is best when reheated.




Windows taskbar: ES 21:20 29/04/2012

Making use of listening / reading activities, e.g. advising on how to write a menu correctly:

http://moodle.coventry.ac.uk/arc/mod/resource/view.php?id=... IP6: Talking about dishes

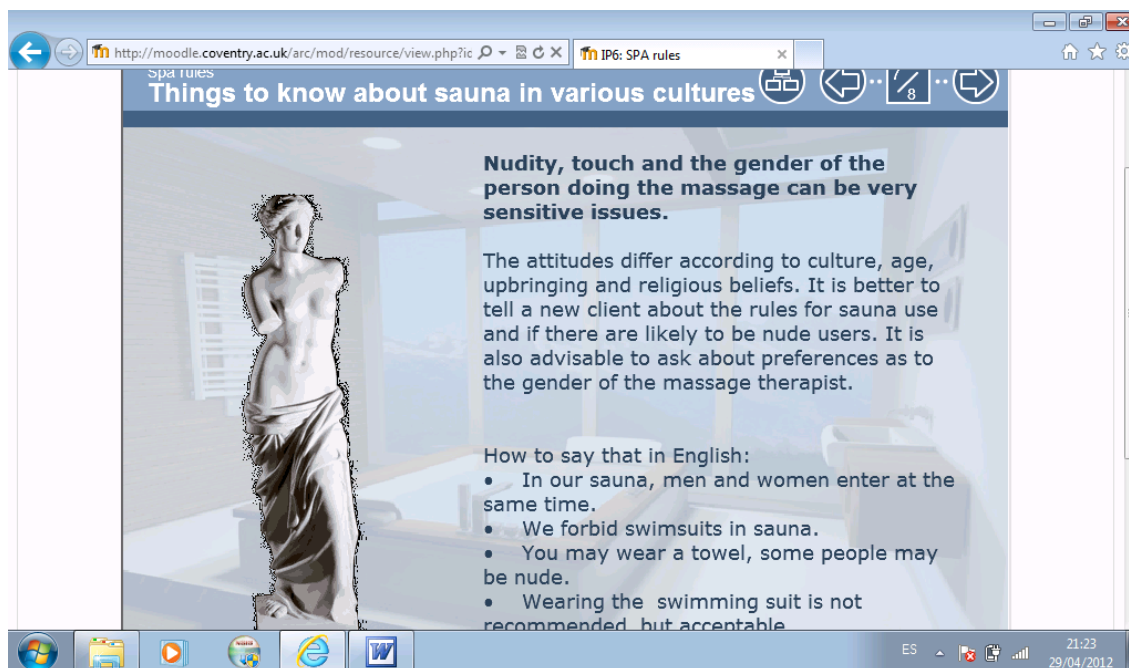
Listen and read

- Do not use phrases like "Grandma's style", "traditional way". Your international client does not know your grandma's cooking or local traditions.
- Be careful with spelling. One letter makes a big difference like in: lamb-lamp, crab-crap, dumping - dumpling, main curse - main course, desert- dessert and many others.
- Remember the KISS principle - "keep it short and simple", let the food talk and not the menu.



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Making use of text to explain cultural differences:



Evidently, these cross-cultural tips as well as the other language tasks progress in difficulty, as can be seen in the examples above.

Learning to learn

The e-TALIA course has yet another important objective i.e. to make trainees acquainted to acquiring information on the Internet so that at the same time, they can get used to benefiting from online tools. In that way, course users could carry on with their learning process once the course is over.

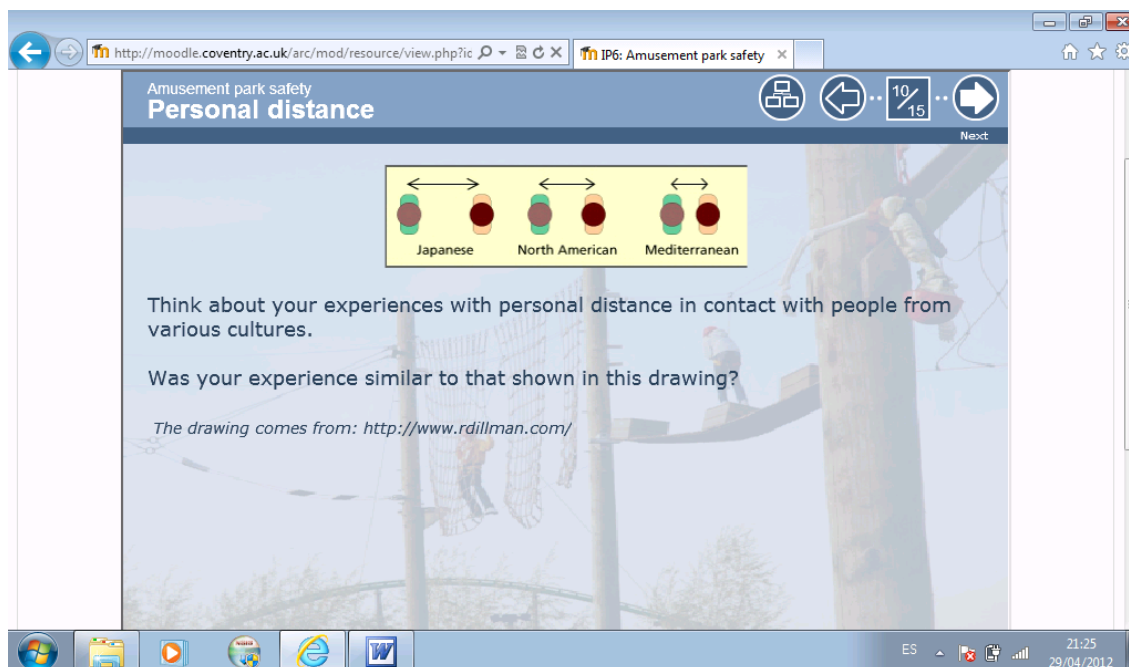
In order to help trainees develop this competence, three lines were chosen:

Introducing a *Webquest* in every unit of the course:



A number of YouTube video links are offered to trainees so that they can do more practice on the subject of the lesson in question. YouTube was chosen because it is well-known by most people and for this reason, it was considered as an optimal tool that participants would make use of. And very important, once there, they could develop an interest in searching further.

Referring to real Internet sources so that trainees could get a direct link to authentic information:



Interacting in the face-to-face sessions with the teacher and the other course participants: by exchanging information, trainees learn from each other; likewise, the teacher must take the role of facilitator guiding them in those exchanges and indeed, making sure that this way of learning is reinforced.

Course accreditation

Certificates or Diplomas are always valued by both trainees and the companies they belong to. The e-TALIA partners bore this in mind from the start of the project and at present, a Certificate is being developed that will be submitted to the course participants. As there are a number of progress tests that trainees must submit and also, a final examination that they will do at the end of the course, trainees will end up achieving a course grade. This grade will appear in the Certificate together with the competencies which have been acquired in order to make it more valuable. For those participants who don't pass the course test an Attendance Certificate will be submitted so that it will become evidence of their effort at least.

However, this accreditation cannot be done officially because every country observes different requirements, even though there should be a standardization which is already being encouraged by the European Council.

Conclusions

Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure cannot be understood isolated from a multicultural environment and as a result, foreign languages and cultural awareness are indispensable for becoming a qualified professional in this economic sector.

The 2001 European Council Report, whose results were described in this paper, proved that Hospitality and Leisure need training in foreign languages and cultural communication. However, the reality is that SMEs employees show neither a fluency in foreign languages nor knowledge of other cultures. And what is more important, they don't relate language and culture and therefore, they cannot relate language barriers with cultural clashes.

The e-TALIA project aims to bridge the gap so that SMEs can become more competitive especially in the present global economic circumstances. This has been done by means of a blended course through the cooperation of 5 partner countries, i.e. United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Ireland, and Spain.

There were a number of obstacles that needed to be overcome such as, the scarce free time that potential trainees may bring to the course and also, the fact that using working time for training had to be discarded in most cases. Concerning information technology, the most important problems were the unavailability of PCs or laptops in the premises; the likely trainees' inexperience in online courses; and in some cases, even an evident reluctance to online training in favour of face-to-face traditional learning (e.g. in Spain).

Taking all the above into consideration, a course was created whose main features are:

- Having a very simple layout and so, being user-friendly.
- Having an attractive design by giving importance to colours, styles and images.
- Having a tool that can be used for in-house training as well as for external training.
- Being interactive, as tasks are submitted for assessment and also, feedback is sent to trainees with additional commentaries.

Making use of a practical pedagogy so that pictures and images show as much as possible the intended learning object without grammatical explanations. In this way, trainees can grasp the meaning more easily and retain the learnt concepts and phrases later on.

Integrating cultural issues and language learning through pictures and images, otherwise trainees would not be able to comprehend the intended message starting from such a basic level of language.

Receiving an accreditation so that not only those trainees who pass the final exam but also those who work through it are rewarded with certificates, although of a different kind. However, official accreditation has been discarded because of important differences in professional official accreditations in the partner countries.

It is a fact that those SMEs that work within an international scope generally show higher cultural awareness. However, it is also a fact that a good number of SMEs are losing business opportunities due to their lack of foreign languages and cultural competencies. It is for this

reason that certain endeavours such as, the e-TALIA course arise to minimize business risks by helping these typically family concerns to become more qualified.

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WWW.E-TALIA.NET

II. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS IN THE FACE OF CRISIS.

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Abstract

The analysis undertaken in this article concerns the relation between destination management organizations and crisis situations, which have an influence on the tourist sector, in particular in the perspective of the current economic crisis. On the one hand, an attempt to assess the influence of the crisis situations on the modern DMOs was made (and thereby to define how this phenomenon influences the functioning of these entities), and on the other hand a presentation was provided of those activities that are undertaken to limit the negative influence of the crisis on the destination. In the paper, the scientific literature was analyzed concerning the problem researched including literature concerning crisis situations in tourism and in destination management organizations as well as their responsibilities (first of all concerning critical management). The results of observations and the research carried out by the authors in the selected destination management organizations had an essential significance for the value of the publication.

Keywords: destination, management, organizations, crisis

Biography:

Mr Jacek Borzyszkowski, PhD, is a lecturer at the Koszalin University of Technology. He specializes in tourist policy and in organizational structures for tourism.

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Introduction

21st century is a unique period. This is not only the further civilization development which includes practically all the spheres of modern economy and also tourism. These are the years of the frequent occurrence of those events which constitute the potential sources of turbulences in the sector of tourism. Tourism in 21st century is particularly affected by events of a crisis nature. The terrorist activity was fairly strongly activated (attacks on New York and Washington on 11

Sept. 2001, the bomb attack in Bali, the attacks in Madrid in the year 2004). Tourism is also struggling against crises of a health nature, including the foot and mouth disease (2001), the SARS epidemic (2003), the bird's influenza (2002). The recent years is the occurrence of a phenomenon which is particularly dangerous to the present-day tourism: the economic crisis. It seems to be particularly essential. It may appear that it will exert an influence on the tourist economy not only of one state or region but the whole world. It should be explicitly emphasized that among all the critical situations that occurred in the first years of 21st century it has definitely the largest influence on the individual tourist destinations. In connection with the fact that it affects many countries all over the world, it can be assumed that to a considerable extent this will have a noticeable effect on the tourist markets of the most important destinations.

The individual destinations cannot remain indifferent to this type of situations. The tourist policy, which is realized on different levels (national, regional or local), provides the possibility of proper influence on the individual spheres of tourist markets both from the side of the tourist supply and demand. The essential role should be attributed to the present-day organizational structures connected with tourism, need have to adapt themselves to the continuously changing tourist market. An appropriate and effective adaptation to the changing tendencies in the modern tourist economy should also be "expected" from them. Those organizations which are to a considerable extent responsible for this problem are generally known as destination management organizations (DMOs). A review of the literature demonstrates that modern DMOs are held responsible not only for strictly marketing activities. Their scope of responsibilities is substantially broader; it also includes issues connected with the management of the destination or creation of the appropriate environment. The first years of 21st century show that the realization of the further issue: crisis management "is expected" from DMOs.

Destination Management Organizations and the crisis

Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). DMOs are defined by the World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) as (...) „organisations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations" (Survey..., 2004, p. 4). According to J. Majewski [2007, p. 178], these are "(...) organizations which are responsible for the coordination and support of the activities of all those entities which are involved in the marketing of destinations". In turn, C. Collins and D. Buhalis define DMOs as suppliers of IT products and services for customers, agents and suppliers in tourist sectors (J. Mendling, M. Rausch, G. Sommer, 2005, p. 2). According to U. Gretzel, D.R. Fesenmaier, P. Formica, J.T. O'Leary (2006, p. 116), DMOs are non-profit entities, whose purpose is to generate visits by tourists to a given area.

According to A. M. Morrison, P. M. Bruen and D. J. Anderson, DMOs perform five fundamental functions, i.e. they are:

- an "economic driver" generating new income, employment, and taxes contributing to a more diversified local economy;
- a "community marketer" communicating the most appropriate destination image, attractions, and facilities to selected visitor markets;
- an "industry coordinator" providing a clear focus and encouraging less industry fragmentation so as to share in the growing benefits of tourism;

- a “quasi-public representative” adding legitimacy for the industry and protection to individual and group visitors;
- a “builder of community pride” by enhancing quality of life and acting as the chief “flag carrier” for residents and visitors alike (Presenza, 2005, p. 2).

The present-day DMOs perform a number of functions related to management and a broadly understood development of tourism in a given destination. It is to be emphasized that the scope of the responsibilities of many DMOs has been significantly extended in the recent years. Those factors that contributed to changes to DMOs were not only the events from the second half of the 20th century, such as the technological progress or the development of the tourist industry. One needs to bear in mind those events that exerted an influence on the world tourist economy in the first years of the 21st century, e.g. terrorist attacks, climate changes, a slow-down of the economic development, health epidemics (including SARS). It is in particular events with a negative impact on the economy that resulted in a number of changes in the approach to the proper management of the tourist sectors. The occurrence of a number of crisis conditions had a significant impact on the operations of many entities including DMOs (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica, 2006, p. 116). As stated by P. Pike (2004, p. 157), the phenomenon of crises is not new, whereas it is only in the recent years that it has become the subject of broader analyses and studies, including the functioning of DMOs. Hence, it can be accepted that DMOs in the first years of the 21st century are facing new challenges. Many of them, apart from strictly marketing activities, had to extend the scope of their responsibilities. It is generally accepted that the present-day DMOs realize many other tasks, and the most important ones include the following:

product management: including consultancy, booking services, personnel development, product development, management of the region: building of partnership in the destination, sustainable development, attracting new investors etc. (Batarow, Bode, Jacobsem 2008, p. 4).

It is to be clearly emphasized that the area of the activities of DMOs is constantly changing. This was observed among others by U. Wagenseil (2010), who indicates three basic spheres of the operations of DMOs, i.e. marketing, product management and the so-called creation of the adequate environment. These changes were aptly perceived by U. Gretzel, D.R. Fesenmaier, P. Formica, J.T. O’Leary (2006, p. 117), who specified the following basic challenges for DMOs:

- an adaptation to technological changes,
- management of expectations,
- “from the marketing of the destination to the management of the destination”,
- new levels of competition,
- recognition of creative partnership as a new life style,
- finding new ways to achieve success.

Negative events have an impact on the destination itself but also on DMOs: among others, concerning the decisions made by their bodies. The managers of DMOs need to control the operational process of the organization and thus to be able to identify any critical situations that may have an impact on the destination. Furthermore, they need to prepare and implement those tools that prevent any negative impacts (Spyriadis, Fletcher, Fyall, Carter, p. 15).

The occurrence of various phenomena that are related to a crisis forces destinations to undertake specific actions aimed at a minimization of the effects of a crisis. Those organizations that are responsible for the development of tourism in a destination during the occurrence of crisis situations possess numerous possibilities to interact with the market and consequently to limit the effects of a crisis. The most important actions include the following:

- an increase of the budget for marketing activities,
- an introduction of temporary tax reliefs and incentives,
- an introduction of an extended offer of loans and special funds,
- launching of direct campaigns in the target markets,
- a stimulation of a growth of the employment,
- creation of packages with a special pricing policy,
- creation of partnerships with the neighbouring regions,
- support of the national tourist market

(Morrison, 2010, p. 3).

Generally speaking, these activities come down to a broadly understood crisis management. As stated by M. Regester and J. Larkin (2002, p. 122), “the core of crisis management consists in ‘finding, cultivation and harvesting’ of a success that may potentially result from a crisis”. The primary assumptions in relation to crisis management concern among others stating that the crisis is in fact occurring and undertaking adequate measures aimed at redressing the situation. An effective crisis management strategy allows a reduction of the potential risk (Gatsou, Gray, Niininen, 2009, p. 193).

To conclude, it is to be emphasized that a broad range of those actions that are at the disposal of DMOs in the era of a crisis makes it possible to undertake a number of measures that may (or even: should) limit the effects of the crisis in the organization and in the destination.

Analysis of the operations of selected Destination Management Organizations in the face of a crisis in the light of studies

Destination Management Organisations may occur in one of the following forms:

national tourism authorities (NTAs) or organizations (NTOs), responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level, regional, provincial or state DMOs (RTOs), responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province, local DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town (Survey..., 2004, p. 3).

The present analysis covers national Destination Management Organizations, i.e. National Tourist Organizations (NTOs) as well and the National Tourist Administrations (NTAs). An NTO can be generally defined as an organization of public and private cooperation, which is to a significant extent financed from the national budget, and which is responsible chiefly for the tourist marketing of the destination state and other operating functions (including development of tourist products or tourist information) (Borzyszkowski, 2005, pp. 92-93). The National Tourist Administration is a specific government department that is responsible chiefly for the creation of

the legal basis of the functioning of tourism as well as the determination and formulation of the objectives of the tourist policy in compliance with the guidelines of the economic strategy of the national administration (Fedyk, 1999, p. 87). It may be assumed that from among all the entities on the national level, NTOs and NTAs perform the most important function in the creation of the tourist policy of a given state.

In order to specify the actions that are undertaken by the European Destination Management Organizations, the authors conducted surveys with the use of a questionnaire. It was addressed solely to national DMOs, i.e. National Tourist Organizations (NTOs) as well as National Tourist Administrations (NTAs). The purpose of the studies was to collect data and to analyze the said data and, consequently, to determine the effect of the current economic crisis on the individual destinations and organizations. The studies were conducted in the period of January-February 2012. A note was included in the questionnaire that the data obtained need to be related to the period of 2010-2011. The questionnaires were sent via electronic mail to nearly 80 NTOs and NTAs. In spite of repeated requests for filling in and sending back the questionnaire, the survey had a very poor response: it was only as few as 6 organizations that responded to it, i.e.:

national tourism organizations: the National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro (Montenegro), Innovation Norway (Norway), national tourist administrations: the Ministry of Tourism, Directorate for Travel Markets and International Relations (Croatia), the Ministry of Economics, Entrepreneurship Competitiveness Department, the Tourism Division (Latvia), the Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism, the Division for Tourism Development and Marketing (Romania), the Ministry of Economy, the Directorate for Tourism and Internationalization (Slovenia).

In general, the questionnaire included only two questions, i.e. "how do you assess the impact of the crisis on your Organization? What measures have been undertaken in order to limit the effects of the crisis in the state (destination)?" Several answers were prepared to each question, and the most appropriate one(s) could be selected. Furthermore, in order not to limit the choice to specific answers, an additional answer was added to each question, i.e. "other".

The majority of the DMOs stated that the current economic crisis had a negative impact on the functioning of the individual organizations (cf. Table 1).

Table 1. Impact of the general economic crisis on selected destination management organizations in Europe

N	Element of influence		Croatia (NTA)	Latvia (NTA)	Montenegro (NTO)	Norway (NTO)	Romania (NTA)	Slovenia (NTA)
1	Positive							
2	Negative	Limitation of funds for the operation of the organization			+			
3		Reduced employment						
4		Limitation of the current activities, e.g. a smaller number of activities undertaken						
5		Reduction of the number of those markets were activities were undertaken			+			
6		Other						
7	No impact							

Source: Author's own study.

In the prevailing majority of cases (5 out of 6 cases), it was emphasized that the crisis resulted in a reduction of funds for the organization's operations. In the case of Latvia, there was a 50 per cent reduction of the costs of administration. In the NTA in Romania, the salaries of the personnel were reduced by 25 per cent. The National Tourism Organization in Montenegro had to cope with a reduction of funds for marketing activities, in the sector of trade fairs in particular. These activities, even though they are necessary, are to be explicitly considered to be very unfavourable. It is hard to talk about any anti-crisis measures when there are significant limitations of the budget. At this point, it is worth to mention another crisis situation, i.e. the events of the 11 September 2001. In the year 2001 (and also in 2002), most of national tourism organizations in Europe significantly increased their expenses on promotion as compared with the year 2000. This was chiefly the result of the effect of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. Many organizations (including chiefly national tourist organizations) started to fight more intensively for tourists. In their promotional activities, they indicated numerous aspects including, which is understandable, the safety of the destination. For example, the budget of VisitBritain (the NTO of Great Britain) rose from 86.5m euro in the year

2000 to 105.3 m euro in 2001, and Maison de la France: from 57.6m euro to 67.1 m euro (Borzyszkowski, 2008, p. 60).

Changes in the employment structure also constituted a consequence of the crisis. For example, the Latvian National Tourist Administration reduced employment by 25 per cent, and the Croatian one found that it was not necessary to increase the number of jobs. In the case of the Romanian NTA, employment was reduced in some of the departments of the ministry that are responsible for tourism. However, it became evident that this was not true of the Division for Tourism Development and Marketing.

In the case of the DMOs covered by the survey, a reduction was also found of the scope of the current activities. In Latvia, marketing activities related to tourism are conducted to a significant extent by private sector entities based on the guidelines of the strategy that was developed by the public sector (the government). The consequence of this situation was also a limited number of those markets where actions had been undertaken so far. Solutions concerning this issue were quite interesting. For example, the National Tourism Organization in Montenegro participates, in some cases, in tourist trade fairs that are organized every second year (and not as previously: every year). In the Romanian NTA, the number of foreign representative offices where promotional activities are undertaken was reduced (from 16 to 9). All the target markets were divided into four groups, i.e. those with the highest priority, priority (primary), secondary and prospective. Generally speaking, the funds and the actions to which they are allocated are spent and realized on the highest priority markets.

The organizations in question indicated other effects of the impact of the crisis on the functioning of DMOs. For example, in the Slovenian National Tourist Administration, the number of business trips was reduced, and foreign trips in particular. It is to be observed that all the aforementioned reductions were actually the effect of a reduction of the funds for the operations of DMOs, the consequences being limited employment, scope of activities and the number of markets.

It is interesting to note that it is only the Latvian Tourist Administration that indicated a positive aspect of the economic crisis by emphasizing that there occurred a better cooperation between the central government, local governments and the private sector in relation to the costs of the promotion and representation of the state abroad.

The specific results of the economic crisis did not produce only negative effects for the individual entities. It was stated in unison that adequate measures need to be undertaken aimed at a reduction of the effects of the crisis (cf. Table 2).

Table 2. Measures that are undertaken by selected destination management organizations aimed at an alleviation of the effects of the crisis

No.	Actions	Croatia (NTA)	Latvia (NTA)	Montenegro (NTO)	Norway (NTO)	Romania (NTA)	Slovenia (NTA)
1.	More accurate on-going monitoring and analysis of the situation on the tourist market	+	+	+	+		
2.	Changes in the organizational structure of the organization, e.g. setting up of a crisis management centre	+			+	+	
3.	Closer cooperation with other entities, e.g. administration for tourism, local governments, tourist industry	+	+		+		
4.	Intensification of actions: an increase of the number of tools and actions, e.g. in the area of the promotion or creation of new products	+				+	+
5.	Preparation and implementation of anti-crisis programmes	+					+
6.	Other	+	+				
7.	Increased expenditures in relation to the operations of the organization						
8.	Intensification of actions: an increase of the number of markets covered by the operations of the organization						
9.	No measures were undertaken						

Source: Author's own study.

It is obvious that the current economic situation exerts an influence not only on the organization itself but, which is particularly important, the entire tourist market of a given destination. Accordingly, the measures proposed and undertaken were aimed not so much at a limitation of the effects of the crisis for the organization but for the entire destination (the state).

In none of the cases, the lack of any measures undertaken aimed at an alleviation of the effects of the economic crisis was observed. The action that was most frequently indicated (4 out of 6 cases) was “more accurate on-going monitoring and analysis of the situation on the tourist market”. The National Tourist Administration in Croatia performs increased monitoring of the global market and of the trends on those markets that are important in relation to the Croatian tourism. The Latvian NTA undertakes actions in relation to a more detailed analysis of the targets markets and groups. Likewise, the NTO in Montenegro conducts on a regular basis various analyses of the market potential and other market studies.

Changes to the organizational structure of the entity were considered to be important. The Croatian NTA declared an organization of more effective ways of the functioning of the Organization. In Romania, in place of separate departments for marketing and development, one department was formed, i.e. a department for tourist development and marketing.

A lot of attention was paid to a closer cooperation with other entities (e.g. the administration for tourism, local governments or the tourist industry). In Croatia, cooperation was initiated and intensified in all of its aspects possible (public-private, public-public and private-private cooperation). In the Latvian NTA, a new consultancy board was formed (national, regional and professional tourist associations, local governments), which is responsible for the development of tourism and taking important decisions concerning marketing activities.

Concerning an intensification of actions in the area of tourist policy tools, the Croatian NTA strengthened the promotional actions on the individual markets on the one hand and decreased the burdens for the private sector on the other (including the fiscal policy). The Slovenian NTA undertook a number of actions aimed at co-financing of undertakings in the area of tourist product promotion. The Romanian NTA, with the use of EU funds, undertook efforts aimed at the creation of the national tourist brand.

Among other actions aimed at a reduction of the effects of the crisis for the destination, one needs to indicate the support of the development of new products and innovative solutions (Croatia). The Latvian NTA liquidated the current barriers for entrepreneurs. New business support programs were launched (also in the tourist sector). Actions were undertaken in connection with effective tourist marketing and creation of the tourist brand of the state.

Generally speaking, clearly defined actions are to be observed that are undertaken by the Destination Management Organizations in question aimed at a limitation of the effects of the crisis. In all of the cases, in spite of the limited funds, the organizations in question undertook a number of measures. It is interesting to note that this situation looked slightly different in the year 2009. The results of the studies conducted by J. Borzyszkowski (2009, p. 53) among national tourist organizations (NTOs) and national tourist administrations (NTAs) in European states demonstrate that there was little interest in this problem. It was observed that on that stage (March-April 2009), the European states did not carry out any particular activities to alleviate the effects of the economic crisis in the tourist industry. They focused merely on regular monitoring of the home tourist market without undertaking any preventive actions. In some cases, the organizations observed a drop in the number of tourists visiting particular states even though the measures aimed at an alleviation of the effects of the crisis were far less clear.

As stated by T. Dziedzic et al. (2010, pp. 15-16), a review of the practical actions undertaken by selected European states in the first period of the occurrence of the economic crisis demonstrates that these actions are diversified; the most important ones include support instruments of the tourist industry:

- a change of the VAT rate for hotel services (Cyprus, Switzerland, Hungary) or tourist packages (Bulgaria),
- a reduction of local taxes (including those on tourist real properties: Greece, Switzerland and some types of business activities: Malta),
- additional loan pools, preferential interest rates and loan guarantees (Austria, France, Spain),
- a reduction of airport fees (Cyprus, Estonia, the Netherlands, Greece),
- subsidies (on national and regional levels) for investments and modernization of the tourist infrastructure (Austria, France, Spain, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Italy),
- increased funds for studies in connection with tourism (Austria, Spain),
- a stimulation of the demand at home by subsidizing tourism within the state for groups that are in a poor economic condition: the so-called welfare tourism and holiday cheques (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy),
- better visa conditions for markets from outside of the EU and that are particularly important in arrival tourism (Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovenia),
- an increased promotion of the state and tourism within the state among the local residents (Austria, France, Spain, Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary),
- an intensified promotion abroad and an increase of the related expenditures (Austria, France, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Latvia, Malta, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Hungary, Italy).

To conclude, the studies and observations made by other authors demonstrate a diversification of the actions undertaken by individual DMOs aimed at a limitation of the effects of the economic crisis.

Conclusions

The theoretical and empirical analysis presented herein of the actions undertaken by the present-day DMOs in the era of the economic crisis clearly demonstrates that their range is relatively wide. A review of the literature shows that in the first years of the 21st century, DMOs became to be more engaged in the issues related to the destination management. The current main area of the functioning of DMOs (i.e. marketing) was extended to include other elements of the impact on the destination. These changes were observed in particular after the events of 11 September 2001 and further events: not only the terrorist ones but also those related to health or economic problems.

The research conducted serves to confirm that the individual DMOs undertake specific actions aimed at an alleviation of the adverse effects of the crisis. At the same time, they emphasize that these effects relate not only to the destination but also to DMOs. It is obvious that this is usually an adverse effect (the result being among others a limitation of funds). In spite of this, the organizations make efforts to increase in various ways the competitiveness of destinations. It

seems, however, that a reduction of funds for their operations (the most frequently indicated effect of the crisis: 5 out of 6 organizations) is not a good solution as it is not possible to undertake a wide range of anti-crisis actions with funds that are limited in relation to the previous years. Hence, the individual DMOs need to make difficult decisions: how, with limited resources (financial and human resources), to undertake intensified actions to limit the effects of the economic crisis in a destination. This is an important problem as it concerns not only this goal but, which is particularly important, strengthening of the competitiveness of the destination.

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OBSERVATORY FOR TOURISM OF SERRA DA ESTRELA - - a tool for sustainable tourism in Serra da Estrela

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ABSTRACT

In tourism new technologies have led to major alterations, leading to changes in the approach to information flow and needs, as well as the ways of its management, due to the high volume of data that needs to be processed and released. Thus, the information management in companies and institutions connected with Tourism is crucial to its success, with a progressive increase in the exchange of knowledge on the Internet.

The Observatory for Tourism of Serra da Estrela (OTSE) is based on the creation of a technological platform that will allow the sharing of information efficiently and economically. It should be noted that the philosophy, structure and organization of this Observatory will be marked by basic scientific studies of the tourism sector in the region of Serra da Estrela and the production of critical information for the tourism industry in the evaluation and progressive monitoring of the dynamics of supply and demand. This observatory is looking for at the same time, to cooperate with tourism partners to facilitate or enable the solving of action strategies, which encourage tourist attractiveness, more products' dynamics, generate business initiatives, strengthen natural and cultural identities and identify trends.

Keywords: Internet; Observatory for Tourism of Serra da Estrela, Serra da Estrela, Sustainability, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The new professional demands require a deep understanding of all sectors of activity. People, businesses and, in short, societies are increasingly closer and in permanent contact. This approach is being supported by two of the industries with highest growthrate: Tourism and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Therefore, we can see that a new civilization is emerging due to new technologies, leading to new life styles in terms of work, family, economy, politics, school, culture and environment.

In tourism, new technologies have also caused major alterations, causing changes in the approach flow and information and management needs due to the high volume of information that needs to be processed and released. Thus, information management by companies in the tourism sector is critical to their success with a steady and progressive increase in the exchange

of knowledge through the Internet. In fact, the Internet has become a prime source of information, confirmed by the increasing proliferation of related sites network.

Therefore, the contribution of the Observatory for Tourism of Serra da Estrela (OTSE) is based on the implementation of a technological platform that will allow the sharing of information efficiently and economically. It should be noted that the philosophy, structure and organization of this Observatory will be marked by scientific studies from the tourism sector in the region of Serra da Estrela and the production of critical information, for the tourism sector, in assessing the dynamics of supply and demand. This observatory is being developed by a group of researchers from the School of Tourism and Hospitality from the Polytechnic Institute of Guarda and is funded by the Research Unit for Inland Development (UDI).

It is believed that the results of the implementation of the OTSE project, whether the scientific, either the technology-based, will be important, such as: Database with scientific information on tourism in the region of Serra da Estrela;

- a) OTSE Portal to meet the needs in respect of information on tourism in the region of Serra da Estrela Production of studies and statistics on tourism with territorial breakdown;
- b) Development of network relationships between the various actors associated with tourism in the region (public and private);
- c) Promotion of regional and even national competitiveness of tourism through the development of qualified information on Tourism.

The OTSE project will contribute to a better understanding of tourism and, further, to abide the necessary knowledge for decision making to improve the competitiveness of the productive sector, a sector that has a strong multiplier effect in the Portuguese economy due to its positive results in the productive structure and society, particularly in regions where other productive sectors have limited weight or that are dismantling.

2. THE ONLINE IN TOURISM

Contemporary society has been undergoing unprecedented economic, political and social changes, becoming a knowledge society where information has become the central element of all human activity (Castells, 2001).

The new communication networks and globalization scenario are showing up as factors that mark the "Age of Information and Knowledge" and provoke a permanent revolution of values, knowledge and perceptions in virtually all areas of human knowledge (Varajão, 2005).

The pervasiveness of ICT is the direct cause of profound changes in the way we live, learn, play and work, leading to new ways of being and acting by users and enterprises (Lavaredas, 2010). ICTs are thus, in this new environment, a powerful instrument of modernization, a key factor for a competitive positioning in a complex and constantly evolving market.

When new avenues and broader horizons are opened, it creates new opportunities to revolutionize and redefine the traditional ways of acting in society, whether individuals or organizations, which makes both the internal and external environment to organizations more

competitive (Castells, 2001). Thus, the global network (Internet) has brought with it, in this complex and competitive environment, new ways of doing business, where only the organizations / companies with vision, flexibility and agility will have a place.

In the field of technology, and driven by the technological revolution, the importance of the Internet has been constantly increasing and has established itself as the main means of disseminating information and knowledge. Notice that from the simplest to the most complex activity, we can observe that the Internet is almost always present. Thus, the "new" tourism system is no exception to these principles, with two key features and at the same time related to each other: the international interdependence and the revolution in information access. The international interdependence results from the adjustments that have been emerging as tourism is no longer seen in a closed and regional / national perspective to start being seen in an open and international perspective. The fact that tourism players are finding themselves closer to each other means that they are dependent on each other and that decisions made, work as direct inputs in the international system. These inputs will cause the system to constantly adapt to the same actors, ie, the players can no longer live disconnected from each other, because more and more quickly, they have to make decisions about the surroundings. Hence, access to relevant information, in time, can be the differentiating factor. The information revolution has to do with the emergence of new means of dissemination, the media, communication has to be made thinking about the masses since there was an exponential growth of the population exposed to such media. Tourism also followed this trend, where Internet plays a key role. In this sense, the Internet has mainly reshaped the way information is distributed, related to tourism and the way people plan their trips (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

In recent years, two major trends have emerged on the Internet, including the so-called "social media websites" and research on the Internet and are causing significant changes in the tourism system (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Thus, on one hand, the "social media websites", which represent the various forms of content generated by the user / consumer (UGC), such as blogs, wikis, social networks, tagging and collaborative file sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr, have gained great popularity due to its use by tourists online (Gretzel, 2006; Pan, MacLaurin, & Crofts, 2007). Many of these "social media websites" allow consumers to post and share their comments, opinions and personal experiences related to travel, which will provide information to others (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This supports the argument by T. Friedman (2007) that "the world is flat", and consumers are gaining more power in determining the production and distribution of information due to the increasing ease of Internet access. On the other hand, due to the enormous amount of available information, research has become an important way of Internet use by tourists (Hitwise, 2008).

In short, in a global context, where technology plays a major role while it is constantly changing, it is essential that all players in the tourism industry, whether large or small, public or private, have the best information in time, in order to ground their decisions.

3. DEFINITION OF THE TERRITORY OF SERRA DA ESTRELA

The importance of tourism as a driving force of socio-economic structures of the regions is now a fact fully assumed. Its growth and spatial diffusion have been one of the most remarkable phenomena of mobility and increase of the standard of living of the populations, with

areas reached by it and appropriate for tourism are increasingly diverse. The mountain is linked from the beginning to the tourism phenomenon, due to its size as a place for recreation and leisure and its natural expression. The presence of a strong ecological component, the different possibilities of occupation throughout the year, the development of sports, the richness of its cultural heritage, the integrity of its forest and water resources and expansion of hotels and sports and recreation equipment's offer have increased its vocation, assuming increasingly as the great alternative to coastal tourism, with special meaning in winter period (Perlis, 2002).

The Serra da Estrela is the most prominent central Lusitanian ridge and the highest and most emblematic mountain of the mainland. With 1993 meters at its highest point and unique periglaciares features in the country, has a unique geomorphological structure, composed by a set of elements whose size, shape and geology establish bioclimatic levels with different types and intensity of occupation. The strong climatic constraints originate a seasonal occupation of traditional activities, but allow the development of various sports and winter activities associated with the topography and presence of snow. These conditions, related to forests, water resources and cultural heritage, lead to a major national tourist destination position today in terms of interior territory.

For its territorial delimitation, as a center of interest of the observatory, it was considered, in addition to the altimeter, the differences of the geographic scope in geomorphological terms, forms of land use, population, population density and productive system, in order to create separations or identities that allow its consistent individualization in relation to neighboring territories, keeping the county as a unit of spatial cohesion. In this sense, we tried to analyze and interpret the biophysical elements that allow to make a separation, that is, the formation of a group with specific administration, to clarify the area of Serra da Estrela (Fig. 1).

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING TOURISM

Tourism is assumed today as one of the main economic activities of the Serra da Estrela which, given the evolution and diversification of supply and demand, is projected into the national tourism frame as a destination with multiple vocations and the primary alternative to coastal tourism. Nowadays, we witness a general revalue of the mountain, at the level of image, productive processes and forms of use, due to the emergence of a new social system of values, which rewards the natural and cultural qualities of these areas (Gaskell, 2005). These changes in perception, and even occupation, mean that these spaces, which were previously hostile due to the natural settings now have a distinct vision and use, as a result of knowledge, openness to the exterior and enlargement of the reasons for the visit, the capabilities of accommodation, more diversified and qualified, and the recognition of its ecocultural value to tourist practices (Fernandes, 2005). There is also an increased accessibility, resource exploration, the spread of ecocultural values, the extension of leisure and recreational activities and an increased flow of tourists that have contributed to its revitalization. The increase of hotel units supply, diversified in the concepts and possibilities of occupation of different market segments, coupled with the widening of sports and leisure equipment, as well as routes and has promoted tourist practices, reducing the seasonal trend of these spaces and encouraging new promotion logics and interests and investment in tourism through administrative entities, private investors and partnerships.

Tourism represents, to Serra da Estrela, a strategic factor for the promotion of economy and increase the welfare of this mountainous region. Its evolution and its dynamic character, with direct repercussions on communities and territory, imply a more careful approach and with technical references that can foster the growth of this activity in a sustainable manner, both at a socio-economic or environmental level (Fernandes, Brigas, Lopes, & Castro, 2005). Thus, it is urgent to monitor and produce accurate and appropriate regular information on the characteristics of tourism in the region namely the major tourist markets, consumption profiles, the distribution throughout the year, the motivations and forms of access to the destination among others. Remember that tourism today has become increasingly decentralized and more emancipated, with fragmented procedures, multiple realities, particularities and various forms of appropriation of spaces or tourist destinations (Tschanz & Klein, 1996). The complexity of behavior and positioning, whether from tourism supply or demand, requiring a thorough understanding of trends and logics of functioning of this sector. This requirement implies a mastery of methods for analysis and diagnosis, as well as the application of various tools that allow the industry to know the realities and trends that are designed, so that appropriate interventions to existing and observed realities, can be made, trying to turn tourism into a real reason of development, with all the multiplier effects that are known. It should be noted that tourism has gained a prominent position and even strategic factor to our regions. The ways to live leisure and tourism have been diversifying the practices and destinations, with the tourism universe being dominated by different motivations and adaptabilities and less and less by homogeneous demands. The ability to generate innovation, anticipate trends, meet expectations, coordinate projects, adapting supply to new demands, differentiate and become competitive tourist destinations emerge as decisive in the current approach of tourism and increasing the attractiveness of the tourist areas. To this end, the existence of OTSE becomes vital, either in the production of quality information for industry professionals, or in the

evaluation of behavior and definition of logics of action, becoming a fundamental leverage to the qualification of Tourism and Hospitality. The new dynamics that influence the development of tourism resulting from the different behaviors of demand and supply, as well as new rationales from the economic, environmental and socio- cultural context, involving new models of planning and managing tourism. We have seen changes, a growing differentiation and classification of tourist practices, which require higher levels of knowledge in decision making and the strengthening of tourist destinations, promoting, unavoidably, the production of information and conceção logics of action and appropriate management tools for knowledge transfer and consolidation of competitive advantage, ensuring the sustainability of tourism (Buhalis, 2002).

In the tourism development period, which we are now living, the emergence of ICT can be witnessed, using various technological advances that allow the promotion of products, manage the distribution of the current offer, provide qualified and current data for decision-making or program investments and new products. Tour operators, administrative boards and the various companies and institutions linked to the sector may, in a cooperative and networking way, get information to facilitate its operation, improving the relationship of educational and research institutions with the various actors that build and develop the tourist destination of Serra da Estrela.

5. OBSERVATORY OF TOURISM OF SERRA DA ESTRELA

5.1 Scope

The OTSE intends to be an asset for tourism in the region, with the mission to promote the monitoring, analysis, and dissemination of the development of tourism, in an independent and responsible manner, ensuring the trustworthiness of the scientific and technical information produced and / or disclosed on its own platform, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in Serra da Estrela and integrated into the global strategies of regional development. It is also intended, at the same time, to collaborate with tourism agents to facilitate or enable the equation of action strategies, which encourage tourist attractiveness, more dynamic products, generate business initiatives, strengthen the natural and cultural identities and monitor trends. In this sense, the operation area of the OTSE will focus primarily on scientific research, study, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of tourism in the region of Serra da Estrela (area defined in section 2.), providing reports, indicators, demand profiles and strategies that promote industry knowledge and the logics, that at each moment, guide supply and demand.

5.2 Objectives

Serious shortcomings were found in the monitoring, dissemination and analysis of the evolution of tourism in the region of Serra da Estrela, the construction of the Observatory, with a technological base through its own platform, comes to bridging these gaps and fill these gaps, trying to create conditions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Better knowledge of the tourism sector in Serra da Estrela, through an analysis of the regional tourism offer and the tourism phenomenon in the region, by analyzing the relationship

between the tourism industry and the surrounding environment and, in a final analysis, between supply and demand;

2. Collect, process, store and disseminate data that may contribute to the planning and development of the region in a concerted, sustainable way with a future perspective of shared responsibilities and towards a common benefit;
3. Be a tool for monitoring, dissemination and analysis of trends in tourism, for the formulation of sector, sectoral and sub-sectoral diagnostics, with emphasis on those involved in the sector;
4. Stimulate and encourage debate and reflection on the current dynamics of Serra da Estrela, associated with tourism and ICT;
5. Conduct studies, launch and cross statistic and research operations, consider and discuss central issues to the functioning of the system and the tourism sector in the region.

5.3 Implementation

One of the assumptions of the platform development, for the OTSE, is that it will be built using *open source software* (<http://www.opensource.org/docs/osd>). Under this assumption the platform of the observatory was defined as being based on an Apache server running PHP extensions, a database supported by a MySQL server and Joomla as a content management system (CMS).

Joomla is one of the currently existing open source tools to develop websites with dynamic content. It is a framework, with basic features of pre-defined maintenance and administration, which provides integration between the operating system, the Apache server, the MySQL database, PHP programming language and the browser (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - Software used to build the OTSE platform.

The choice of this CMS was related to the fact that it provides a number of important features, such as: (a) ease of use, (b) versatility, (c) various types of personalization and also for providing a set of various models, extensions and plugins (Roque & Duarte, 2010). The extensions (<http://extensions.joomla.org/>) authentication, events, forum, maps & locations, newsletter, site search and social media are among the many features available.

Joomla allows, therefore, that people without much technical knowledge, can relatively easily succeed in developing and managing a website.

a final result of the compilation of these different technologies, a prototype of the observatory (Fig. 3) came out which can be accessed at <http://www.otse.com.pt>.



Fig. 3 – OTSE main webpage.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As tourism plays an increasingly relevant role in terms of its multiple economic, social and environmental effects, it is important for contemporary society to be concerned with the present data, knowing the past and looking for relevant information to try to find a perspective of the future. The technologies are fundamental tools for the knowledge and dissemination of tourism, projecting itself as a privileged means of dissemination and management of destinations, with the ability to interact and to interact in network with the various tourism stakeholders, from the administrative boards, to hospitality agents and different segments of demand.

The cultural diversity and natural homogeneity of the territory to be observed by OTSE, which includes the cities belonging to the Natural Park of Serra da Estrela, as well as the counties of mountain characteristics and the whole territory with the nomenclature of Serra da Estrela territorial unit, allowing to promote a range of relevant research, and enable relevant studies and analysis. Monitoring the tourism phenomenon, more than knowing the territory, rather than making an inventory or identify resources or equipment, is a challenge for the OTSE and on which the community in general, and science in particular, deposit expectations and information in order to await together, formulating policies and strategies for the sector in the region.

Pledging to keep a watchful, meticulous and capable eye on the reality of tourism in the region of Serra da Estrela and assuming the new technologies as an instrumental support for this plan,

using where possible, the more reliable, trustworthy and safe technology resources, the OTSE support platform aims to be consistent for the collection and processing of information and consequent production of indicators and knowledge for decision support.

The Internet is a day-to-day integral part of all contemporary societies globally and is used as an invaluable resource for information and knowledge management, helping to change the paradigm of the tourism system.

The year two thousand and twelve, the first in the activity of the Observatory of Tourism in Serra da Estrela (OTSE) will be important for the realization of a reference project that will result in a competitive asset for the promotion, organization and development of tourism in the Serra da Estrela, the result of corporate efforts and collaborative work between agents and partners who will join it.

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IMPROVEMENT OF THE MARKET POSITION OF AN INLAND DESTINATION THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE - CASE STUDY OF MORELLA IN SPAIN

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The tourist sector carries a great weight in the Spanish economy, despite the impacts produced by the current economic situation. Furthermore, the image of the tourist destination has a large influence on the buying decision making process of the tourists. These are some of the reasons why it is important trying to improve the way to promote and market tourist destinations through the analysis of tourists' destination image. Because of that, this paper analyses the mental image formed in the current and prospective visitors to Morella, in order to identify its weak and strong points and being able to work on it. Thus, the promoters will know if the projected image meets the perceived one and they will improve if possible the position of the destination in the market and the knowledge resulting from the analysis will be translated into strategic implications.

Keywords: destination image; market position; image analysis; promotion; inland tourism.

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Introduction

The tourist sector carries a great weight in the Spanish economy, although the impacts produced by the current economic situation and the tourist destinations are one of the main parts of the offer (Rufin et al, 2010). Furthermore, the image of the tourist destination has a large influence on the buying decision making process of the tourists (Gallarza, M., I. Gil Saura, and H. Calderón García, 2002; Beerli Palacio, A. and Martin Santana, J., 2004). These are some of the reasons why it is important trying to improve the way to promote and market the tourist destinations through the analysis of the tourists' destination image.

In this case, the objective of the research is to analyze the mental image of the tourists who travel to the inland locality of Morella, located in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (Spain), in order to identify its weak and strong points. Thus, the strengths of the destination can be maintained and the aspects that could involve a competitive disadvantage and that represent its main weaknesses can be improved. Based on this general objective, other more specific objectives are established: (1) Analyze the concept of touristic destination image by means of the identification of its dimensions, cognitive and affective, that makes up the perceived image, (2) contrast if the perceived global image of the individuals who have not visited the destination matches with the perceived be the ones who have visited it and (3) identify if the personal factors of the individuals influence in the destination global image formation to establish, in a later analysis, the strong and weak points of the destination and so the results could be a tool for the promoters to maintain the strengths of the destination and improve the aspects that could involve a competitive disadvantage and that represent its main weaknesses.

In the same way, the current study represents an interesting example to the tourism professionals and especially to the ones that are involved in the promotion and marketing of inland tourist destinations because of two reasons. First of all, by means of structured research techniques the dimensions involved in the image concept are evaluated: individuals' cognitive and affective image of the touristic destination. By this way, promoters will know if the destination image they try to plan agrees with the tourist perception, and if it is possible, improve their position in that market, redirecting the promotion and marketing actions. Secondly, the knowledge outcome of the analysis will be translated into strategic implications that is, specific ideas or solutions based on the needs of the users of this tourist product.

With the purpose of reaching the proposed objectives above named, the current research is structured in the following way. In first place, the importance of the conceptualization of the touristic destination image and its management is cleared. Immediately after, conceptual contributions about the touristic destination image are reviewed. Departing from this literature review it is proposed in a third section an empirical study to analyze the destination image, together with the obtained results discussion. And finally, the section four gathers the final conclusions of the paper and the recommendations for future researches.

Destination image concept

Importance of the destination image concept

The image of the touristic destination has been aim of study in the academic as well as in the professional context, because knowing the tourist's mental destination image formation has been considered an important concept in order to improve the touristic destinations management and its competitiveness. Because of it, several authors deal with the search of differentiation among destinations, to focus the tourism attraction and, by this way, helping their development (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Gallarza et al, 2002).

Image management

As is the case with products, the infrastructure management throughout a destination life cycle is necessary not to run important risks. The same happens in the case of destinations which suffer from political instability or massive influx of tourists, which can reduce the destination appeal (Kotler et al, 2008). Consequently, the destination marketing is a fundamental part in the development and maintenance of the popularity of a destination. However, more than should be the case, the people responsible for the destination planning, focus their efforts only in the destination development without paying attention to the attributes maintenance and preservation, that really attract the tourism (Bergstorm and Medweth, 1994).

The destinations that do not manage correctly their product during the life cycle stages can have a short life and the ones that do it can increase their turnover and even mitigate the seasonal demand variation of the destination. The people responsible of the destination planning must take into account the destination residents as well as the tourists to calculate the carrying capacity and avoid troubles that affect them both, and consequently, the image (Manning and Dougherty, 1995).

On the other hand, the present high competitiveness in the touristic sector implies the creation of a destination image that helps to differentiate from the rest, which is strongly influenced, among other aspects, by the recreations of that destination in the media, influencing also the destination appealing on the individuals. However, once the image is established, it is hard to change it (Kotler et al, 2008).

The efficient image creation of a destination requires that exists a relation between what is offered to the visitor in the advertising and the real experience in the destination, to avoid the risk of losing current or prospective customers and also avoiding the reception of negative comments from the current ones (Kotler et al, 2008).

The ordinary marketing and the support the tourist information desks give is fundamental when marketing a destination. The Chambers of Commerce collaborate in increasing the number of tourists that visit a region by means of diverse actions. In addition, it is important for the companies and travel agent's to work together when marketing the destination to ensure the achievement of the tourist's expectations. Tourist information desks, hotels, airlines and local companies ought to collaborate closely (Avraham and Ketter, 2008).

The destination and its brand management turn out to be of special importance for tourists, residents, DMOs and stakeholders. For this reason, their opinions and the consequences over them must be taken into account when bringing up the competitive strategies, focusing the problems from the residents point of view to understand their needs and wishes, and by this way it could be possible to improve the solutions by means of a continuous and open dialogue between the governments and these lobbies (Valls, 1992).

Components of the touristic destination image: Cognitive and affective assessment

However, despite this increasing interest in destination image, there is a lack of framework or solid conceptualization that stands the researches in that field and that they ought to be more theory-based in order to definitely define the concept (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991).

Likewise, the review of the touristic destination concept and its nature is fulfilled from different approaches which have not many aspects in common (Gartner, 1989; San Martín et al, 2008). To come to that conclusion, an exhaustive review of the literature up to nowadays has been carried out, from seed works like Hunt's (1971), going through one of the most relevant contributions, as it is the model from Echtner and Ritchie (1993), which proposes that the destination image arises from the sum of the perceptions of the individuals about the attributes, functional or psychological, together with the holistic impression about it. So the image of the destination is delimited by three two-pole continuums: holistic attribute, functional-psychological and common-unique.

As a result of this proposal, one of the destination image concepts more widely recognized was developed. It was proposed that the image is a mental representation of the beliefs and feelings, consisting of the cognitive and affective assessment of the subject about the destination, in addition to the global impression about that destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004).

This approach considers the existence of cognitive and affective assessment following the works of other past authors like the Gartner's (1993), who is preceded by several works in which the cognitive component of the image was considered more important (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Walmsley and Young, 1998).

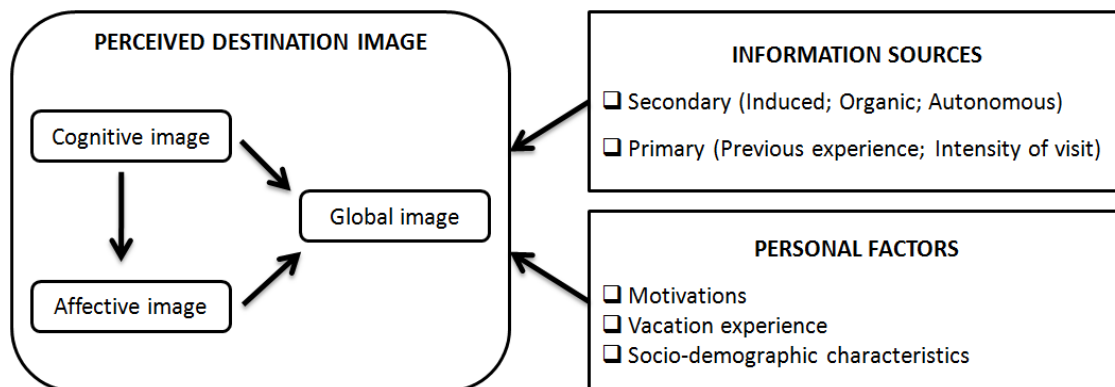
To that effect, the Baloglu and McCleary's model (1999) considers the destination image as a multi-component concept that depends on three parts: rational interpretations, emotional interpretations and global image. The global image is the consequence of the two components closely related: (1) the perceptive/cognitive assessment referring to the knowledge and the individual beliefs about the destination, that is to say, the assessment of the destination perceived attributes and (2) the affective assessment, referring to the individual feelings towards the destination. At the same time, it is formed a global image as a result of these two components of the image, both cognitive and affective destination assessment of the subject, that can be different from both of them, which are previous to the global image (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004). According to this, we can state:

Hypothesis (H1): The image destination is configured by the cognitive and the affective image, while at the same time, the cognitive image influences the affective image creation.

Later, Beerli and Martin (2004) included in the Baloglu and McCleary's model (1999) other factors that determined the image formation as the information sources, and they distinguished between secondary and primary ones (Gartner, 1993). In this case, the previous information about the destination is obtained from the question that guesses if the subject has visited Morella before.

Consequently, several researchers agree in a general framework of the destination's image formation that considers the personal factors and the environmental external stimulus previous to the image formation (Figure 1). Based on this, it can be stated:

Figure 1: Destination image formation model from Beerli and Martin (2004)



Source: Beerli and Martin (2004)

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The previous information about the destination, such as having visited it, influences its image formation.

As a result, the image analysis of this research is based on the Beerli and Martin model (2004), but it has been modified both the consideration of previous factors on the image formation, taking into account only the socio-demographic characteristics of the subject personal factors obtained from the sample profile and the previous experience described before inside the stimulus factors. So we can state:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The individuals socio-demographic factors influence the destination image formation.

Research methodology

After reviewing the literature and establishing the working hypothesis, a quantitative empirical investigation is carried out with structured techniques to be able to contrast those hypotheses.

Below it is detailed in the technical research sheet (table 2) information about the research characteristics and development. Among other data, it is showed the number of valid surveys obtained after the information gathering and its treatment, which are 169.

Table 2: Technical research sheet

Characteristics	Survey
Universe	Current and prospective tourists of Morella older than 16 years
Geographic area sampling	Autonomous Community of Valencia
Sampling procedure	Snowball, Social Networks, Judgement sampling: Posts in travelers' forums
Information gathering	Personal and online survey
Sample shape	169 valid surveys
Fieldwork	May (2012)

In the current research it has been selected a sample among the population of the autonomous region where Morella is located, that is to say, the Autonomous Community of Valencia. The way to contact this sample has been through Internet by means of an online survey method, which requires the previous insertion of the survey on this media. It is an online self-managed survey, whose visible face must be visited by the subjects to answer the questions. To that end, they are sent a link through a mail in the case of snowball sampling, through social networks and through posts in specialized travelers' forums in the case of judgment or criteria sampling.

In table 3 sample characteristics are specified according to gender, age, marital status, occupation and studies level, gathering the valid percentages.

Table 3: Sample profile

Variables	Valid %	Variables	Valid %	Variables	Valid %
Gender		Marital status		Highest level of education	
Male	51.5	Single	26.6	University graduate	76.9
Female	48.5	Married	50.3	Vocational training	10.7
Age		Divorced	16.6	Baccalaureate	5.9
17-22	5.9	Partner	5.9	Secondary	4.7
23-35	37.3	Others	0.6	Others	1.8
36-50	36.1	Occupation			
51-65	18.3	Student	14.2	Unemployed	3.0
> 65	2.4	Housework	1.8	Others	2.4
		Employed	78.7		

In the same way, the survey is based mainly in the destination image measurement scales proposed by the Beerli and Martin's model (2004). For the assessment of the affective component attributes of the image, authors employed a semantic differential bipolar scale of 4 items and 7 positions: arousing-sleepy, relaxing-distressing, gloomy- exciting and unpleasant-pleasant, following the Baloglu and McCleary's proposal (1999), as used before by Russel and Pratt (1980). Whereas for the assessment of the cognitive component of the image, a 21-item and 7-point Likert scale was taken. Although in both scales it has been applied a variation in the current research, establishing 5 positions as proposed by authors like Baloglu and Love (2005), to facilitate the survey to the individuals, since they must value the attributes in an autonomous way and according to their opinions.

Table 5 summarizes the items that make up each one of the employed scales, while table 4 shows the personal factors and information sources factors.

Table 4: Measurement scale of the cognitive and affective assessment

Personal factors			
PERS1	Gender	PERS4	Studies level
PERS2	Age	PERS5	Occupation
PERS3	Marital status		
Information sources			
VISIT	Destination visited		

Likewise, the questionnaire is completed with a series of introductory questions that reveal the destination previous information available to individuals, finishing with a section of classification or sample characterization. The whole questionnaire consists of 32 variables, including not only the ones contained in the scales, but also the sample characterization ones.

Table 5: Measurement scale of the cognitive and affective assessment

Cognitive assessment		
(Beerli and Martin, 2004) State your level of agreement with the following statements in reference to Morella.	Factor 1: Natural and cultural resources	
	1. Great fauna and flora diversity	ICD1
	2. With places of historical or cultural	ICD2
	3. Wealth and landscaping beauty	ICD3
	4. Singular ways of living and folklore	ICD4
	5. With cultural activities of interest	ICD5
	Factor 2: General infrastructures, touristic and leisure	
	6. With shopping facilities	ICD6
	7. With nightlife	ICD7
	8. Gastronomic culture	ICD8
	9. Possibility to practice sportive activities	ICD9
	10. Good development of general infrastructures	ICD10
	Factor 3: Atmosphere	
	11. Luxury	ICD11
	12. Fashionable	ICD12
	13. Exotic	ICD13
	14. A good name and reputation	ICD14
	15. A good quality of life	ICD15
	Factor 4: Social and environmental background	
	16. Offers personal safety	ICD16
	17. Clean	ICD17
	18. Hospitable, friendly people	ICD18
	Factor 5: Sun and beaches	
	19. Good beaches	ICD19
	20. Good weather	ICD20

	21. Good infrastructure of hotels and apartments	ICD21
Affective assessment		
(Baloglu and McCleary, 1999) State how you consider Morella, taking into account the following attributes	gloomy-exciting	IAD1
	unpleasant-pleasant	IAD2
	sleepy-arousing	IAD3
	distressing-relaxing	IAD4

It is important to know the answer to the variables related to personal factors and information sources, measured through polynomial questions, as the sample characteristics will be useful when verifying the hypothesis H2 and H3. These variables are part of the previous determining factors to the destination image formation and they influence it (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

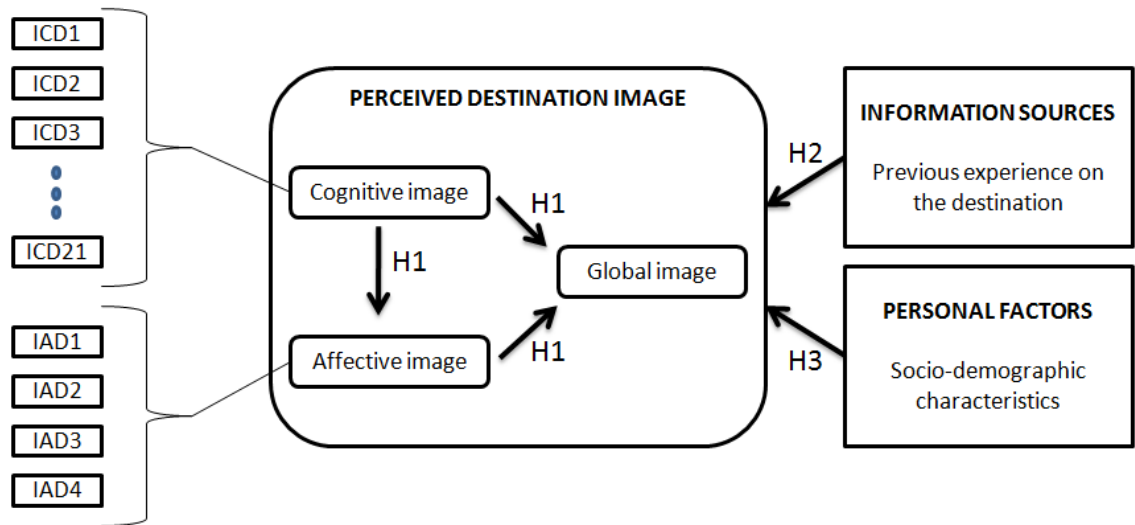
Validation of the proposed measurement scales

When checking the validity of the proposed scales and the valuation of the proposed model (Figure 6), it is employed the Partial Least Squares analysis or PLS by means of the Smart PLS 2.0.M3 program, which has been widely used in the past by several authors to observe the reliability and validity of their model scales (Ekinci et al, 2008; Hutchinson et al, 2009).

The PLS model employs latent variables, manifest variables and asymmetrical connections (Falk and Miller, 1992; Wold, 1985; Barclay et al, 1995) and allows the valuation of a prediction of the dependent variables, whether they be latent or manifest, even with small samples, in which it turns out to be beneficial. In this case the validity of the construct is analyzed (Churchill, 1995) through the convergent and the discriminant validity (Uriel and Aldas, 2005). The first one indicates the correlation level between the indicators and the second shows if the indicators employed in measuring different concepts have a low correlation among themselves.

The reliability of a scale is not enough to prove its validity, therefore other more restrictive indicators will be used as the Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), which requires that the value of this coefficient overcomes 0.7 (Churchill, 1979). Another indicator is the result of the compound reliability analysis (Hair et al, 1999), which establishes a minimum of 0.7 to accept the reliability of the model (Forner and Larcker, 1981).

Figure 6: Outline of the proposed model for the investigation



Source: Own production

As a consequence of these analysis and after a first approach, for reliability and validity reasons and in order to improve the model's output, items ICD5, ICD6, ICD7, ICD11, ICD12, ICD13, ICD19, ICD20 e ICD21 are eliminated, owing to the value of their charges, which was under 0.6. In table 7 can be observed the result of the proposed model validation.

The reliability indicators show in this case that the results obtained are enough, as the Cronbach's alpha is over 0.7 and the values of the compound reliability are over 0.8.

Table 7: Measurement tool of the structural model: Convergent reliability and validity

Factor	Indicator	Charge	t value (Bootstrapping)	Cronbach's S	Compound reliability	A.V.E.
F1 – IMAFEC – Destination	AFEC1	0.721	4.122715	0.7338	0.834	0.55886
	AFEC2	0.645	2.998634			
	AFEC3	0.823	8.516595			
	AFEC4	0.789	7.322264			
	COG1	0.612	3.753186			
	COG2	0.678	4.971782			
	COG3	0.764	5.372574			
	COG4	0.724	6.927258			
	COG8	0.764	6.825169			
	COG9	0.748	6.393874			
	COG10	0.618	4.679176			
	COG14	0.798	7.966667			
	COG15	0.745	6.113988			
	COG16	0.772	7.446753			
	COG17	0.773	5.382103			
	COG18	0.754	4.996354			

With regard to the convergent validity, as it can be noticed in table 7, the results point at a good adjustment of the scales, because the factorial charges obtain a value around 0.7 (Nunnally, 1987). Moreover, it exists significance of all of them, as they all overcome widely the t value 2.56 (Hair et al, 1999). The good adjustment of the model in relation to its convergence is indicated also by the extracted average variance (A.V.E.) of the indicators, as it overcomes 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

The discriminant validity has been proved by means of the shared average variance between the construct and its averages (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), turning out to be in this case that value larger than the correlation between the model factors, which points at a good adjustment and, as a consequence, the discriminant validity is accepted.

Model valuation and discussion of results

For the valuation of the most part of the structural model, it has been used the program Smart PLS, in addition to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, Bent and Hull, 1970) program to complete the valuation.

Table 8: Assessment of the structural model for the hypothesis H1

Hypothesis	Regression coefficient	t value (STERR)
	0.683192**	

** t > 2.56; * t > 1.96

To confirm the hypothesis H1, the analysis of the standard regression coefficients of the proposed factors has revealed the existence of a very strong connection between the affective and the cognitive image, therefore in this case the cognitive image influences the destination affective image formation to a great extent. This is demonstrated following Chin's theory (1998) that considers these coefficients optimum when they are over 0.3. Previously it is proved that these coefficients are significant as they all have a value over 0.2.

On the other hand, the stability of the obtained valuations has been carried out by means of a resampling process through Bootstrapping (Efron and Gong, 1983), obtaining also significant values among them.

Table 9: Assessment of the structural multisampling model for the hypothesis H2

H2 – VISIT-7 IMDES	Regression coefficient	t value (STERR)	β	m, n	SE ²	t value
	0.587587*					
	0.884203*				0.066214 ²	

** t > 2.56; * t > 1.96

With regard to the hypothesis H2 (Table 9), as it is a valuation of a moderator factor of the destination image, i.e. the previous visit to the destination or not, a multisampling analysis has been chosen to analyze two different groups: the ones who have visited previously the destination and the ones who have not. In this way, it is possible to compare statistically the standard regression coefficients for both samples (Cepera and Roldan, 2004). It is confirmed the significance of the difference between the correlations of both samples (Chin, 2000), and it is obtained a significant t value. It is remarkable the strongest correlation and major significance between the destination image and the individuals who have not visited the destination before.

Table 10: ANOVA analysis: Global destination image and personal factors

	PERS1: Gender			
	Male	Female	F	p
Global destination	3.84	3.85	1.62	0.20

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

	PERS2: Age						
	17-22	23-35	36-50	51-65	> 65	F	p
Global destination	3.61	3.75	3.84	3.93	3.33	1.60	0.18

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

	PERS3: Marital status						
	Partner	Married	Divorced	Partner	Others	F	p
Global destination	3.59	3.87	3.78	4.15	3.26	3.23*	0.01

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

	PERS4: Studies level						
	University graduate	Vocational training	Baccalaurate	Secondary	Others	F	p
Global destination							

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

	PERS5: Occupation						
	Student	Housework	Employed	Unemployed	Others	F	p
Global destination	3.73	3.56	3.83	3.46	3.84	0.75	0.56

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

To contrast hypothesis H3, diverse one-factor ANOVA analysis were employed. Previous to the analysis, it was worked out the average value of the scales that constitute the destination image, that is to say, of the cognitive and affective image scales. As a result, a new variable was generated named “global destination image average”. After that it was found out the significance of those personal factors in relation with the global destination image (Table 10) to be able to confirm hypothesis H3. Finally it is partially confirmed, as they are not found significant values in all the proposed personal factors, just in the PERS3 factor, marital status, with regard to the different averages between groups.

Conclusions

This research tries to find out the image that current and prospective visitors to Morella have, detecting its weak and strong points in reference to the image projected to the tourist. This study is highly interesting for the destination managers to be taken into account when searching for destination competitiveness (Elizagarate, 2008).

With regard to the objectives raised at the start of the research, they have been reached to a great extent by means of the analysis of the proposed hypothesis. In relation to the hypothesis H1, it has been widely confirmed, as the cognitive image influences largely the destination affective image configuration. In addition to this, the destination image depends on a moderating variable such as the previous visit to the destination, as confirmed in the hypothesis H2 in which is detected a significant connection in the obtained results between the tourists who have visited the destination and the ones who have not. At the same time, the socio-demographic factors, as the marital status, influence the destination image configuration, indicating that unmarried couples have a more favorable destination image than the rest, and therefore hypothesis H3 is partially confirmed, according to Beerli and Martin’s proposal (2004).

In relation with the strong and weak points of the image of Morella, on the one hand, it is worth noting the scarce attention to the shopping facilities perceived in the destination as well as the scarce perceived nightlife, opposite to the good consideration of the natural spaces and areas, as something important and attractive of the destination. On the other hand, there is a general agreement on the consideration that it is a relaxing and pleasant destination, a safe and clean place whose residents are considered and kind. Moreover, it is widely considered as a destination where tasty and varied local gastronomy can be tasted and as a place that offers multiple opportunities for adventure and sport.

With reference to the strategic implications, it could be highlighted the importance of the previous beliefs and knowledge about the destination by the current and prospective tourists, since according to what has been stated above, it affects in a very significant way the affective destination image, which affects in turn the global perceived image.

With the purpose of possibly achieve a better destination image, the destination characteristics must be transmitted in an appropriate way to provide the individuals knowledge and beliefs about the destination. They must be adequate to the segment they belong, as it is necessary a previous market segmentation (Joope et al, 2001).

Moreover, in terms of effectiveness, the affective marketing obtains better results and appeals to the individuals feelings and emotions towards the destination (Oliver, 1997), which helps both the cognitive and affective destination image formation. In the affective part, it channels those feelings and emotions towards the affective image formation (White and Yu, 2005).

Concerning the main limitations of the research, it can be pointed out the shape of the sample; especially in the case the subject has not visited the destination in contrast with the number of subjects who have visited it. Also, the existence of certain sample bias, in relation to the age and level of studies features, could have meant a limitation in the model validity.

There exist certain factors to be considered for the inclusion in case of carrying out future researches as could be the global destination image attributes that have not been taken into account as other authors did (Chi and Qu, 2008; Chen and Tsai, 2007; San Martin et al, 2008) in their research to evaluate the total image in reference to the destination.

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CASE STUDY: MARKETING TOOLS IN DESTINATION SELLING - Case of Macedonia

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ABSTRACT

Macedonia is a small Balkan country, not yet sufficiently discovered as a tourist destination. 8 years ago, the Macedonia Tourism Cluster (group of tourism sector stakeholders: hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tour guides, university, state authorities etc.), supported by the USAID Macedonia Competitiveness Activity (MCA), initiated marketing activities to contribute towards promoting Macedonia among the international tour operators with the final goal: increase the number of foreign tourists in the country. Those activities included:

Market research of the international tour operators as the distribution channels to the final foreign customers – secondary research was conducted on publicly available data about the international tour operators in terms of their segmentation, types of tours offered, trends in the demand, prices, length of stay, differences in cultural behavior and expectations etc. The activity continued with a primary research through conducting phone interviews with a selected number of tour operators.

Determining the **competitive advantage** of Macedonia as a tourist destination – Based on the market research, conclusions were made about the foreign tourists preferences. Meetings and workshops were held with the Macedonia tourism cluster members to finally define Macedonia's competitive advantage (unique selling proposition): **providing unique nature/adventure, history/culture experience for the wealthy and healthy foreigner.**

Product development – Macedonia tourism cluster members worked together to prepare the unique combination of 7Ps that would appeal to the international tour operators and thus, to the foreign tourists. Task forces of tourism cluster members were formed to be responsible for different issues: searching for the best tourist experiences in Macedonia, grading hotels and restaurants where the foreigners should visit, training waiters, chefs, tour guides, artisans, drivers etc. in how to deal with the foreign tourists, and finally – cleaning the environment. As a result of all of these, two promotional tours were developed and 12 international tour operators were invited to be part of the familiarization (Fam) trip around Macedonia.

Trial – Group of 13 representatives from 12 foreign tour operators from different countries arrived in Macedonia in April 2004 on a 4-day Fam trip, in two groups taking two different tours: nature/adventure and history/culture. Pre-visit and post-visit survey was conducted with each of the Fam trip participants to determine their expectations and their perceptions and experience afterwards.

Immediate results: 11 of 13 Tour Operators showed strong to moderate interest in returning to Macedonia.

But how many did return? And how many foreign tourists have they brought so far? Has the combination of the 7Ps been the most unique and attractive one? Has it been changing since then? Did we define correctly our competitive advantage? What have been the forces of the micro and macro environment that also have influenced the long-term results? What has been the multiplying effect of the tourism on the entire economy?

These will be some of the questions that this case study will try to provide answers on.

INTRODUCTION

"One anecdote says it all: a German journalist came to Macedonia, and was overwhelmed with the country's natural beauty and hospitality. He enthusiastically fired off seven articles, but was dismayed to hear his editor say: nice articles -- but I'm not printing anything good about Macedonia." – This is how Christopher Deliso started his article on the Macedonian tourism in United Press International (UPI) in July 2003¹. And that was a very good description of the situation in tourism at the time - a pristine land of mountains and lakes, Macedonia was nevertheless receiving a bad media image, a relic of 2001's ethnic conflict, the long-standing dispute with Greece over the name issue, as well as other relevant factors. Namely, the only thing worse than no marketing is bad marketing - something that Macedonia had in abundance due to: "cheap, verbally anemic brochures which only provoke reader skepticism" with low standard of written English, infrastructure and transport problems, uninviting old, socialist-era hotels, small airport with no shuttle bus - only overpriced taxis, Cyrillic-only street signs, well-littered environment. In the private sector tourism was traditionally not seen as a "real business", just as an additional activity for extra income, there was lack of customer focused mindset, over-dependency on "asset model" tourism (lake, hotel, casino), lack of cooperation within the industry, over-reliance on government to lead the industry². The fact that there was no tourism ministry - just an office within the Ministry of Economy, spoke that tourism remained a low priority for the government.

These were some of the factors that led to fall in the revenues from the tourism industry in Macedonia by 66% over 17 years (1985 – 2001) and decrease of the Compound Annual Growth Rate of the sector by 6.2%³ (Figure 1).

¹ http://www.upi.com/Business_News/2003/07/29/Analysis-Macedonian-Tourism-I/UPI-96031059511821/

² **Source:** "Foreigners Temporarily Living in Macedonia Tourism Survey; n=92; August 2003; MCA analysis

³ **Source:** Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of Macedonia and SSO/1998 survey at accommodation facilities

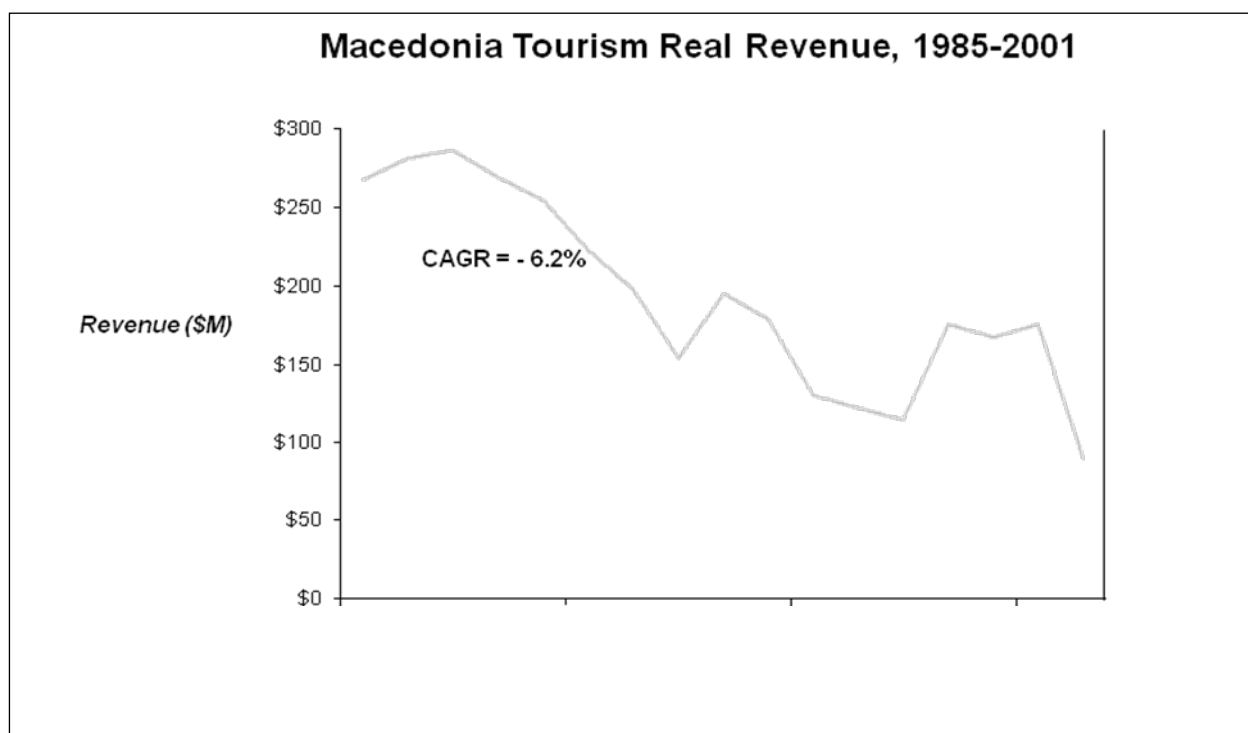
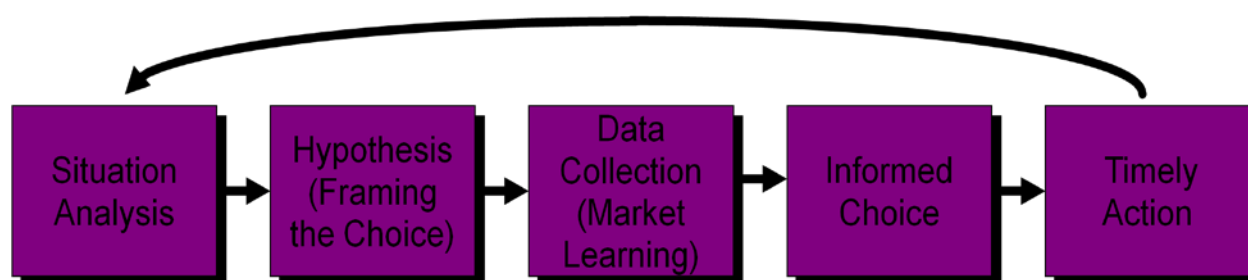


Figure 1 – Macedonia tourism revenue (Source: State Statistical Office⁴)

Macedonia Tourism Cluster which included relevant stakeholders of the tourism sector (tour operators, travel agents, hotels, restaurants, tour guides, biking and hiking clubs, educational institutions, governmental authorities etc.), supported by the USAID Macedonia Competitiveness Activity, agreed that only increased leadership in the private sector would build a strong tourism industry.

STRATEGIC PROCESS

Not being satisfied with the situation as described above, the cluster was determined that actions must be taken in order to improve it, and bring the sector to the level of increased number of foreign tourists and income. It had to go through a clear process in order to develop a winning strategy:



⁴ www.stat.gov.mk

Hypothesis

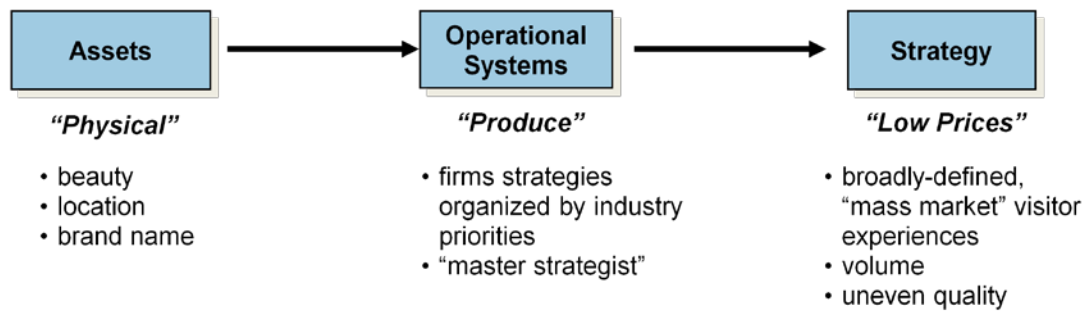
In their efforts to define the starting hypothesis and decide on a strategy, the cluster members held meetings, discussions and analyses, identifying and elaborating two models for tourism development, developed by the OTF Group⁵. The first model was the traditional one, according to which tourism is based on physical assets and comparative advantages: mountains, lakes, sea, infrastructure etc. Within that model emphasis is on the production, according to the industry's priorities, and not customers' needs. That leads to pushing for the mass market, lower prices and high volumes, which does not always guarantee standard quality.

The second model was the one that is based on competitive advantages and searches for unique experience, which requires more than mere physical assets. It is based on the so called social assets: human capital, trust, institutions, unique knowledge. The strategies are based on the customers' needs and the offering is differentiated, unique, customized – and therefore highly priced, with standardized quality.

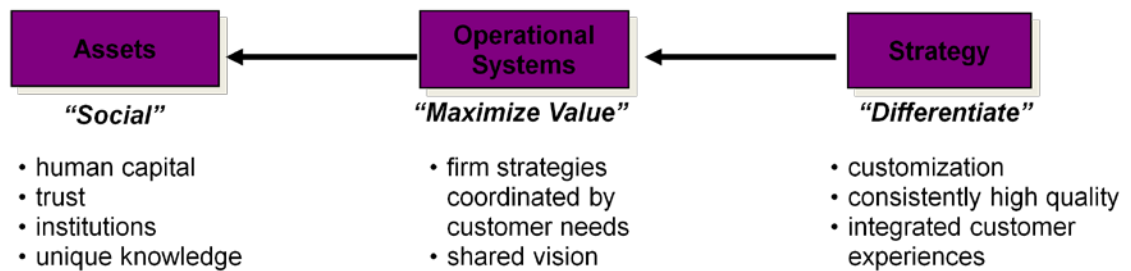
It was clear that the Macedonia could not base its strategy on the social assets – simply because they had not been sufficiently developed, nor it could build its offering on the physical assets, because they were not more special than any of the countries in the region. Low price was also not the best solution, because of the cost of travel. Namely, it was determined that Macedonia did not have very good flight connections, which increased the travel cost. Finally the cluster members accepted the so called Integrated Model, which was based on potential assets, both physical and social, achieved by specialized training, investments and national campaigns.

⁵ <http://www.otfgroup.com/>

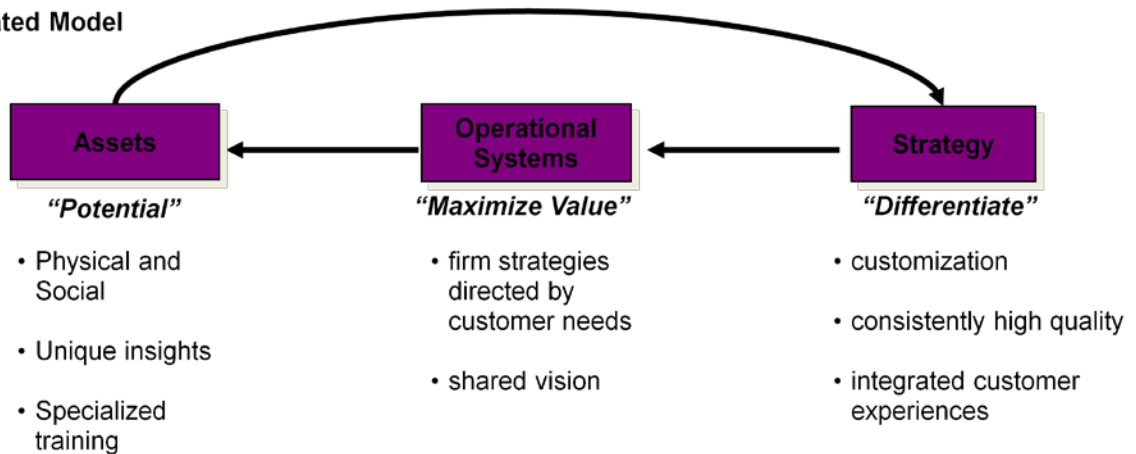
Old Model (Comparative Advantage)



New Model (Competitive Strategy)



Integrated Model



Source: OTF Group

This helped the Macedonia Tourism Cluster to develop its starting hypothesis:

Hypothesis – *The cluster can offer world-class visitors unique experiences by integrating basic assets (mountains, lakes, cultural, historical) into a unique story lived by the visitor.*

Data Collection

In order to understand the market needs market research was conducted of the international tour operators as the distribution channels to the final foreign customers. Secondary research was

conducted on publicly available data about the international tour operators in terms of their segmentation, types of tours offered, trends in the demand, prices, length of stay, differences in cultural behavior and expectations etc. The activity continued with a primary research through conducting phone interviews with a 77 international specialty tour operators (interview questionnaire in Annex 1). Some of the findings were the following:

First thought when thinking about possibilities for tourism in Macedonia:

1.history, 2.potential for development, 3.difficult to develop

Most important destination's attributes for customer's decision:

1.Novelty, 2.Accommodation, 3.Safety, 4.Transportation

Importance of the information sources for the buying decisions of the customers:

1. information from tour operators, 2.Word of mouth recommendations, 3.Websites, 4.Guidebooks, 5.Brochures, 6.Advertisement)

Average number of tourists brought to a new region in the course of a year = 100

Average number of tourists per tour = 30

Average trip length = 8 days

Average amount spent while traveling = 235 euro

Average % spent in the visited country = 58%

Average % discount from local partners = 26%

Importance of the factors that influence the decision to work with a new destination:

1.Safety, 2.Quality of the natural environment, 3.Strong local partners

Average length of realizing a new trip idea = 6-18 months

Most of the respondents require 2-3 star hotels, traditional food, good roads and hygiene.

Explorers travel to enrich themselves, have fun, and learn something along the way. They visit *destinations which educate them*, where they make *“real connections with the locals,”* and from which they *bring back trophies* that demonstrate to friends *how well rounded they are*.

A study of outdoor recreation conducted in Vermont⁶ illustrated what active travelers are doing when they visit:

Active travelers have higher incomes and more likely to travel further for their trips

⁶ Source: Mallet, Jerry. (President of the Adventure Travel Society) *The Evolution of Adventure Travel*, 2002. www.adventuretravelbusiness.com

Stays are 8.1 nights vs 4.7 nights

Outdoor recreation travelers spend \$971 per visit, typical tourist spend \$645 (U.S.)

Active travelers in Vermont are more likely older than typical tourists to the state

Visitors significantly rely on visitor information packages

Adventure travel is a major source of economic development globally.

Nearly 8,500 tour operators in the US offer various adventure trips. Over \$115 billion is spent on adventure travel annually in the US.

The Adventure Traveler is ~50/50 male/female, makes over \$30,000 annually.

The Adventure Traveler will pay for adventure, but they are spending money on “their” terms. One to one marketing is critical.

Trends in society today indicate that ***the public’s interest in the great outdoors and learning about other lifestyles will continue to grow well into the next century.***

As people spend more time in offices, the need to be more physically active increases, leading us to more outdoor recreation

The world is coming to realize that a healthy environment means a better quality of life. As a result, people will continue to become more involved in wildlife, wilderness and cultural issues.

Undiscovered areas on earth are more and more rare. Travelers will continue to climb mountains, run rivers, bicycle, hike, watch wildlife and enjoy natural and cultural wonders, and ***will continuously search for experiences that are enriching, rewarding and unique.***

The Adventure Traveler is motivated by many things including:

Personal development and growth

Environmental benefits

Social/cultural benefits

The conclusion was that the demand for specialty/adventure tourism in off-the-beaten track destinations was strong. Adventure/specialty tour operators seek accommodations ranging from camping in pristine locations to mountain lodges to small luxury hotels in unique settings. They may bring 5 - 500 visitors to a region spending \$50 to 300+ per day. The average trip length of the specialty operators was 7 days. It takes 6 –18 months from conceiving of a new trip idea to actually bringing customers to a new destination. The cluster must organize promotional tours in the region for targeted overseas partners.

With these findings the starting hypothesis of the research was confirmed.

Informed Choice

Based on the conclusions from the collected market information the Macedonia Tourism Cluster made its informed choice:

Who? (target market): *The wealthy, healthy, experienced traveler* - well traveled foreigners (explorers) seeking off the beaten path adventure in new locations with unique stories (historical, cultural, etc)

What? *“Put them inside” unique Macedonian experiences* - Unique stories coupled with compelling activities (hiking, biking, and adventure)

How? *Understanding the customer and building the necessary relationships to bring them to Macedonia* - Deliver improved access to information and guide services, clean accommodations with regional charm, transportation, hospitality services, and pristine environmental conditions

In that way, the Macedonia Tourism Cluster came to its strategy, as shown in Figure 2.

Macedonia Tourism Cluster members worked together to prepare the unique combination of 7Ps that would appeal to the international tour operators and thus, to the foreign tourists. Task forces of tourism cluster members were formed to be responsible for different issues: searching for the best tourist experiences in Macedonia, grading hotels and restaurants where the foreigners should visit, training waiters, chefs, tour guides, artisans, drivers etc. in how to deal with the foreign tourists, and finally – cleaning the environment. As a result of all of these, two promotional tours were developed and 12 international tour operators were invited to be part of the familiarization (Fam) trip around Macedonia (Promotional tour program in Annex 2).

Migration Strategy for the Macedonian Tourism Cluster

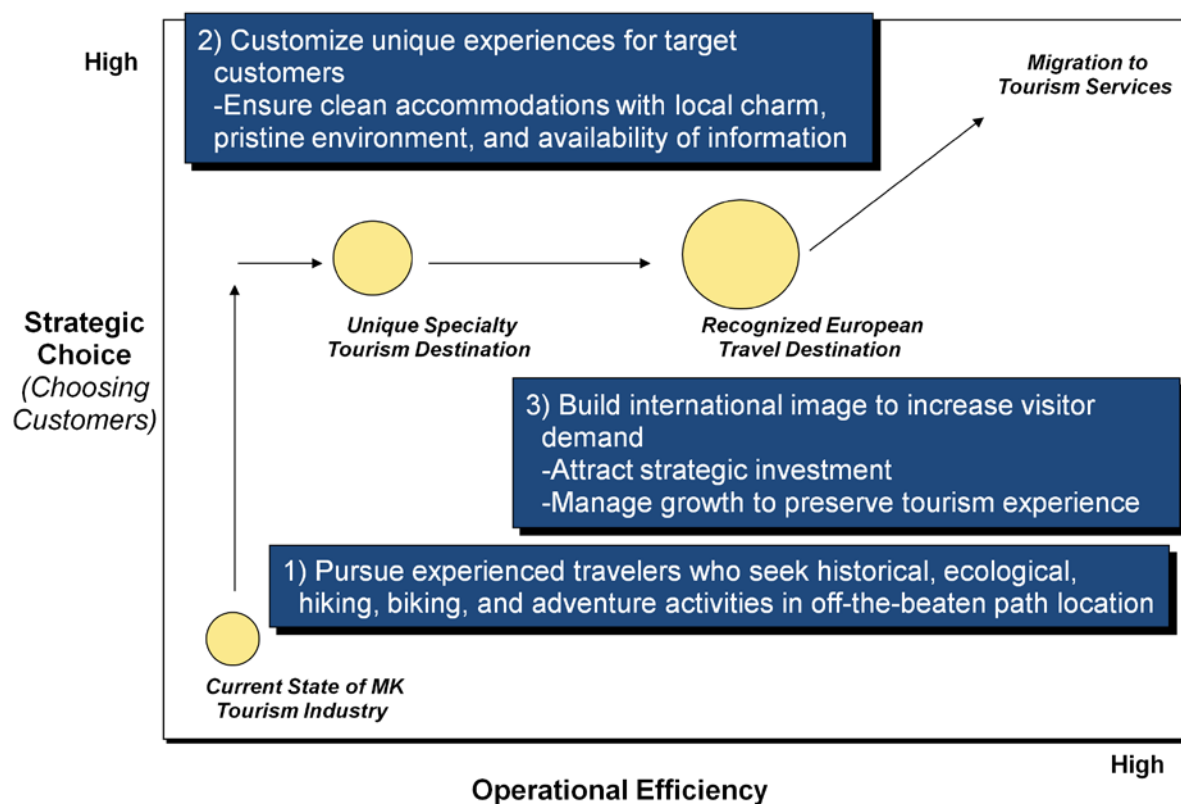


Figure 2 – Macedonia Tourism Cluster Strategy⁷

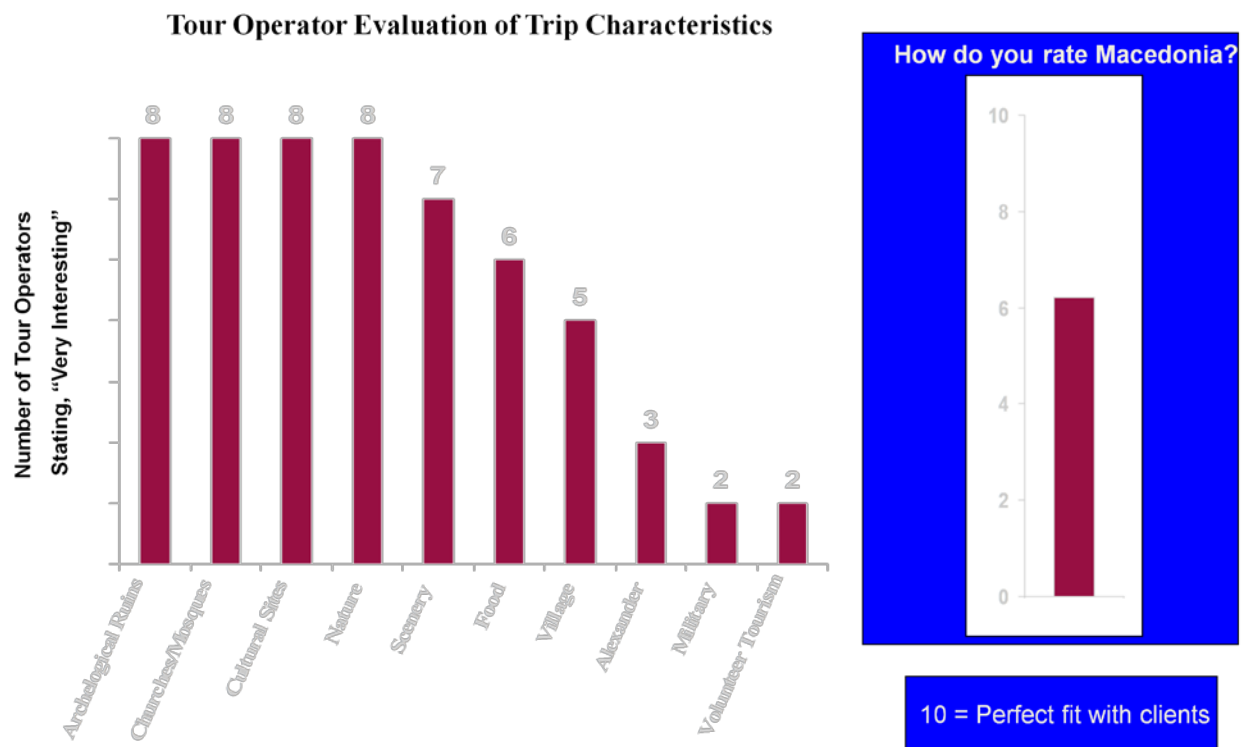
Timely Action

PROMOTIONAL TOUR

13 representatives of 12 tour operators from 7 different countries (USA, UK, Germany, Bulgaria, Italy, Denmark, Turkey) attended the **fam trip** organized by the Macedonia Tourism Cluster in April, 2004. Cluster members collaborated to create culture and nature experiences in Skopje, Mavrovo, Ohrid, Galicica, Krushevo and Bitola. The tour operators experienced Macedonian nature, culture and hospitality while testing the tourism infrastructure. At the end of the tour the participants were surveyed to check their satisfaction level.

The most interesting trip characteristics for the participating tour operators were archeological ruins, churches and mosques, cultural sites and nature. The overall rating of their experience was a little above average (Figure 3).

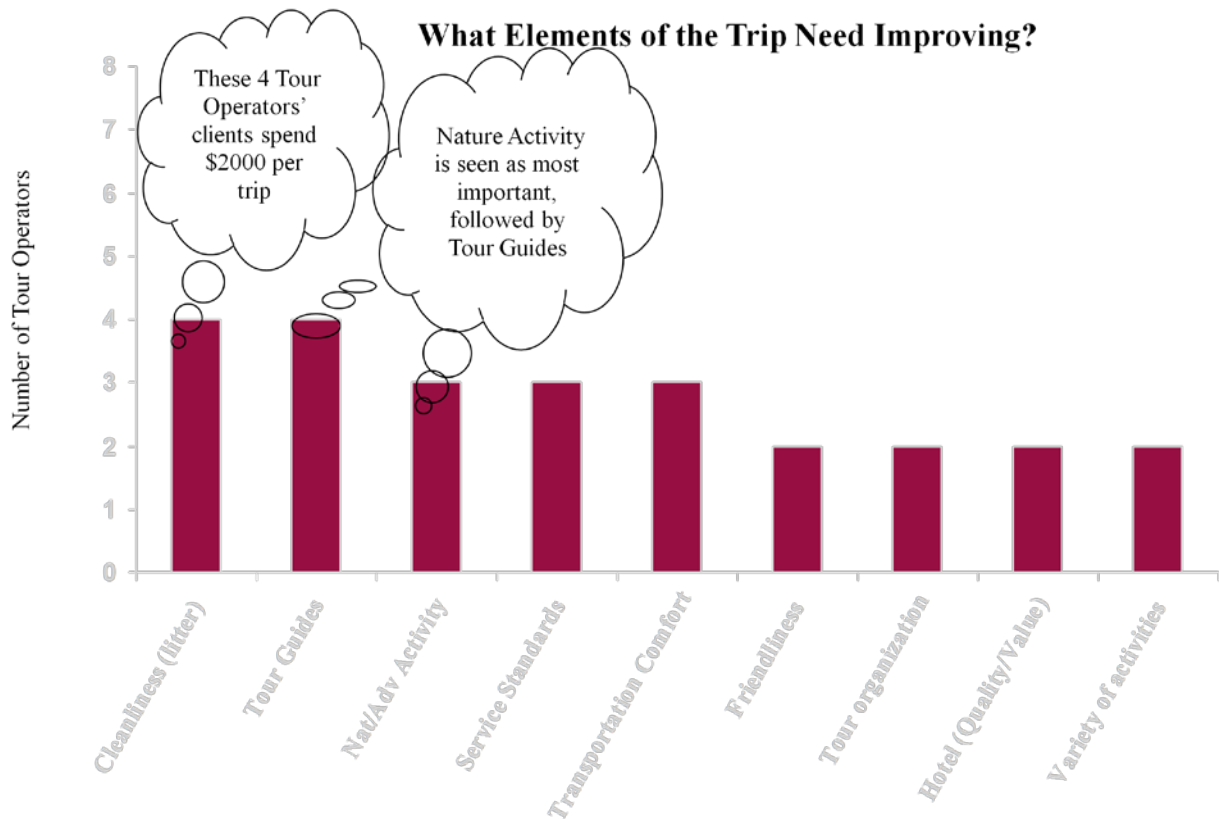
⁷ Macedonia Tourism Cluster meeting – Ohrid, 23 September 2003



Source: MCA Fam Trip, 21 May, 2004, N=11; Very interesting, Not Shown: Mod Interesting, Not Interesting

Figure 3

The most important issues that needed improvement according to the tour operators were the cleanliness of the nature, the quality of the tour guides, the organization of the nature/adventure activities, standard of the services and the comfort inside the transportation vehicles (Figure 4).



Source: MCA Fam Trip, 21 April, 2004, N=11 Note: Food and Value were not mentioned for improvements

Figure 4

Internet was mostly mentioned as a source from which customers learn about a destination, followed by promotional articles and brochures (Figure 5). A very important question was what would be the biggest concern – so called “deal breaker” for adding Macedonia in the product offering. The fact that it was a new and unknown destination was the biggest concern for the tour operators.

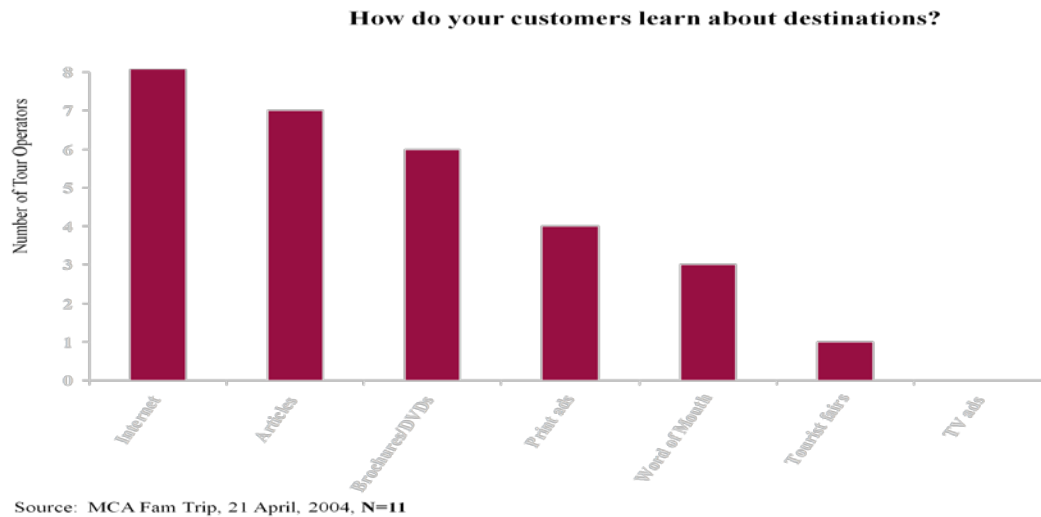


Figure 5

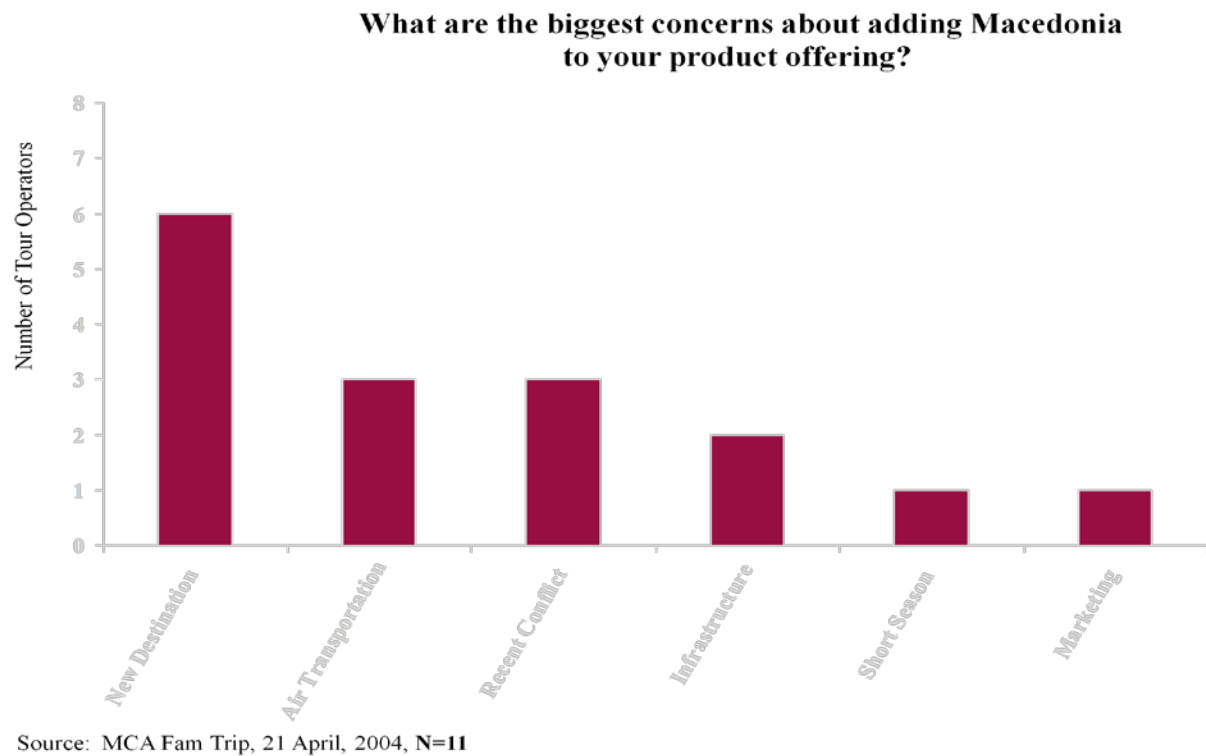
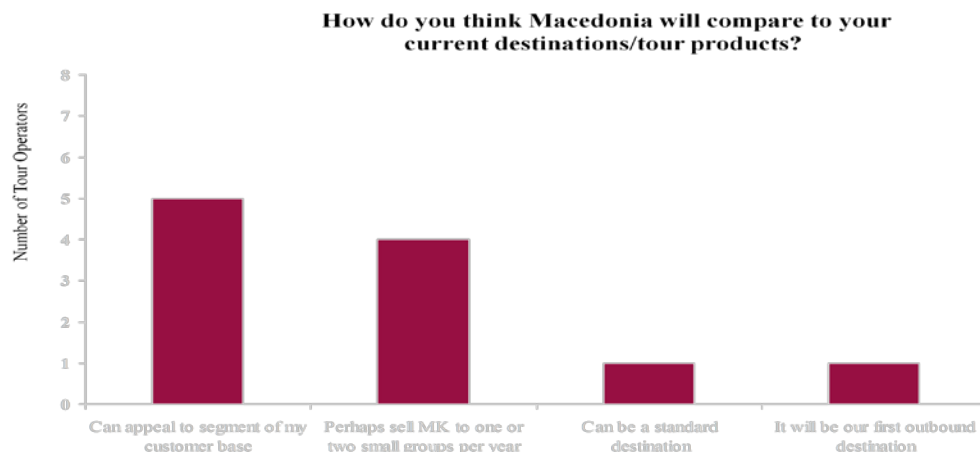


Figure 6

Having in consideration all of the characteristics of Macedonia as a destination, most of the tour operators said that it could appeal to a segment of their customers and perhaps they could bring one or two groups per year (Figure 7).



Source: MCA Fam Trip, 21 April, 2004, N=11

Figure 7

IMMEDIATE RESULTS

11 of 13 Tour Operators' representatives showed strong to moderate interest in returning to Macedonia. Five of them immediately took concrete steps toward bringing groups to Macedonia. Some examples follow:

Experience Plus! USA, started organizing a biking fam trip for journalists in few months later and had begun to negotiate to bring biking tourists to Ohrid and Mavrovo twice a year.

Explore, UK, planned to list Macedonia in its summer catalogue that went to almost 40,000 customers. The firm wanted to collaborate with a Macedonian partner to develop a "Walking in the Snow" tour.

Old Country Tours, UK, prepares regional military and history tours and planned to include Macedonia in its 2005 program. The firm also offered to link to the Macedonia tourism portal when it was ready.

Culterramar, Germany, had begun to cooperate with the German development organization's Euroregion Project after meeting them during the trip to Ohrid. They were planning nature and village tours to the area in 2005.

Middle Earth Travel, Turkey, had developed four tours to Macedonia and was cooperating with local tour operators to organize and test them.

The tour operators reported that their clients spent from \$500 to \$2000 per trip.

CURRENT SITUATION

Macedonia Tourism Sector Performance

Looking at the general picture of the Macedonian incoming tourism in the past period a conclusion can be that there is a positive trend. Namely, the number of overnights spent by foreign tourists in

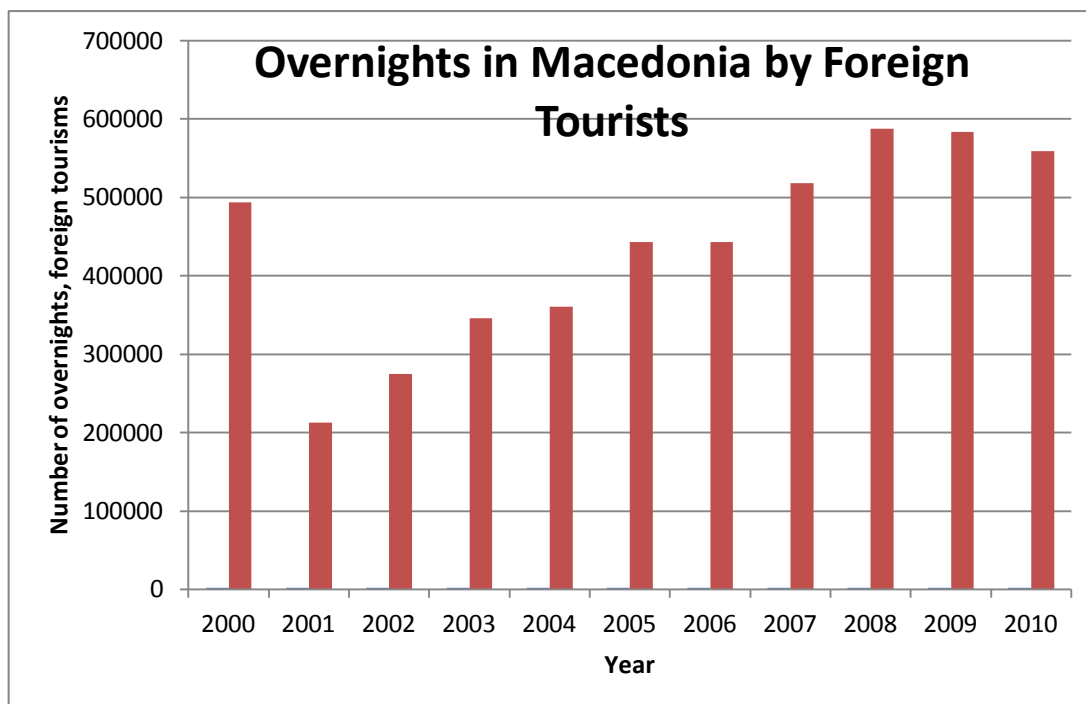
Macedonia has been steadily increasing after the significant drop in 2001⁸, which is explained by the ethnic conflict at that time, when the foreigners were advised not to travel to Macedonia. Mild decrease is noted in 2009 and 2010, which is explained by the world economic recession, which also influenced the travel of people.

Some of the important steps that have been undertaken on the national level that contributed to this positive trend are⁹:

- ☐ Macedonian Government established the **Agency for Tourism Support and Promotion** in 2008, in order to promote tourism resources and capacities on the international level.
- ☐ In order to attract tourists in Macedonia as a unique tourist destination, the multiple stage campaign **Macedonia – Timeless**, sponsored by the Macedonian Government, was initiated in 2008, its first videos already being broadcasted on worldly renowned media such as CNN. This has been supported with the preparation of the web-portal: www.macedonia-timeless.com.
- ☐ The web portal www.exploringmacedonia.com was established in 2005 as part of the efforts for internet promotion of tourist capacities and beauties of Macedonia, as well as the tourist offer for various types of tourism.
- ☐ Local self- government is intensively involved in tourism promotion and presentation activities since 2007. Many municipalities have already prepared Development Strategies, a specific part of which is **Alternative Tourism Development**.
- ☐ The **National Agency for Foreign Investments**, whose goal is to promote and facilitate investments in Macedonia, is offering attractive package of economic incentives to foreign investors.

⁸ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

⁹ Macedonia Chamber of Tourism <http://www.tkm.org.mk/institutions.html>



Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia¹⁰

Follow-Up With 2004 Fam Trip Tour Operators

But what has happened with the tour operators that visited Macedonia on a fam trip organized by the Macedonia Tourism Cluster (supported by USAID MCA) in 2004? Eight years later only two out of the 12 tour operators which attended the fam trip in Macedonia in 2004 are offering Macedonia as a travel destination¹¹ (as part of regional tours) – one from UK and one from Germany. Both are working with relatively small groups of tourists (4 – 20), organize active tours of 14 – 15 days, at a price of 1200 – 1900 Euro. Thus, their total approximate annual turnover from the regional tours that include Macedonia is 310,000 Eur. Even if only a small percentage of this turnover remains in Macedonia, it is sufficient to justify the initial investment of the USAID MCA and the Macedonia Tourism Cluster in the fam trip back in 2004.

On the other hand, it is interesting and important to analyze the reasons due to which the other tour operators are not offering Macedonia as a travel destination. For more in-depth conclusions, I continued with a primary research, contacting them (with a survey questionnaire – in Annex 3). Some of the comments are given below:

“The fam trip to Macedonia influenced us in that we began to consider the Balkans as a possible destination. Unfortunately, we chose Croatia and not Macedonia....We run road bike tours and the road network was not as extensive as needed. In addition, Macedonia is not a popular destination

¹⁰ www.stat.gov.mk

¹¹ www.exploreworldwide.com; www.highplaces.co.uk; <http://www.nbts.it>; <http://luckytours.hypermart.net/Home.htm>; www.experienceplus.com; <http://www.interjet-bg.com/>; <http://www.journeys-intl.com>; www.middleearthtravel.com; <http://www.oldcountrytours.com/>; <http://www.hikeandsail.com>; <http://www.urlaubundnatur.de/>; <http://culterramar.de/>

for US (North American) tourists...For us, it is a question of marketing and ensuring that the press and media are talking about it.”

– Rick Price, Experience Plus! - USA

“After the Fam trip to Macedonia we started offering it because of our personal experience of destination, great food, nice people, superb scenery, potential for hiking...We spent a fair amount to include the destination in our color catalog, website and in advertisements without attracting much interest...Macedonia as a destination is not known to prospects.”

– Will Weber, Journeys International, Inc. - USA

From these statements it is obvious that despite the tour operators' interest in Macedonia and their individual effort to offer it to their customers, it did not sell due to the lack of knowledge about it among the prospects. As mentioned above, there has been a promotional campaign on the national level to build the brand of Macedonia, but obviously it has not reached the US prospects.

Analyzing the offerings of some of the tour operators it can be noted that Macedonia with its characteristics does not really fit in (some of them are only offering incoming tours within their own countries). That means that most likely those tour operators do not really belong in the target market selected by the Macedonia Tourism Cluster.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of this research paper would be:

Market research must be the starting point for any effort to sell a tourist destination. It provides useful information that can be crucial in all of the further steps of developing the offer and selling the final tourist product. Macedonia Tourism Cluster gathered important information, which gave it the right to confirm its hypothesis that there are “wealthy and healthy travelers” ready to pay high prices for exciting experiences “off the beaten track” that Macedonia can offer.

Segmentation is an important step that makes it possible to define the target market. It is of outmost importance to have a very clearly defined target market according to whose needs and preferences the offering will be designed, promoted and priced. Macedonia Tourism Cluster invited 12 foreign tour operators, for which it believed were part of its target market. It turned out that some of them did not really belong to the target market – they offer only incoming tours to their own countries. Promotional efforts should not be wasted to more than the target group.

Similarly, national campaigns to build the name brand of a country/destination are welcome. However, the promotional efforts must be carefully selected to focus on the target market. Widespread general expensive commercials do not really hit the target, so that they are not justified. Macedonian government paid for expensive commercials on CNN, but they obviously did not do much to generate attention of the target group of prospects in USA.

Governmental measures aimed at tourism development are very important. However, it is necessary that they are communicated, discussed with and even proposed from the private sector.

Defining the competitive advantage of a destination is a crucial step in the efforts to attracting tourists. The competitive advantage, and the corresponding competitive strategy, must be very clearly defined, in order to avoid getting “stuck in the middle”. In addition, the offering must be continuously tested against the customers’ satisfaction and improved in order to retain its market position and even expand markets.

Promotional tours for targeted tour operators can be a successful marketing tool in destination selling. The fam trip for foreign tour operators was a positive experience for the Macedonia Tourism Cluster and has been financially justified even by only two of the twelve tour operators who are offering and selling Macedonia as a travel destination to their customers.

Small country, such as Macedonia, can mostly be seen as a potential travel destination by foreign tourists only if it is combined in regional tours with the neighboring countries. That would financially justify the pretty high air travel cost and length of stay.

APPENDIX 1 - Macedonia Tourism Cluster Interview Guide

Name of Operator –

Contact Name -

Telephone –

Website –

Address -

Notes – (Fill this in if they aren’t available....)

NOTE – Internal MCA comments in Italics

Introduction: Hello – Is this name of company or contact. My name is insert your name from the Macedonia Competitiveness Activity and I am contacting you on behalf of a group of tourism companies in the country of Macedonia. Macedonia, which is still largely unknown in the world tourism market, is interested in finding partners with whom to develop and market specialized trips to the region. I discovered your company through (insert how the company was identified) and felt that it would be worth talking further. Would you be the right person with whom to speak about (insert name of company’s) business model?

If possible, I have a series of questions I’d like to discuss with you on behalf of my clients. Would that be possible for you? *If necessary you can say –“In exchange for a few minutes of your time to answer these questions I’d be willing to send out the aggregated data we collect from the group of tour operators that we are interviewing.”*

Qualification Questions:

Are you at all familiar with Macedonia? (*If yes, continue. If no, give brief description that would be relevant to the type of operator.*)

Yes

Somewhat (Knows more than where it is)

Very Little (Knows where it is)

No

Based on your current understanding of, or lack of knowledge about Macedonia, what first comes to mind when thinking about the possibilities for tourism in Macedonia?

What are the current trips/packages in which your company is involved? *Answer this question ahead of time from their website so that you can avoid wasting time with this question. Ask any clarification questions as needed. Circle all that apply.*

Hiking	History	Culture	Adventure	Sports
Mountain Biking	Road Biking	Culinary	Wine	
Nature	Mountaineering	Rock-climbing		
Beach	Lake	Volunteer	Activities	
Fishing	Hunting	Village Tourism	Hotel rooms only	

Other _____ (*Dori – please add new categories where appropriate*)

Other _____

Other _____

Where in the world do you lead trips? (*Answer question from Website ahead of time*)

Do you have any experience with trips in Eastern Europe or the Mediterranean?

Yes No Comments _____

Would you be interested in learning more about the possibilities for leading (fill in the blank about the appropriate type of tourism- ie volunteer, adventure...) trips to a place like Macedonia?

Understanding the Market

Is the demand growing for (fill in the blank about the appropriate type of tourism- ie volunteer, adventure...) tourism? Who are the principle customers and why is this segment of the market growing/not growing?

What attributes of a trip/destination are most important when a customer is choosing a destination? What are the key factors upon which a traveler decides to visit a new, off-the-beaten track destination? *Modify question according to the tour operator's area of expertise*

On a scale of 1-7, 1 being least important, 4 being important, and 7 being most important, how important are the following information sources to the buying decisions of your customers?

Information from tour operators (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Guidebooks (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Word-of-mouth recommendations (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Websites (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Brochures (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Advertisement (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Other_____ (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Comments:_____

What is the competitive environment like for destinations such as Macedonia? How can Macedonia differentiate itself from the competition? Who do you see as the primary competitors to Macedonian (fill in the blank about the appropriate type of tourism- ie volunteer, adventure...) tourism?

How many tourists do you bring to a new region in the course of a year? How many on each tour?

Clarify range_____ *(The range will be very different based on type of trip and destination. Ask them to walk through an example. If there is a possibility that they could bring tourists to Macedonia, ask for the estimated numbers that they could bring in the 1st year, the 2nd year etc...)*

What is the average trip length for your customers?

What is the average amount a customer spends per day when he/she travels with your company?

What percentage of the money that a customer spends with you ends up in the country where you lead the tour? (i.e. money spent on hotels, restaurants, local guides, etc.) What is the typical percentage discount rate you expect from hotels or local tour operators with whom you partner?

Building Relationships

On a scale of 1-7, 1 being least important, 4 being important, and 7 being most important, how important are the following factors in terms of your decision to work with a new destination? Please make any important qualifying comments as needed to complement your numerical rating.

Price (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Safety (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Strong local partners (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Easy to access the destinations (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Quality of the natural environment (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

History/culture of the region (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

World recognized historic/natural features (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Unique but not necessarily world-recognized historic/natural features (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)
Comments_____

Luxury (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Novelty (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Compelling story (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) Comments_____

Other_____ (1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

“World recognized historic/natural features” are things like Machu Pichu or the Greek Islands or the Egyptian Pyramids...

Why do customers buy from you rather than your competitors?

Who are your key competitors? (*Don't insist on this question if they don't feel comfortable with it*)

What makes it worthwhile for you to carry a new trip to a new region of the world?

What lodging accommodations, food diversity, communication technology, transportation infrastructure, safety standards, etc., are required for your trips?

What's the typical lodging that your guests require?

What activities/services must be available for you to be interested to run trips in a region?

What experiences do you provide your clients that truly exceed their expectations?

How should you be contacted about new trip ideas? What is the typical way through which you learn about new destinations and build new partnerships?

How long does it usually take from conceiving of a new trip idea to actually bringing customers to a new destination? What takes the most time to implement?

How do you ensure the highest possible quality experiences for your clients?

Macedonia Specific Questions

Even though Macedonia is currently a safe country, it is located in a region known for ethnic conflict. What safety measures do you need in place to bring clients to the region?

Is Macedonian (fill in the blank about the appropriate type of tourism- ie volunteer, adventure...) tourism of interest to your company? If so, how should we continue a conversation together about developing a world-class product? *Obviously you don't need to ask this if they have already shown no interest in working in Eastern Europe...*

Based on what you know of Macedonia, who do you believe are the best partners through which to develop the tourism industry? Are there other tour operators, travel agents, investors, or individuals whom we should contact to discuss opportunities? *It would be especially interesting to ask about investors interested in new projects since we need to start identifying contacts for foreign direct investment.*

Follow-up and closing remarks:

Ask if you haven't already - Contact Person Name: _____

:

Obviously adapt your closing remarks based on your conversation:

Thank you very much for all of the information you provided today over the phone. This is very helpful as Macedonia makes choices about the future of the tourism industry. Before ending the conversation I wanted to check if I could pass your name onto interested players in the industry or contact you with any follow-up questions? Would this be ok?

Thank you very much – I hope to be in touch soon and see you here in the countryside of Macedonia.

APPENDIX 2 – Program for the promotional trip for tour operators April 17-22, 2004

WELCOME TO MACEDONIA !

Saturday, April 17 – Skopje

Arrival in Skopje. Tourism cluster members will welcome you at the airport and help you get settled in your hotel in Skopje.

8:00 - Dinner (Lira restaurant)

2. Sunday, April 18 - Skopje 7:00 – Breakfast at the hotel Mramor

8:00 – City tour of Skopje including the Kale Fortress, the Church of St. Spas, the Mustafa Pashina Mosque and the Old Bazaar.

Nature/Adventure group:

10:30 – Bus ride to the Millennium Cross

11:30 – Bike to Matka Gorge

14:00 – Lunch at Matka Gorge (Mechkina Dupka)

15:30 – Walk through the Matka Gorge

17:00 – Depart for Mavrovo

18:30 - Arrival in Mavrovo

20:00 – Dinner (Bistra)

Culture/History group:

10:30 - Tour of St. Pantelejmon in the village of Nerezi

14:00 - Lunch at Matka Gorge (Mechkina Dupka)

15:30 – Walk through the Matka Gorge

17:00 – Depart for Mavrovo

18:30 - Arrival in Mavrovo

20:00 – Dinner (Bistra)

Matka – Only 17 km outside Skopje, lies Matka Gorge with its magnificent rocky cliffs. An excellent spot for mountaineering and alpinism, Matka also has a kayaking course. For those that prefer a less strenuous experience, the Mechkina Dupka restaurant is situated on the banks of the Lake Matka, and the Sveti Andreja monastery has a lovely view of the canyon.

Mavrovo – Spreading over an area of about 750 square km, Mavrovo National Park offers the visitor sublime scenery and some of Macedonia's best hiking and mountain biking trails. Nature lovers will appreciate Mavrovo's deep canyons, snow peaks, blue lakes and dense forests. The ***St. Jovan Bigorski*** monastery is just outside Mavrovo. Visitors will be impressed by the monastery's carved wooden iconostasis, one of the finest examples of traditional woodcarving in the world.

3. Monday, April 19 – Mavrovo / Struga

Nature/Adventure group:

7:00 – Breakfast (Bistra)

7:30 – Inspection of Mavrovo hotels

8:30 – Hiking group: 4 hours of easy to moderate hiking

Biking group: 4 hours of moderate biking

12:30 – At leisure to refresh

13:00 – Lunch (Bistra)

14:30 – Tour of St. Jovan Bigorski monastery

17:30 – Inspection of hotels on the way to Struga, and tour of Struga (old bazaar and the river Drim bridges)

19:30 Arrival in Ohrid

20:00 Dinner with wine tasting (Park Hotel)

Culture/History group:

7:30 – Breakfast (Bistra)

7:30 – Inspection of Mavrovo hotels

9:00 – Tour of St. Jovan Bigorski monastery

12:00 – Inspection of hotels on the way to Struga

12:30 – Tour of cave church in the village of Radozda

13:00 – Lunch in the village of Radozda

14:30 – Tour of Struga (old bazaar and the river Drim bridges)

16:00 - Accommodation at a hotel in Ohrid (Tino)

16:30 – Visit woodcarving shop, handmade paper workshop, homemade brandy distillery

20:00 Dinner with wine tasting (Park Hotel)

Ohrid – The area around Lake Ohrid, one of the 3 or 4 oldest lakes in the world, has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Ohrid city, situated along the coast of the magnificent lake, could be called a city-museum. The entire region is registered in UNESCO's directory of the world's cultural heritage and has been placed under world environmental protection. The city bears the marks of Philip II's Macedonian kingdom from the 4th century BC, and the restored amphitheatre testifies to the presence of the Romans two centuries later. Twelve of Orthodox Christianity's earliest basilicas, dating from the early 5th century, were constructed in Ohrid. The largest of these is present today at the Monastery of St Clement. The city's collection of more than 800 Byzantine icons is considered among the most important in the world.

4. Tuesday, April 20 – [Ohrid / Bitola/ Krushevo](#)

7:00 – Breakfast (Tino Hotel)

7:30 – Inspection of Ohrid hotels

10:00 – Ohrid City Tour: St. Sofija church, Roman Amphitheatre, Plaosnik monastery of St Clement, Samoil Fortress, St. Jovan Kaneo church

12:30 – Depart for St. Naum monastery

13:30 – Lunch (St. Naum)

14:30 – Tour of the monastery

15:00 - Boat ride to the freshwater springs at the source of Lake Ohrid

15:30 – Departure

Nature/Adventure group:

16:30 Arrive at Galichica National Park

16:30 Hike including the scenic vantage point overlooking lakes Ohrid and Prespa

19:30 Arrive in Bitola

20:00 Dinner (Epinal)

Culture/History group:

18:00 – Tour of the archaeological site Heraklea and Shirok Sokak (the Wide Street) in Bitola

20:00 Dinner (Epinal)

Galichica – The Galichica National Park lies between Macedonia's two largest inland lakes, Ohrid and Prespa. Ohrid Lake is part of the Albania – Macedonia border and Prespa Lake is shared with both Greece and Albania. Mt Galichica (2600 m) offers a beautiful view of both lakes.

Heraklea – the Heraklea Lynkestis ruins show the remains of a town founded in the middle of the 4th Century BC by Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. In the 2nd century BC, the Romans conquered Macedonia and divided the country into 4 regions. Heraklea was the center of one of the regions and was an important waypoint along the ancient Balkan road Via Egnatia.

5. Wednesday, April 21 – Bitola / Krushevo

Nature/Adventure group:

7:00 – Breakfast at the hotel (Epinal)

8:00 – Depart for morning hiking or biking in Pelister on Mt. Baba

Hiking group: 2 1/2 hours of easy to moderate hiking

Biking group: 2 1/2 hours of easy to moderate biking

12:30 – At leisure to refresh

13:00 – Bus to Prilep

13:30 – Lunch (Makedonska Kukja)

14:30 - Depart from Prilep

17:00 – Arrive in Skopje

19:00 - Dinner in Skopje and meetings with Macedonian tourism hosts

Culture/History group:

7:00 – Breakfast at the hotel (Epinal)

8:00 – Bus to Kreshevo

9:00 – City tour in Krushevo (Nikola Martinovski gallery, Ilinden museum, St. Jovan church, Ilinden monument, Krushevo traditional house, craft shop)

13:00 – Lunch (Montana)

15:30 – Tour of the archaeological site Stobi

17:30 – Arrive in Skopje

19:00 - Dinner and reception in Skopje and meetings with Macedonian tourism hosts

Pelister – Pelister National Park is filled with exquisite flora and fauna, including the rare five-needle pine molica, which can be found only on a few mountains of the Balkan peninsula. The beauty of the Pelister landscape is dramatized by its two mountain lakes, “Pelister’s Eyes,” and diverse wildlife including bears, deer, wild boars, several species of eagles, and the Macedonian Pelagonia trout.

Krushevo – One hundred years ago, the Macedonian people rose up to briefly liberate the city of Krushevo from 500 years of Ottoman rule. Macedonians pour into the city every year to proudly commemorate Ilinden day (August 2, 1903). Krushevo is also a museum of the old Macedonian style of architecture and boasts a gallery of Nikola Martinovski's art. Martinovski, a native of Krushevo, is celebrated as the master of modern Macedonian painting.

Stobi – The ancient city of Stobi developed from a small Paeonian settlement with roots in the Archaic Period. In the Stobi ruins, archeologists have discovered a large number of bronze and marble statuettes of Greco-Roman deities along with examples of decorative architectural stonework from early Christian shrines.

6. Thursday, April 22

Depart from Skopje. Tourism hosts take you to the airport.

APPENDIX 3 – Survey questionnaire sent in April 2012 to the tour operators that attended the Fam trip to Macedonia in April 2004

FAM TRIP MACEDONIA, APRIL 2004
Did the Fam trip to Macedonia in April 2004 have an influence on your company's tourist offering? (did you start offering Macedonia as a tourist destination to your customers?)
IF YES:
What was the deal maker for you to start offering Macedonia? (nature, landscape, hospitality, available accomodation, infrastructure, expertese...)
What kind of organization did you use? (local partners, own representatives...)
How well has it been selling? (has the number of tourists been growing, decling...)
What do you think has been the reason for that trend?
How many tourists visited Macedonia through your company so far?
IF NOT
What was the reason for not including Macedonia in your tourist offering?
PRESENT AND FUTURE
Do you offer Macedonia as a tourist destination at the moment?
If not, why not?
If yes, what do you think is its competitive advantage?
Do you have any future plans regarding Macedonia as part of your company's tourst offering?
What do you think should be improved so that it becomes more attractive for the foreign tourists?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATIVISM AS A TOOL FOR RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF VALENCIA (SPAIN)

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Abstract

This study will refer to the role of social enterprise, namely cooperatives, in rural areas. In our work we emphasize the importance of agriculture cooperatives and worker cooperatives because these societies, in our days, are capable of contributing to creating jobs for local people. Also, we will explain the implications of the establishment of a cooperative in the tourist activity in a particular area, especially in a Spanish region, the Community of Valencia. Finally we will propose solutions and future prospects.

Key words: rural tourism, sustainable tourism, cooperatives, rural development.

Biography:

Ana Lópaz has a degree and a PhD in law from the University of Valencia. She also has a Master in Tax Law from the School of Public Finance of Valencia (1994). Her doctoral thesis was presented in July 2008. She teaches full time since 2003 at Florida University, affiliated to the University of Valencia.

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INTRODUCTION

The current economic crisis that Spain is currently suffering has been the trigger for many changes in society, in politics and in the Spanish economy.

Before analyzing the causes of the crisis in our country, which have been motivated by external and internal factors, however it is worth remembering that Spain has not always been in crisis.

We must emphasize the extraordinary progress that the Spanish economy has taken, especially in the past ten years, where GDP growth has been important, the highest in the European Union, and that the essential innovation has been accompanied by job creation. If we were to point out one figure that expresses the differences between the economy of 1995 and 2008 (the year when the crisis began), we would say that in 2008 the number of jobs almost doubled at the time. Obviously, emigration has been an essential component of the increase of the active population, employment and economic growth (Torrero, 2008).

The external factors that have led Spain to this difficult situation are of varied types: economic globalization and the new macroeconomic regime as a result of membership in the European economic and monetary Union this. Economic globalization involves greater interdependence between economies. Process is not new. Today there are some special features that allow understanding the growth and the crisis of the Spanish economy. (Alonso; Furió, 2010).

Moreover, since the nineties, Spain is already no longer to be a country of emigration and instead, it has become a host country for economic reasons (Alonso et al, 2008). This is the last feature of current globalization quote. In 1965, the Spanish net migration (immigration less emigration international international) was negative. Beginning in 1995, and in just ten years, the immigrant population living in Spain reached the percentage that other countries have achieved in three decades. In 2000, the registered foreign population was lower than a million people, in 2008 there were 5.3 million and accounted for 11.4% of the population living in Spain.

The increase of population and workforce, and the increasing activity in the construction sector, are the changes that have taken place internally and which motivated the Spanish crisis. The growth of the Spanish economy fed an abundant labour force, relatively cheap but not particularly productive, which has multiplied with the arrival of five million immigrants in just 10 years. These facts, together with historically low stock of houses, helped to drive a "boom" in the field of sustainable construction. Considering that 12 years ago the demand for housing in Spain was very high and the flow of immigrants has added 15% of new homes, the total increase in housing stock (estimated between 25% and 30%) can be based on more solid foundations of what some critics have suggested lately. However, the demand for any sector is limited in the long term, since the year 2005, should have been obvious that the supply was beginning to exceed demand (Boldrin, 2009).

The cooperative enterprise model emerged as a great alternative, with its working philosophy of solidarity, mutual aid and the supremacy of man. It was in 1844, when 27 men and 1 woman founded the first cooperative in the town of Rochdale, England.

The new Declaration of Cooperative Identity adopted by the Second General Assembly of the ICA (International Co-operative Alliance)ⁱ, that was took place in the month of September 1995 in the city of Manchester, on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the Alliance includes a new definition of cooperative and a review of the formulation of cooperative principles and valuesⁱⁱ. The new formulation maintains the essence of a system of principles and values that proved to be efficient in more than 150 years of history and contributed to transform the cooperatives in one of

the greatest social and economic forces worldwide, while incorporating new elements for better interpretation of the present historical moment.

Since its birth, the cooperative movement has continued to grow worldwide and today, members of cooperatives worldwide stand above 800 million.

In 1994, the United Nations Organisation estimates that the daily food intake of more than 3,000 million people (half of the world population) was secured or facilitated by cooperative enterprises.

In order to highlight cooperatives as companies that create jobs, we will enumerate some facts:

- Cooperatives employ more than 100 million people worldwide, representing 20%.
- Only in Europe, cooperative banks employ more than 700,000 people
- In Canada, cooperatives employ over 160,000 people.
- In Colombia, a health cooperative stands second national in the ranking of employment generation.
- In Slovakia, cooperatives employ more than 75,000 people.
- In France, 21,000 cooperatives employ over 700,000 people and in Kenya cooperatives employ over 250,000 people.
- In Spain, the importance of Social Economy companies lies not only in size but also, in its qualitative factors. Its capacity to innovate and adapt, its ability to meet the needs the rest of the economy and its contribution of values; all of these factors contribute to support the economic cycles with an enviable stability (Monzón, 2010).

The generation of employment by the social economy in Spain and all European Union members, and especially the cooperatives, is one of the solutions which proposed by the European Commission and highlighted by its current president, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso who said: *"Promote and support self-employment, social enterprises and companies of new creation. Job applicants who are motivated to create and run businesses may face significant obstacles, including lack of professional or business skills and mentoring opportunities and difficulties in obtaining financing. To facilitate self-employment and creating new jobs, are particularly important to promote the entrepreneur spirit and a wider availability of support services to the creation of enterprises and microfinance as well as conversion systems of unemployment benefits in grants for the creation of companies. Assistance should be directed to groups with higher potential (such as unemployed workers with professional skills, women or youth) and based on close cooperation between employment services, services and business support providers financing. The agents of the social economy and social enterprises are important engines of job creation and inclusive social innovation and require specific support, which can occur through public procurement and access to financing"*ⁱⁱⁱ.

The main purposing of this work is to carry out a thorough analysis of certain kinds of cooperatives like worker cooperatives, as key factors contributing to the development of tourism in Spain and particularly through fieldwork, and on the other hand to analyze their role in the Community of Valencia.

COOPERATIVISM AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism can be understood as a practice in the rural tourism that promotes the economy and quality of life through the provision of accommodation and leisure activities, with the mediating presence of the inhabitants of rural areas, and which discloses visitors a living reality in all its natural and cultural wealth (Gil, 1992).

Thus, rural tourism can be understood, as a way of activating social processes of activation of the economy, which in turn should improve the training of local people; in the context of the profound reconversion of concepts, structures and active activities that affect rural communities. Rural tourism is a broad term, which includes many activities, stakeholders and interests; all are closely related to the new demands of tourist and recreational services that are developed in rural areas.

The Institute of Tourist Studies (Spain) defined this type of tourism as *"Any type of tourism used in rural areas, with the following limitations: it is a tourism diffuse (scattered and not concentrated supply), that it respects the natural and cultural heritage, involving the active participation of local people in order to maintain the traditions of the medium, moving away from tourism monoculture^{iv}."*

From that definition we may draw the following features that can help us to understand better what rural tourism is. (Fuentes, 2009): first, rural tourism is a type of tourism that takes place in rural areas. Second, tourism is innovative as it is a non-traditional activity that provides wealth and development opportunities to rural areas with wealth and development opportunities. Moreover, tourism is dispersed, with no major concentrations or infrastructure, which should be integrated into their environment without damaging it. As the third feature, we note that tourism enables communication between tourists and local people, so this plays an important role. In addition, rural tourism is a way of promotion and safeguarding of cultural values and traditions that are part of everyday life of the rural population, such as gastronomy, festivals, crafts, etc... This is a factor of interest for visitors.

Finally, it is worthwhile to remark that if the rural tourism facilitates communication and understanding between different peoples, the different cultures that make up the demand for this type of tourism should be analyzed, in order to know their motivations, their characteristics, their languages, etc., so that the supply satisfies the expectations of tourists and consequently, a demand continuity is encouraged.

In Spain, the current Constitution of 1978, in article 148, 1, 18th, allows regions to take responsibility for promotion and planning of tourism in their area. As a result of the regulation of rural tourism in our Constitution, there are a multitude of regulations affecting this sector; this involves many problems for the promotion, marketing and quality of this type of tourism.

Today, it cannot be said that different regulations of rural tourism in Spain actually offer a definition of what constitutes the concept of rural tourism. Their concern focuses on accommodation located in rural areas, which means establishing its definition and typologies, regulating its infrastructure and services, as well as establish performance requirements. The intervention of the competent administration results in the need to obtain an administrative

authorization for the opening and operation of all institutions devoted to housing in rural areas (Gil-Albarellos 2007^v).

Rural tourism regulation in Valencia can be found in Law 3/1998, May 21 and Executive Order 188/2005, 2 December, Rural Tourist Accommodation in the interior of the Community of Valencia; modified by Executive Order 206/2010, 3 December.

In connection with the establishment of relations between rural tourism and cooperatives, we note the ability of the social economy (cooperatives are social economy companies) to correct social and economic imbalance and contribute to the achievement of multiple objectives of general interest. Among these objectives, the following are closely linked to some rural development (Chavez; Monzón, 2000):

Endogenous economic development, especially in the local area, and autonomy of the territories.

The social economy has revealed its ability to correct the deficit in the field of social welfare services; for instance in services to disadvantaged people.

The social economy has shown a great capacity to increase the level of social cohesion in the territory, to revitalize the social participation and democratic culture, so as to correct the imbalance in the capacity of negotiation and pressure from different interest groups in the process development and implementation of public policies, especially those articulated in the regional and local levels.

The social economy has the capacity to distribute and redistribute income and wealth more equitably than traditional capitalist enterprises do.

The social economy is capable of correcting various types of imbalance in the labour market. Indeed, it has helped to create new jobs; keep jobs in sectors in crisis, to increase the level of job security, to emerge occupations from the informal to the formal economy (handicrafts) and to extract new professions (jobs social care).

Cooperatives in rural areas promote endogenous development, since they make possible to maintain wealth in their area of influence, through democratic processes with a fair redistribution of the wealth generated. In addition, we must be aware that these entities are companies, by definition, socially responsible; from all the cooperatives existing in our country, agricultural cooperatives and worker cooperatives are companies which, at present, are contributing most to develop and promote rural tourism.

The tourist activity created and promoted by agriculture cooperatives involves economic diversification, and with it the realization of new activities in order to invent new strategies in marketing and advertising. The above implies that members of these cooperatives have to create an image, which gives rise to the consolidation of the long-term tourist activity. It can also help to preserve, maintain and improve territorial resources: cultural, natural and social ones. Finally, from a social point of view this fact implies to involve partners on a new activity.

One should wonder, how can agriculture cooperatives operate as facilitators in the diversification of rural areas. The answer is given in the following issues: agriculture cooperatives have to take advantage of their knowledge and expertise members. Additionally they should have strong initiative and showing willingness to change. Furthermore, the cooperative should be able to develop new learning tasks and new ways new ways of communicating its initiatives to society. We should not forget, finally the capacity for analysis and diagnostic capabilities (Cortés, 2009).

Current regulations concerning cooperatives allow the development of new activities in rural areas. For instance, Law 8/2003 Cooperative of Valencia, in its article 87 clearly defines one of the objectives of agriculture cooperatives, *"to promote rural development through the provision of all kinds of services and the promotion of diversification of farming or other efforts to the promotion and improvement of the population and the rural environment."* The consideration of this objective coincides with the development of the processes to create sections within agriculture cooperatives engaged in rural development and rural tourism.

Agriculture cooperatives can play a key role in the development of tourist activities in rural areas. Cooperatives are legal ways that brings together the joint efforts between farmers; in the context of economic globalization cooperatives are very important because its flexibilization, economic diversification and production, can generate competitive advantage and strategic positioning. The development of tourism in rural areas by improving agricultural resources can benefit not only members of the cooperative, but also farmers and local people (Cortés, 2008).

Regarding the worker cooperatives, there are companies whose members have the condition of workers and owners. This means that the relationship of these people with the co-workers acquires a new dimension, different from the other cooperatives. That is, not only members' economic progress is conditioned by the progress of the cooperative, but also members spend most of their time directly linked to the business that has developed and made dependent on the future of their own acting. In this situation member suffers a kind of "corporate schizophrenia" because they are both employers and employees.

What are we, employers? Does it depend on our future work on the viability of the cooperative or the cooperative's viability depends on how we do our work? How does this duality, as natural to us, in a society and a market in which labour relations are designed only enrolled in the traditional? (Alba, 2006). Their contribution to rural tourism development, especially in Valencia, will be referred in to the following section of this paper.

To conclude this section, we will discuss, even briefly the present role of public policies in rural cooperatives. In Spain, Social Economy regulations^{vi} establish a starting point for policies to promote cooperatives and social economy in Spain and in Europe in two key areas: first, the recognition of this sector as a social partner in the process of elaboration of public policies; and secondly, the conception of a whole battery of policies to promote social economy. Concerning the latter, this legislations provides four groups of policies (Chaves, 2011):

Institutional measures aimed at eliminating legal obstacles to the development of social economy. In particular, this measures implies the simplification of administrative procedures for the creation

of social economy entities; the revision of current regulations to remove restrictions on the entities of the social economy so that they can act in any type economy activity and the revision of labour regulations in order to implement subsidies for the cooperatives.

Measures aimed at disseminating, training, researching and innovating in this field, such as, promoting the principles and values of the social economy; introducing references to the social economy in course curricula at different educational levels; and facilitating access to the processes of technological innovation and organizational entrepreneurs in social enterprise.

Measures aimed at establishing a public agency for the promotion of social economy. As a part of the Ministry of Labour, there is an organ of social participation and dialogue on social economy; the Council for the Promotion of Social Economy, which are represented state governments, regional and municipal unions, organizations whose are representing social economy.

Institutional measures of explicit inclusion of the social economy in various sectorial policies, in particular, active labour market policies, especially for those sectors most affected by unemployment (women, youth and long- term unemployment) in rural development policies; social services for people who are in a situation of dependency and social integration, as well as the integration of the social economy companies in the strategies for improving productivity and competitiveness.

In rural areas and as an aid to cooperatives, it is very important to implement each and every one of the measures described, although it is especially important for cooperative the supervision in implementing the measures on institutional measures. However, due to the situation of severe economic crisis in our country, we are aware that the effective implementation of these policies is in fact impossible.

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF COOPERATIVISM IN RELATION WITH THE RURAL TOURISM OF THE AUTONOMUS COMMUNITY OF VALENCIA

In order to analyze the current situation, we made a series of in depth interviews to representatives of rural cooperatives with tourism initiatives; seeking the highest-rank representatives wherever as possible. We interviewed representatives of agriculture cooperatives in rural tourism initiatives.

Also, we interviewed experts in cooperatives and rural tourism in the Comunitat of Valencia: Dr Javier Solsona is a specialist in rural tourism in Valencia and technician in tourism in the Research Department of Valencia Tourism Agency ; John Joseph Damiá, is the director of the Foundation INTERCOOP, a non-profit cooperative group.

The objectives of the interviews were to learn the situation of the sector, its problems and expectations. In particular:

- The importance of public sector cooperatives in rural tourism development
- The impact of public support in the development of rural tourism initiatives by the cooperative.
- If tourism is a main or supplementary activity for cooperatives and their members.

- The services provided by the cooperative in relation to rural tourism.
- If criteria of sustainability have been considered in rural tourism initiatives.
- The role of women in these initiatives.

Problems detected and future proposals.

In all the cases studied, the public sector participation has been a key factor in the development of rural tourism through municipalities, associations of municipalities or provincial councils themselves. This fact has made it easier for agriculture cooperatives to begin with rural tourism projects.

This is caused by considering tourism as a way to diversify and complement activity income, agricultural or otherwise, of the inhabitants of the area and therefore, comply with a twofold purpose: to stop the depopulation of rural areas and increase the income of their inhabitants.

The first initiatives were generate offer and involved the rehabilitation of homes and farms to be dedicated primarily to renting a full house for days, without any other additional service. We note that the existence of such aid, in many cases not related to a master plan for development of the area, has caused an excess of supply.

The travel services offered by the members of cooperatives interviewed were focused on accommodation, offering some activities such as visits to wine cellars, hiking, etc. In all cases, the cooperative provides marketing (reservations center, web...) and some specific training in tourism. Both women and men perform these activities, which help to solve the female depopulation; this fact is great concern to the women in rural areas.

Also, all interviewees considered that public support has had a strong impact on tourism development which have allowed the generation of basic tourism infrastructure with the rehabilitation or construction of tourist accommodation, cultural heritage and natural resources: signaling of roads, rehabilitation of buildings, etc. Public support has decreased to almost disappear and makes it difficult for some of these initiatives to grow nowadays.

The rural tourism projects initiated by the cooperatives, with or without public aid, are based on criteria of environmental sustainability, asset recovery and the physical environment. They also help with preservation of local traditions and customs.

All the interviewed highlight the importance of governance in tourism and the difficulties in generating public-private spaces for better coordination of different stakeholders: tourism is composed mostly of small businesses, and therefore the experts consider cooperative as a way to grow together. The creation of opportunities for public-private cooperation is an opportunity for growth and consolidation of rural tourism.

Quite a few cooperatives consider tourism as their main source of income; sometimes incomes, which are obtained by cooperative, are a supplementary activity, more or less important depending on the case. Agriculture cooperatives emphasize the importance of tourism as a way of advertising to sell their products; egg, wine linked to wine tourism.

Regarding the problems of the cooperatives analyzed, Solsona and Damiá highlighted the following: the sharp reduction in demand due to the crisis; excess supply and low occupancy; strong seasonality; lack of adaptation to changes; and public aid reduction. All the experts interviewed considered the lack of training in terms of product structure and marketing which make it difficult to overcome the above problems.

Future perspectives at the moment are not very optimistic, although the introduction of more professional management models, stimulating quality facilities and expansion of additional supply are seen as key factors for success.

PROPOSALS AND CONCLUSIONS

Resulting from our research work in the situation of cooperatives in the tourism sector of our country, especially in Valencia, we present the following conclusions as well as proposals for the future.

Referring to the regulatory framework, it is necessary to regulate homogeneously rural tourism in each region of Spain. It is also clear needed to coordinate the different regional policies to establish a quality tourism offer. The establishment of a single rural tourism concept applicable to all regional laws should be added.

The role of public administration has been very significant in promoting cooperative movement but it is necessary to strengthen the dialogue between representatives of the cooperative world and the political authorities in order to receive higher subsidies. Public intervention in support of cooperatives was based basically on the need for the correction of market and institutional failures. In the same line, it would be very convenient the participation of cooperatives in advisory councils: the Economic and Social Council (State organ) and the organ with the same name of the Community of Valencia (Chavez, 2012)^{vii}.

It is also important to enable local people to participate in making decisions; associations of rural tourism should be promoted because they can make possible that the inhabitants of rural areas have voice and vote in the tourism activity; an activity from which they obtain their main source of income.

In addition, formation of the partners of a cooperative should also increase so that its members and employees can acquire more professional skills. To do this, the role of training to members of the cooperative as a strategic value should be reconsidered. Training is the basis for work and has to be innovative in the tourism sector.

Finally, we propose to promote local community participation, especially cooperatives, in the process of planning and management of rural tourism; designing communication activities designed to explain the importance of rural tourism to the resident population and their implication in rural development.

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III. FILMTOURISM

DESTINATION IMAGE BUILT BY THE CINEMA: THE CASE OF “BASILICATA COAST TO COAST”

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Abstract

Film tourism, meaning the phenomenon that is born of the desire to visit film locations, has been the object of increasing attention in recent years. This document presents the results of a field research conducted with the aim of analysing the effects of the film "Basilicata coast to coast", by Rocco Papaleo, on tourism in Basilicata, (a small region in the South of Italy) after its success at the box office and the award of several Italian awards. The film, planned with the involvement of local institutions and stakeholders, pursues the objective of promoting an area that is still largely unknown to national and international tourists. The romantic and naturalistic dimension expressed by Papaleo's film seems to have stimulated the curiosity of tourists and promoted a "dreamy" but truthful image of the region.

Keywords: film tourism, Basilicata coast to coast, destination image, cinema, responsible tourism, local tourism development

Biography

Angelo Bencivenga graduated in economics at the University of Salerno and received a Master's degree in hospitality management from the University of Perugia (CST). He joined the Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation in May 2010 as a researcher in film tourism and sustainable tourism.

Livio Chiarullo has a PhD, with a thesis on territorial planning and policies. He has undertaken research for the Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation since 2002. He is currently coordinator of the "Sustainable tourism in Basilicata" research group.

After graduating in Philosophy from La Sapienza University, in Rome, Delio Colangelo got involved in cinema and was awarded a Master's degree in cinema criticism by the Silvio D'amico National Academy of Dramatic Art in Rome. He is currently working with the Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation on the project film tourism.

Annalisa Percoco has a doctorate in economic geography from the University of Naples "l'Orientale". She joined the Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation in May 2009 as a researcher where she is involved in research into film tourism and sustainable tourism.

Introduction

As some specialized studies (Riley, Van Doren 1992; Schofield 1996; Beeton 2005; Hudson, Ritchie 2006) have shown, cinema can undoubtedly be an excellent tool to promote an area, thanks primarily to the enhanced visibility guaranteed by the silver screen. Film is an effective way of building a powerful image of a destination, because it provides a lot of information in a short time. The image depicted by the cinema is more reliable than the image projected by classic advertising, and reaches a wider audience (Gunn 1977; Gartner 1993; Rodriguez, Fraiz, Rodriguez-Toubes 2011).

This manuscript presents the results of a research conducted in this field with the aim of understanding the effects of the film "Basilicata Coast to Coast" (Papaleo, 2010), after its success at the box office, on tourism in Basilicata, a small region in the South of Italy. In particular, we wanted to understand the whole process of film-induced tourism. To achieve this, we, firstly, investigated the key points of "Basilicata coast to coast" from a tourism perspective. Secondly, we administered a questionnaire to accommodation providers (hotels, B&Bs and agritourism structures and related enterprises such as restaurants, travel agents and tour operators). The field analysis was completed with a survey of tourists who had seen the film and had decided to visit Basilicata. In this sense, the aim of the research was to understand the entire process of film induced tourism: from tourism potential and promotion of the territory at the screenplay and direction level, to the image of the destination promoted by the film and its impact on tourism.

Destination tourism image and film tourism

The image of a territory is an aspect that is fundamental for the tourism market, characterised by the intangible nature of the product. For the tourist, being able to see what could be of interest to you ahead of time generates a feeling of familiarity, confidence and trust in the locations, and plays a fundamental role in the final decision to purchase. Some authors (Gunn, 1972; Gartner 1993; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Rodriguez, Fraiz, Rodriguez-Toubes, 2011) have pointed out how the process of forming a touristic image depends on informative agents which can be grouped into three fundamental categories: induced agents, or information which comes from sources associated with the tourism sector and which advertises the destination; organic agents, information which does not come strictly from the tourism sector such as information from friends and relatives, stemming from personal experiences; and finally, autonomous agents, or information produced by the mass media. The latter has considerable power in building the image of a destination, because it is able to provide substantial information on a destination in a short period of time, and is considered more objective than information from classic advertising. Autonomous agents are thus more reliable, and have a greater level of penetration than induced agents. One such autonomous agent is film, and the effects it generates on territories, in terms of tourism, have been studied since the nineties.

Film-induced tourism is defined as "tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video or the cinema screen" (Evans 1997). Several major

studies have been carried out on the effects on tourism generated by cinema or television programmes, (Schofield, 1996; Beeton, 2005; Macionis, 2004; Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Empirical research conducted in the locations of successful films such as "Lord of the Rings", "Sideways" and "Harry Potter" has demonstrated how the visibility of a silver screen product is capable of increasing tourism exponentially. As shown by Riley and Van Doren (1998), visits to the site of a hit movie increase on average by 54% over a five-year period. Moreover, films enjoy a longevity (Beeton, 2005) that extends beyond the cinema screen: home video, prime-time television, pay-per-view and inclusion in festivals and on-line streaming. Through the long tail of audio-visual releases, people remain interested in film locations.

In Italy, this phenomenon has been recently studied, and the analysis has been promising for Gubbio (featured in a domestic TV series "Don Matteo") and Città Delle Pieve (featured in another Italian TV series "Carabinieri"). Both have seen an approximate 20% increase in tourism; The castle of Agliè (used as the set for TV drama "Elisa di Rivombrosa") saw visitor numbers increase from 8,549 to 92,091 within one year (Rocco and Di Maira, 2007). Other studies, which do not consider any production in particular, investigate the relationship between viewing an audio visual product and tourism demand from a more general perspective. An interesting study of this type of analysis is the survey conducted by Di Cesare and Rech (2007) who investigated the influence of films on the individual stages of tourism product purchases, through an on-line questionnaire (promoted through web portals associated with the cinema) . This study showed how the influence of cinematographic products on consumer choice-behaviour attenuates gradually as the process passes from the first stage of a destination purchase process, represented by the "birth" of the desire (45%) to the last stage, when the actual purchase takes place (15%). So the study confirms that the phenomenon of film-induced tourism does not represent a primary motivation in the choice of a tourism destination, but is a motivation that has its own weight in support of other more relevant motivations. Hence, cinema can be a tool for promoting tourism, and even though it may not be the only motivation for choosing a holiday destination, it is certainly one of the main ones.

Cinema in Basilicata

Since the end of the Second World War, more than forty full-length films of the most disparate genres have been shot in Basilicata. Most productions were made in Matera, the cinema capital of Basilicata, thanks to the presence of the Sassi (a Unesco World Heritage site since 1993). There are glimpses in comedies such as "Anni Ruggenti" (Roaring Years) by Luigi Zampa, "Made in Italy" by Nanni Loy, historic works such as "Allonsanfan" by the Taviani brothers, to productions like "Il Rabbdomante" in which the city is the background for the entire affair, and religious films such as Pasolini's "Il Vangelo secondo Matteo" (The Gospel according to St. Matthew) and more recent works such as Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" and Hardwicke's "The Nativity Story". Some other parts of Basilicata also appeared occasionally, especially since the 1960s, such as Maratea (on the Tyrrhenian coast) where some scenes of Siani's "La Vedovella" and Dino Risi's "A Porte Chiuse" were shot, or the ghost town of Craco which, thanks to its powerful atmosphere of an abandoned town, allowed director Francesco Rosi to represent Basilicata from the 1930s in "Cristo si è fermato a Eboli" (Cristo stopped at Eboli). The Municipality of Irsina is the backdrop for the Michele

Placido's "Del Perduto Amore" and the Vulture Melfese area, in the northernmost part of the region, is admirably depicted by Gabriele Salvatores in his "Io non ho Paura" (I am not afraid).

The movies shot in Basilicata	
Passannante by Sergio Colabona, 2011 Un giorno della vita by Giuseppe Papasso, 2011 Basilicata Coast to Coast by Rocco Papaleo, 2010 Mineurs by Fulvio Wetzl, 2007 The Nativity Story by Catherine Hardwicke, 2006 The Omen Il presagio by John Moore, 2006 Il Rabbdomante by Fabrizio Cattani, 2005 The Passion of the Christ by Mel Gibson, 2003 Io non ho paura by Gabriele Salvatores, 2002 Ogni lasciato è perso by Piero Chiambretti 2000 Terra Bruciata by Fabio Segatori, 1999 Del perduto Amore by Michele Placido, 1998 L' Uomo delle Stelle by Giuseppe Tornatore, 1995 Il sole anche di notte by Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1990 King David by Bruce Beresford, 1985 Tre Fratelli by Francesco Rosi, 1981 Cristo si è fermato a Eboli by Francesco Rosi, 1979 Volontari per destinazione ignota by Alberto Negrin, 1978 L'Albero di Guernica by Fernando Arrabal, 1975 Qui comincia l'avventura by Carlo di Palma, 1975	Il tempo dell'inizio by Luigi Di Gianni, 1974 Allonsanfan by Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1974 Anno Uno by Roberto Rossellini, 1974 Il decamerone nero by Piero Vivarelli, 1972 Non si sevizia un paperino by Lucio Fulci, 1972 C'era una Volta by Francesco Rosi, 1967 Made in Italy di Nanni Loy, 1965 Il vangelo secondo Matteo by Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964 Il Demonio by Brunello Rondi, 1963 Gli anni Ruggenti by Luigi Zampa, 1962 La Vedovella by Silvio Siani, 1962 Italia '61 by Jan Lenica, 1961 Viva l'Italia! by Roberto Rossellini, 1961 A porte chiuse by Dino Risi, 1960 La nonna Sabella by Dino Risi, 1957 La Lupa by Alberto Lattuada, 1953 Le due sorelle by Mario Volpe, 1950 Nel mezzogiorno qualcosa è cambiato by Carlo Lizzani, 1949

Source: Ciak si Viaggia, Apt Basilicata

However, it is only since Mel Gibson's "The passion of the Christ" released in 2004 and filmed largely in Sassi di Matera, that Basilicata's institutions have begun to think about the effects that the cinema might have on the promotion of the Region in a broad sense. In fact, the large number of visitors and the international visibility of which the town of Matera benefited (there was an estimated 144% increase in foreign tourists^{viii} the year after the film came out, and in the following years there was a significant increase in hotel structures^{ix}) highlight the opportunities. However, this is an almost "spontaneous" effect, linked to the popularity of the director and the success of the film, rather than to an effect related to initiatives and actions specifically designed to promote tourism in Matera and Basilicata.

Basilicata coast to coast: the movie and the opportunities for film tourism

"Basilicata coast to coast" is a musical comedy that achieved good commercial success placing it in the classification of the best Italian box office films for 2010. Its director, Rocco Papaleo, won awards as best first-time director in two of the major Italian competitions, the "Nastro d'Argento"^x and the "David di Donatello"^{xi}. It tells the story of a trip through Basilicata. Four friends, united by their passion for music, decide to leave Maratea, a beach town in Basilicata on the east coast, and walk to the "Festival di teatro canzone" in Scanzano (on the west coast of the region). The trip is dotted with meetings, misadventures, music, local culinary tradition and breathtaking scenery which make their experience unique.



Fig. 1: The movie poster of *Basilicata coast to coast*

"Basilicata coast to coast", is the first experiment in the "targeted" promotion of the territory. Papaleo's film, thanks to a co-planning of the audio-visual product (which involved public and private subjects) managed to trigger a series of micro-initiatives that benefited the Region, especially in terms of promoting Basilicata as a "product", giving visibility to an area which is still largely unknown in the national tourism panorama. A "positioning" action, even from a geographical point of view, made possible precisely because of the active contribution of local organisations (in particular the Basilicata Region and Local Action Groups also with a financial support, using ERDF^{xii} funds) in defining the screenplay and the values/resources to bring out in the film, and in identifying the locations to be used.

As Hudson and Ritchie suggest, the more the setting is in the foreground of the story, the more it will leave an impression on the viewer's mind (Hudson, Ritchie 2006). One way to explain the success of "Basilicata coast to coast" may be to consider the successful interpenetration of story and scenery in the film. In "Basilicata coast to coast" storyline and site are closely intertwined and the story gives the audience an emotional experience, which they associate with the location. The screenplay, following the stories of its five characters and providing each one with his own space for deeper psychological examination, also leaves some gaps for the director to intervene, modulating music and landscape. It is therefore not simply a question of alternating the story of the characters with postcards of Basilicata, but of inserting breaks in the narrative in order to allow a "Basilicata atmosphere" to be created. In this sense, the musical moments cannot be considered

evasive pauses, but rather as a contribution to the representation of the characters and their stories. The trip that the characters make is first and foremost a personal journey, which even though it ends in defeat and disappointment (the group does not reach its destination in time for the Festival), leads them to discover their key points^{xiii}. Also it is precisely in the game of mirrors between characters and landscape that the music represents a fundamental glue. The format of the film score is part road movie and part musical comedy, harmonising them in a musical walking movie structured in well-defined chapters. Each chapter, or leg of the trip, from the story's perspective, contributes to progress one or more threads of the narrative; from a landscape perspective, the film gives very specific indications about where it is set, tying it to typical products and traditions^{xiv}. At the end of each leg, the music is the moment in which the two aspects come together, revealing how essential it is to strengthen the relationship between characters and countryside^{xv}.

From a film tourism point of view, "Basilicata coast to coast" is a very interesting film in that it manages to condense an entire series of elements intended to keep attention on the Basilicata landscape without prejudicing the progress of the film. From the title onwards we understand the intention is to perform a branding operation, attributing a philosophy of life to the Region. In fact, inserting the word Basilicata in the film title means associating the stories of the characters with the territory in which they take place. In this way, the scenic space in which the story is set is not a simple background, but appears from the beginning as strongly characterised and provides precise values. Basilicata is a place in which a trip is taken, from coast to coast, where people meet and reveal themselves. The first scene is relevant from a film tourism point of view, also meeting a practical need: geographically placing a region that is not well known as yet. Beginning from an "extra-terrestrial" perspective, the camera zooms in on the Region on a map of Italy and quite literally enters it, as if to emphasize that the metaphoric voyage is supported by a real presence. "Basilicata exists" Papaleo emphasizes at the beginning of the film, and the voyage on which the characters embark can be traced and replicated following the specific descriptions of the legs. The use of the music, the image of an almost abandoned land, all contribute to the creation of what we have called the "Basilicata atmosphere". The atmosphere of this film is nothing less than an attempt to establish the Basilicata brand – exalting a life that is authentic and far from our hectic modern existence, honest human relationships, and mystic involvement in a timeless landscape. These are its strong points. Clearly, a representation of a dreamy and romantic Basilicata can be a precious resource in terms of "iconising" the territory and hence for the promotion of tourism^{xvi}.

Within the film there is quite effective product placement. Products and traditions are inserted into the story with a dual value: on the one hand they tie the metaphoric scenery to the real scenery and on the other they meet the need to characterise and promote the territory. The product placement already happens in the screenplay, amalgamating the products with the story in such a way that they are not outside of the narration, but become a pretext for a funny scene or for the reflection of a character (plot placement). If we analyse the effect on the destination and therefore the destination placement, the choice of an unconventional route that leaves out Matera, a place celebrated by other films, in favour of an inland and less known area of Basilicata, made by Papaleo is interesting. During the film, the characters travel through towns which do not have much of a tourism profile on national or even local level, and which have almost never before been used in

films set in Basilicata. Putting the camera in these places, it is clear that "Basilicata coast to coast" wants to make the most important chance in film tourism its own, the chance to create an incentive for the creation of a tourist destination also through the visibility produced by the silver screen^{xvii}. More generally we can say that the whole film contributes to form that vicarious consumption, which is one of the most important driving factors of film tourism. The term vicarious consumption refers to the sense of familiarity with a destination that has already been "consumed" indirectly thanks to a film and which makes said location more attractive from a tourism point of view to others (Schofield, 1996; Macionis, 2004). The "aesthetic" promotion allows the location to be entered right away, significantly reducing the worry tied to the discovery of an unknown location (Fagiani, 2009). Through the story of the trip, the viewer acquires a series of pieces of information on the territory and its traditions, and therefore a prior knowledge of the towns appearing in the film.

The field research: Objectives, methods and results.

Objectives and methods

The research in the field carried out in the period between November 2010 and April 2011 was conducted with the general aim of investigating the relationship between cinema and tourism in Basilicata, and specifically, of analysing the effects of the film "Basilicata coast to coast" on local tourism and on tourism destination image.

To investigate the repercussions on the territory that are attributable to the film, all the tourism operators present in the locations used by the film were interviewed by telephone, using a questionnaire. In particular, 95 operators running hotels, bed and breakfasts, agritourism structures and restaurants as well as tourism intermediaries (travel agencies and tour operators) were interviewed. Hotel and restaurant owners (the kind of tourist structure mostly common in the area) made up 65% of our sample. Over 60% of the questionnaires were administered to operators in Maratea, on the Tyrrhenian coast, and in Scanzano, on the Ionic coast (respectively the departure and arrival point for the Basilicata coast to coast group), Municipalities already involved in tourist flows and, for this reason, equipped with a more tourism-related services. A telephone survey, used to contact the area tourism operators, was selected both to overcome the problems of physically reaching the interviewees (the survey was conducted during the off season which is frequently when many structures are closed) and because there would be less resistance to granting an interview with this type of contact (Corbetta, 2003). The survey was structured with 12 mainly multiple choice questions investigating the tourist effects produced by the film "Basilicata coast to coast" in terms of the image and knowledge of the territory, and in terms of numbers of tourists and hence income for the local economy.

The final phase of the investigation involved tourists who had arrived in Basilicata in the wake of the success of "Basilicata coast to coast". They were asked a series of open questions, to find out their expectations before taking the trip, the image of Basilicata which the film had communicated to them (and how this matched the reality of what they had experienced during the trip), their degree of satisfaction and the strong and weak points of the tourism on offer. The technique of the semi - structured interview^{xviii}, leaving the subject interviewed ample autonomy in discussion, also

allowed us to collect information in addition to what was expressly asked, thereby adding information to the overall picture that had not been examined at the start of the study. The tourists who arrived in Basilicata through some domestic tour operators specialised in responsible tourism and the walking holiday sector were contacted by e-mail or met directly at the end of their trip. These were people with an average age of 40-50 years and a medium-high level of educational attainment, mostly self-employed professionals from Central and Northern Italy.

The results: The film tourism opportunities for the image of Basilicata

In general the silver screen is considered by almost all the tourism operators surveyed as a special kind of marketing of the area that would allow the image of Basilicata and knowledge about it to be more widespread.

To the question "do you believe that making films can represent a form of promotion of the area?" almost all (96.4%) of those interviewed stated that making films can effectively represent a form of promotion of Basilicata. Films shown in cinemas, in particular, are considered an excellent tool to promote little known territories to which symbolic meanings that enhance the specific nature of such areas are often associated, thanks to cinematic storytelling, stimulating strong curiosity in the viewer. Almost 70% of those interviewed believe that the film "Basilicata coast to coast" had a positive influence on local tourism, showing the colours and countryside of the area and, at the same time, bringing out the specific components of the identity of a territory which is still little known from a tourism perspective.

As for the effect that the making and subsequent distribution of the film had on the area, those interviewed stated that the main impact is related to the dissemination of the image and the greater awareness of the territory (40%), followed by the effect on the local economy and the increase in the flow of tourists. So according to those interviewed, one of the main merits of the film is that it promoted awareness of Basilicata and its natural and historical-cultural resources. A widely held opinion is that initiatives such as this one must be given incentives, above all to generate curiosity and provide visibility to the inland areas of the region, which is still in an exploratory phase in terms of tourism (Butler, 1980) but with great resources that can be used to the advantage.

What was the main influence of Basilicata coast to coast?

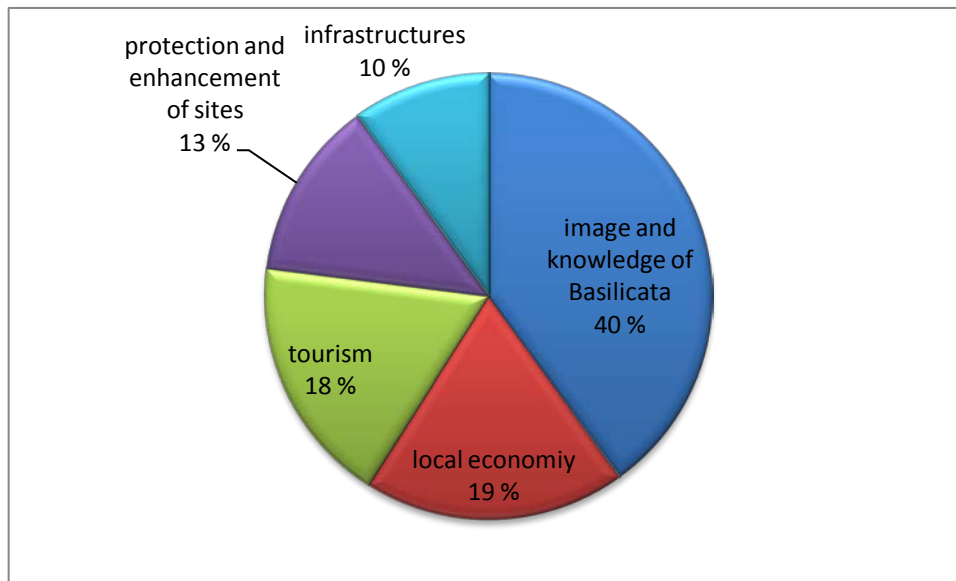


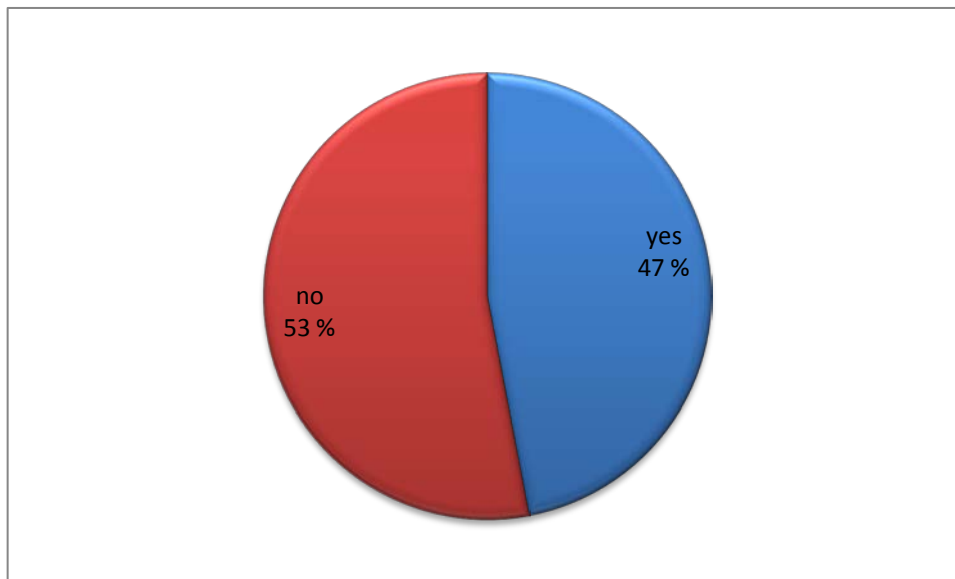
Fig. 2: The impacts of "Basilicata coast to coast"

A comparison with other films that have "brought" Basilicata to the silver screen is also interesting. An opinion shared by many is that, unlike other film productions which used Basilicata to represent other places (for example "The Passion" in which the town of Matera is used to "speak" of Palestine), by placing the territory of Basilicata at the centre of a story (also indicating towns and typical products) Papaleo's film guarantees greater visibility to the territory, including visibility for the purpose of tourism. Nonetheless, the image of Basilicata that emerges from the film is not comparable to the image of a postcard or a poster, static and faithfully connected to reality. The story, the characters' adventures, the shots, the music, all enrich the territory with elements, intangible but perceived by the viewer, which contribute to presenting Basilicata as a dreamy region, suspended between conservation of its authenticity and the anxiety about modern times.

The results: The film tourism opportunities for the local economy

Regarding the impact that "Basilicata coast to coast" had on local tourism and the desire stimulated by seeing the film, it is not easy to provide precise indications (as has been said already, it is impossible to identify the relevance of the film tourism component compared to others in the reason for a holiday). However, the investigations show that just under 50% of the tourism operators involved registered an increase in tourist numbers compared to the previous year in their businesses. Specifically, this increase was less than 10% for 30% of the operators, between 10% and 20% for 58% and between 30% and 50% for the remaining 12%.

Since the release of the film, have you seen an increase in tourism?



What was the percentage increase in tourism?

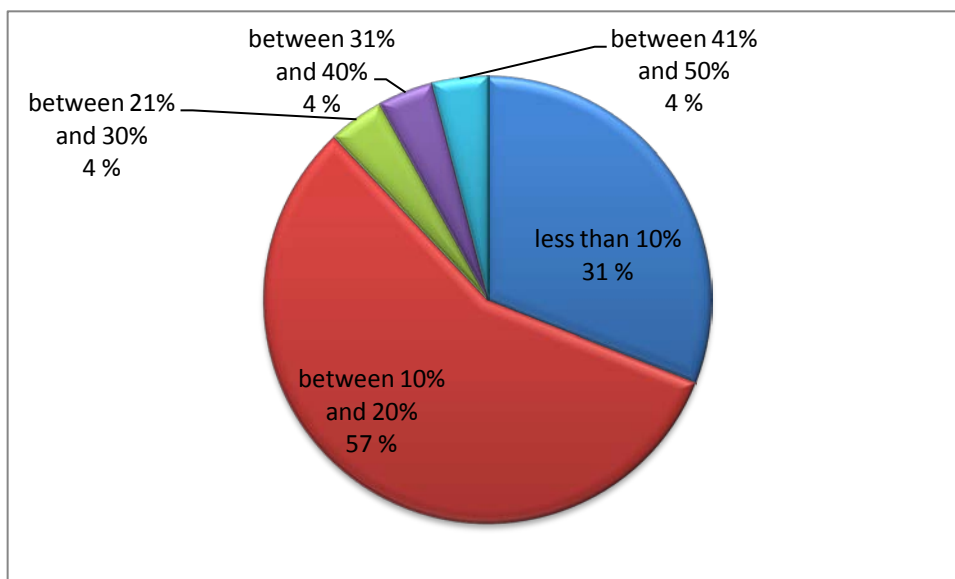


Fig. 3: Increase in tourist numbers connected to the film BCTC

Two questions in the questionnaire sought to verify whether or not the increased visibility of Basilicata and the increased number of visitors traceable to the distribution of the film had also increased the turnover of companies in the territories involved in filming. 65% stated that they had experienced no increase in turnover. Of the remainder, 58% recorded an increase of less than 10%, 32% had seen turnover grow between 10 and 20%, and the remaining 10% stated that they recorded an increase in turnover of over 20%. The structures which claimed to have had an increase in their turnover are hotels, restaurants and agritourism structures which altogether represent about 90% of those who confirm that they had seen benefits, including economic benefits, from the making and distribution of the film. Maratea, Scanzano Jonico and Trecchina are

the Municipalities where most of the operators who recorded both an increase in traffic and in turnover are concentrated. This fact can also be explained by the tourism visibility of the two coastal towns (Maratea and Scanzano Jonico).

Tourists' opinions

The last part of our investigation involved some travellers who chose Basilicata as their destination after seeing the film and prompted by less usual tourist packages promoted by some domestic tour operators. The decision to propose a road movie on foot like a self-discovery, with an itinerary that can also be intended as a journey of the soul, is particularly congenial to stimulate a type of responsible tourism. In the wake of the film some national tour operators specialising in walking holidays conceived and marketed proposals for tourists interested in seeing at first hand the places narrated by Papaleo's film. "Walden -Viaggi a piedi" in collaboration with "Viaggi Solidali" offered "Basilicata coast to coast. From the Tyrrhenian coast to the Ionian sea, in the footsteps of the emotions of the film of the same name, for a journey with no schedule in a land to be discovered." The journey from the 2nd to the 12th of June, 2011 leaving from Maratea (Tyrrhenian coast) with final destination Policoro (Ionian coast) was undertaken by walkers who wanted to discover the region and its resources on foot. "I'm always on the lookout for new proposals, ideas and this offer from Papaleo's film was perfect. I couldn't let such a great opportunity get away from me. I didn't know Basilicata very well and thanks to the film I appreciated its specific nature and, above all, I was able to structure a walking trip which partly covers what the group did in the story by Papaleo"^{xix}. The other package was proposed and organized on September by "La Via dei Canti" and was included amongst the news in the catalogue: "Christ Stopped at Eboli? Let's see". An important initiative was the offer from CamminAmare, a social promotion association specialising in the organisation of walking holidays: "A trip on foot in the places of the Rocco Papaleo film and along the Tyrrhenian and Ionian coasts in search of natural scenery and agriculture to be discovered at 3 km per hour". A route with 11 stops in 16 days, scheduled for October 2011 all set up completely free of charge and on private hospitality, with the goal of getting to know Basilicata, its people and its traditions at "low speed". In this case, it's important to underline that the philosophy of the film inspired a trip that combines trekking with social aspects, a sort of praise for the slow traveling. The tour offered by Camminamare was specifically intended to provide a glimpse of Basilicata, to promote alternative economic initiatives and sustainable development, organizing public meetings along the way and producing a GPS itinerary to offer to local communities.

We met some tourists directly, during their journey on foot in Basilicata, and contacted others by e-mail. This phase allowed us to investigate the image and the level of awareness of Basilicata that each participant had before seeing the film (and on how Papaleo's film may have had an influence on changing it), on the reasons which led them to take part in the itinerant trip, and finally on the expectations that each one had when they decided to undertake the tour. Most of those interviewed had a very limited awareness of Basilicata before seeing the film, often linked solely to the town of Matera. Some of those interviewed had not known the area at all ("I had no idea what it could offer", "I didn't know it very well, I assumed it was similar to other regions in the south"). This situation was also confirmed by one of the organisers: "For me Basilicata was, as they also say in the film, a black hole in Italian geography. Little is written about the region and apart from Maratea and Matera, very little is known about its natural beauty and cultural wealth".^{xx}

The film gave everyone the opportunity to appreciate the nature and characteristics of some small towns in the region ("It seemed like a wild and interesting land", "A luxuriant and green land, a land where time stops", "A land of very striking countryside"). For many, Basilicata called to mind ideas of a place which is still preserved, where you can live simply, a land which is not well known but which, for this very reason, reserves unexpected possibilities, all yet to be discovered, for the traveller. In this sense the romantic and naturalistic dimension expressed by Papaleo's film seems to have stimulated the curiosity of tourists and promoted a "dreamy" but truthful image of the region. Basilicata is striking because of its tranquillity and because of how far it is from modern frenetic life, also highlighted in the film. "It is a region which made me curious, and which was worth visiting, precisely because it has not yet been discovered, catalogued, standardised, homogenised".^{xxi} The decision to explore this region on foot is linked particularly to the conviction that walking allows one to "experience a territory" and therefore to perceive the places, the environment, the nature and the people one meets with greater force and intensity. All of those interviewed agree in considering all of their expectations more than satisfied ("I found it very hospitable, welcoming and clean. Nor did we have any problems in terms of safety", "Perhaps much more than I thought it would be", "It satisfied my expectations") and they identify the strong points of Basilicata as hospitality, the landscape and the good food. At the same time, however, those interviewed emphasised the need to improve the tourism offer both by taking better advantage of the natural resources of the region ("more maintenance is needed and improved signs on the trail network", "Marking or putting signs on thematic routes to take on horseback, mountain bike, on foot would allow the visitor to appreciate the territory better") and by promoting the local resources in an integrated way, sustaining and stimulating private initiative ("It would be useful if local operators created websites involving all the various sectors: food, restaurants, lodging, excursions and in this way offer tourists more structured products", "I found very few entrepreneurial initiatives related to Basilicata coast to coast. More should be promoted. It's worth it").

Conclusion

The investigation in the field confirms the role that cinema can play in the promotion of a destination image, especially if it is not very well known like Basilicata. In fact, it's a region that is still one of the least known in Italy where tourism is concerned (in spite of the rich natural resources, landscape and historical-cultural wealth it possesses) and in which the tourism industry is still in a pioneering stage.

In the case of "Basilicata coast to coast", it was a major strategic film promotion of the territory in which the local communities and institutions intervened directly both in determining the locations and with financial support. The film, in fact, gives very specific indications about where it is set, tying it to typical products and traditions. The use of the music, the image of an almost abandoned land, exalting a life that is authentic and far from our hectic modern existence, honest human relationships and mystic involvement in a timeless landscape all contribute to the creation of a "Basilicata atmosphere". Through the story of the trip, the viewer acquires a series of pieces of information on the territory and its traditions, and therefore a prior knowledge of the towns appearing in the film. The field research shows that, the year after the film's release, nearly half of

tourism operators have recorded an economic impact between 10% and 20%. If the results are not so high, it should depend on a lack of awareness in film tourism potential by local operators.

Beyond the immediate economic impact, Papaleo's film is an interesting brand operation and has created a responsible tourism demand that there wasn't before. In the wake of the film some national tour operators, specializing in walking holidays, have conceived and marketed some proposals related to the filming locations. The romantic and naturalistic image built by Papaleo's film seems to have stimulated the curiosity of tourists and promoted a "dreamy" but truthful image of the region. It's an important niche tourism, especially for such a small region as Basilicata with an interesting natural heritage. For the tourists interviewed, the Basilicata destination called to mind a place that is still preserved, suitable for responsible tourism, where travellers can genuinely experience the culture of the territory.

The increase in the visibility of Basilicata, determined by the success of the film, could produce a long tail effect in the tourism sector; it depends only on the role of destination management in the territorial development policies and on the activism of local operators.

ⁱThe International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is established on 9 August 1895 in London, United Kingdom as an independent, non-governmental organization, which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. It is the largest non-governmental organisations in the world. ICA members are national and international co-operative organisations in all sectors of activity including agriculture, banking, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance, tourism and consumer co-operatives. Currently, ICA has 267 member organisations from 96 countries, representing approximately 1 billion individuals worldwide.

ⁱⁱ New definition of cooperative enterprise is: a cooperative is an autonomous association of people who united voluntarily to meet their needs and aspirations economic, social and cultural common through a jointly owned and democratically controlled.

ⁱⁱⁱ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (Brussels, 18.4.2012).

^{iv} Available in <http://www.iet.tourspain.es/paginas/home.aspx?idioma=es-ES>

^v The author describes the development of rural tourism in Spain as follows: the beginnings of Rural Tourism in Spain as an organized activity must place them in the early 80's years in matching a series of compelling circumstances: crisis of agriculture, framework that can see tourism as an alternative capable of generating additional income in the style of some experience among most notably the French case. Some exhaustion of the sun and sand tourism, that having reached the maturity of the sector, offers few advantages with new destinations in Europe, North Africa and the Caribbean. Appearance of new typologies of tourist demand with consumers becoming more experienced and interested in completing your holiday with various activities (active leisure, nature, culture...) Sense of waste of cultural roots by the Spanish population having been made that each more and more urbanized, misses the traditions and the ease with which it identifies the environment rural closest ancestors.

^{vi} Law 5/2011 of 29 March, Social Economy and Law 2/2011 of 4 March, Sustainable Economy.

^{vii} Economic and social councils are advisory organs mentioned in the Spanish Constitution. Its functions, with some variations between them, are channeling streams of information, institutionalize a permanent mediation and develop opinions. There is currently such organ in all the Autonomous communities.

^{viii} Data provided by Ape (Italian Association of production service companies) and cited by Provenzano, Rech (2007) p. 260.

^{ix} According to an empirical analysis conducted by De Falco (2007), it increased from 685 beds in 1999 to 1460 in 2006.

^x Award presented by the Italian national union of film journalists to the film of the year.

^{xi} Award presented by the Italian academy of film to the film of the year.

^{xii} The ERDF is the European Regional Development Fund. It finances productive investments which create and maintain employment, infrastructure, local development initiatives and small and medium business activities, technological research and development and environmental protection, and finances activities in the transport, research and innovation, urban recovery and industrial reconversion and tourism sectors.

^{xiii} The phrase at the end of the film by Rocco Santamaria is emblematic: "Maybe we haven't figured out who we are, but at least we have figured out what we are not". Nicola (Rocco Papaleo), the dissatisfied teacher, rediscovers the joy of family, Rocco (Vittorio Gassman), the out of work actor, realises that he must change paths, Salvatore (Paolo Briguglia) decides to get his degree, Franco (Max Gazzè) rediscovers his voice thanks to love, and Tropea (Giovanna Mezzogiorno) discovers a passion for film-making.

^{xiv} The locations which are specifically mentioned in the film are: Maratea, Trecchina, Lauria, Latronico, Tramutola, the Pertusillo dam, Aliano, Craco, Scanzano. The products which are specifically mentioned in the film are: bread and frittata, "crusco" peppers, Sarconi beans, "gnumaridd", and Aglianico del Vulture wine.

^{xv} So the planning of the trip ends with the song "L'Americano" sung in each of the places the characters start from; "Pane e Frittata" is sung at the first stop of the trip; "Alba/Tramonto" and "Mariateresa" during the stop at Tramutola and the arrival of a new character; after the Pertusillo dam, the song "Il Calore" performed by Tropea marks her definitive entrance into the group; "Basilicata is on my Mind" in Scanzano after the disappointment of the missed festival.

^{xvi} It is important to emphasise that the representation of a romantic Basilicata is in line with the objectives of the APT (regional tourism agency) in creating incentives for quality tourism, also connected to the nature and cuisine of the region. It is not by chance that Rocco Papaleo was used as testimonial for the exhibition organised by the APT at BIT 2011 (international tourism exchange).

^{xvii} A consideration should be made regarding the double perspective of the film. In fact, the objective point of view of the camera is often accompanied by the subjective view of the camera of Tropea, who discovers a passion for filming precisely on this trip. The incursion into the film of images with an amateur feel offers a sort of unconventional guide to Basilicata. Tropea's view through her camera might be thought to symbolise the view of the spectator who, initially diffident and then with more and more conviction, gets inside the story. During the trip the characters in front of the journalist's camera talk a bit about the place they are in, bringing personal information and anecdotes alongside the information about the territory. So it is a moment in which the relationship between countryside and story is strengthened, reaffirming a fundamental principle for the purpose of our discussion of film tourism: interest in a place develops if there is interpenetration of its narrative and scenic aspects.

^{xviii} Corbetta (2003) defines it as "a conversation for the purpose of obtaining knowledge, stimulated and guided by the interviewer based on a flexible set of questions".

^{xix} Interview with Alessandro Vergari, *Walden - viaggi a piedi*, on 4 May 2011.

^{xx} Interview with Alessandro Vergari, *Walden - viaggi a piedi*, on 4 May 2011.

^{xxi} Interview with Riccardo Carnovali, *Le vie dei canti*, on 10 September 2011.

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