Tourism thought as a factor of tourism development in Serbia

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Abstract: Tourism as a phenomenon, by its spatial, economic, sociological, psychological, cultural, political and other connotations, has no counterpart in any other phenomenon of the modern world. Although not a science, Tourismology represents a scientific discipline that perceives tourism in the most comprehensive way. The aim of this research is to devise strategies (based on the results), the implementation of which could contribute to a greater appreciation of Serbian intellectual elite in the field of tourism, tourism research recognition and promotion of tourism thought in Serbia as the main factor of tourism activity development.

Keywords: tourism science, education, research, labor market, human resources.
JEL classification: J24

Туристичка мисао као фактор развоја туризма у Србији

Сажетак: Туризам као феномен, по својим просторним, економским, социолошким, психолошким, културолошким, политичким и другим конотацијама, нема пандана у некој другој појави савременог света. Иако није наука, туризмологија представља научну дисциплину која, на најсвеобухватнији начин, сагледава туризам. Циљ овог истраживања је да се, на основу добијених резултата, дође до стратегије чија примена може допринети већем уважавању српске интелектуалне елите из домена туризма, афирмацији туристичких истраживања и унапређењу туристичке мисли у Србији, као основног фактора развоја туристичке делатности.

Кључне речи: туристичка наука, образовање, истраживање, тржиште рада, људски ресурси
JEL класификација: J24

1. Introduction

Tourism is a global spatial as well as social, economic, political, cultural, ecological, aesthetic and psychological phenomenon. There is almost no country in the world which does not develop some form of tourism. It is a specific socio-economic phenomenon, a kind of intertwining of the material and spiritual, but it is also a significant factor in modern civilization development. Tourism is of particular importance for developing countries, and in some poor sectors is the only economic activity. The multiplier effect is particularly significant – tourism has an effect on domestic product and national income, employment, standard of living, balance of payments, the scope and structure of investment activities. In Serbia, there is an insufficient amount of systematic research and relevant statistical data on the extent of tourism science development and contribution that it makes to the tourism development at the national, regional and local levels. In this respect, we believe that the analysis of the development of this scientific discipline in the Republic of Serbia is both valuable and necessary.

The paper uses a combination of theoretical and empirical non-experimental research (surveys), employing secondary data obtained from the available literature in the field of tourism. The analysis of these data and implementation of a modified matrix of the Boston Consulting Group, so-called Cluster Strategy, yield results that direct the selection of the optimal strategy. By applying the appropriate measures and instruments it is possible to realize previously defined goal of this research - the promotion and development of tourism science in Serbia. The basic methodological tool in the work is the SWOT analysis of human resources and labor market, as one of the key examination areas in creating *Strategy of tourism development in Serbia*.

2. System of education in Serbia

Financing of education in every country should not be seen as expense but rather investment. Education in the Republic of Serbia encompasses four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education, with primary education comprising 53%, secondary 26% and tertiary 21% of pupils/students, according to the 2010/2011 Statistical Yearbook data. In addition, number of pupils in primary schools has decreased by about 2%, which is a common trend in recent years and mainly is a result of demographic movements in our country. Regarding secondary and tertiary education, number of students shows small oscillations compared to the previous year (Републички завод за статистику, 2013).

Table 1: Basic indicators on schools in thousands, 2010

	Teaching Staff	Pupils/ Students
Primary Education	52,935	815,403
Secondary Education	30,067	284,789
Tertiary Education	14,855	228,531
Total	**97,857**	**1,328,723**

Source: (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Serbia, 2012)

Table 1 shows that 53.7% of all teachers are employed in primary, about 31% in secondary and 15.1% in tertiary education. Particularly we emphasize tertiary education of students in our country, shown in Table 1.2 which encompasses particular areas of interest at state and private faculties and colleges as well.

Table 2: Total Number of Students and Number of Budget-Funded Students in thousands

	Republic of Serbia	Budget-Funded	Females
State Faculties	148,248	81,677	86,785
Private Faculties	33,114	-	16,951
State Colleges	41,190	1,686	20,718
Private Colleges	5,979	-	2,700
Total	**228,531**	**97,763**	**127,154**

Source: (Statistical Yearbook of The Republic of Serbia, 2012)

The number of students at faculties and colleges increased by 0.7% in school year 2010/11 compared to the previous school year. It should be noted that current organization of tertiary education is result of implementation of The Bologna Declaration of June 18th 1999, signed by 29 European Ministers of Education in order to start the process of reforms in higher education (Коцић и Перић, 2010).

Serbia signed The Bologna Declaration in 2003, and Law on Higher Education was passed in 2005. However, effective implementation of Declaration did not begin until 2006, leading to implementation problem in Serbian system of higher education. In the following Table, we will display the total number of graduated students.

Table 3: The total number of graduated students in thousands

	Republic of Serbia	Budget-funded
State Faculties	28,476	19,758
Private Faculties	8,179	144
State Colleges	8,518	3,380
Private Colleges	989	4
Total	**46,162**	**23,286**

Source: (Statistical Yearbook of The Republic of Serbia 2012)

During the observed period in Serbia, 20.2% of all students graduated, with the percentage being higher among budget-funded students (23.8%). At the state faculties 19% of students graduated, at private 25%, at state higher schools 20.7%. The percentage of all budget-funded students enrolled in state faculties who graduated is 24.2%.

3. Tourismology

After the Second World, tourism researches in Serbia were based mainly on the study of the economic aspect of tourism. There are two main concepts in this research: economic-commercial and tourismological (Ромелић, 2007). Since the 1970's tourism geography in Serbia has its specific scientific and educational development whose theoretical results, especially in 1970's, have been recognized all around the world. The concept of accessing Tourismology as a scientific discipline is particularly prominent at the Faculty of Geography - University of Belgrade, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Institute for Geography at the Faculty of Sciences - University of Niš, etc. Also, geographers who study the tourism geography have made a comprehensive academic contribution by publishing their work in the Bulletin of the Serbian Geographical Society. So far, more than 110 papers in the field of tourism geography were published (Поповић, 2007). The prominent scholars, who have made a comprehensive contribution in their researches and scientific and educational activities to tourism management and marketing development in Serbia, are S. Unković, O. Bakić, J. Popesku, S. Čerović, K. Čačić, etc.

- State Higher-Education Institutions;
- Faculty of Geography, Beograd (Tourismology);
- Faculty of Economics, Niš (Tourismology and Hotel Management);
- Faculty of Economics, Beograd (Tourismology and Hotel Management);
- Faculty of Economics, Kragujevac (Tourismology and Hotel Management);
- Faculty of Sciences, Niš, Department of Geography;
- Faculty of Sciences, Kragujevac – Professional Studies of Ecology-Tourismology;
- Faculty of Sciences, Novi Sad – Specialization in Geography, Department of Tourismology;
- Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism, Vrnjačka Banja (Tourismology and Hotel Management);
- The College of Tourism, Beograd;
- Private Higher-Education Institutions:
- Faculty of Sport and Tourism, TIMS;
- Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management – FTHM, Singidunum University, Beograd and Valjevo;
- Faculty of Sport and Tourism "Metropolitan".

4. Research and development

Regarding all organizations involved in research and development activities in 2010, non-financial sector accounted for 33%, the government sector 24%, higher education 42% and the non-profit sector 1%. In adition, number of researchers in 2010 increased by 5% compared to the previous year. In the same year, research works (projects and studies) increased by about 27%, compared to the preivous year, with a significant increase in the share of fundamental research work.

Table 4: Expenditures for R&D by Fields of Science, 2010, in thousands of RSD

Fields of Science	Gross Domestic Expenditure	Gross investment
Natural Sciences, Mathematics	6,305,819	275,828
Engineering and Technology	6,366,346	1,409,935
Agricultural Sciences	1,578,598	88,459
Medical and Health Sciences	2,405,287	106,142
Social Sciences	4,238,519	196,602
Humanities	193,367	71,160
Total	**22,828,236**	**2,148,126**

Source: (Statistical Yearbook of The Republic of Serbia 2012)

Noticeably, the most resources were allocated to Natural sciences, 26.7% and the least to Agricultural sciences, 6.9%. Educational system improvement will continue, in order to increase the quality, comprehensiveness, relevance and effectiveness of education at all educational levels and in accordance with Strategy for development of education in Serbia until 2020. The key mechanism for meeting the goals of education is the introduction of the system of pre-university education funding, by the number of students, depending on the

educational needs and socio-economic characteristics of local communities. Of particular importance is the adjustment of curricula and studying programs to the modern labor market requirements (Републички завод за статистику, 2013).

5. Research works (projects and studies)

The amount of expenditures for science from the budget of the Republic of Serbia in the past few years was around 0.3% of GDP, of which only 18% for the social sciences, while the private sector investments are estimated to be 0.2% of gross domestic product. The private sector is not motivated to invest in science, and there is no strategy for increasing investments of private sector into researching activity. Cooperation with researchers in the country, the region and abroad, as well as between universities, institutes and professional associations, is negatively developed (Regional Research, 2013).

Table 5: Research Works in 2010

	Basic Research	Applied Research	Experimental Development
Non-financial Sector	201	274	354
Government Sector	1,653	534	752
Higher Education	3,298	1,287	633
Non-profit Sector	-	-	1
Total	**5,152**	**2,095**	**1,740**

Source: (Statistical Yearbook of The Republic of Serbia 2012)

As already mentioned, there has been a significant increase in the number of scientific research works, compared to the previous years. The Table shows that the highest figure is in the basic works area (higher education – 64%); followed by applied works and experimental development works. Also, it is necessary to simplify the verification of diplomas and to abolish the validation procedures as an outdated model of preserving monopoly in our education. It is very important to enable quality people actively doing research to cooperate with institutions for scientific research in Serbia and to stimulate them to come back to their homeland.

6. Results

The profile of current strengths and weaknesses of the observed system, is based on extensive theoretical analysis of key components, analysis of the results of numerous studies and research on labor market and human resources in the tourism sector and surveys of the tourism employees, especially tour operators. The profile of current opportunities and threats, i.e. external factors of the observed system, is determined on the basis of market analysis, competition analysis and interviews undertaken with Serbian intellectual elite.
After identifying these factors, respondents were asked to assign a score for each element of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on a scale from 1 to 10, as follows: score 1 (one) for an element of the least significance (in their own opinion), score 10 for an element of the greatest significance. Although this assessment may not be completely objective, it can be said that the obtained scores point to the relative importance of certain elements.

Table 6 shows all the elements of internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) of the observed system.

Table 6: SWOT analysis of human resources and labor market in the tourism sector in Serbia

STRENGTHS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mostly positive attitude of the Serbian population toward tourism as the industry	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
An inherent Serbian mentality and propensity for quality of service	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
High-quality of general education system and its current reforms	■	■	■	■	■	■				
The tradition of higher education in the field of tourism	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Diversification of professional education by professions	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
The entry of private schools and the universities into the education market	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
International organizations' projects in order to build capacity of employees in public and private tourism sector	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WEAKNESSES										
The population of Serbia is not sufficiently informed about tourism and hospitality industry as a source of well-being and career development	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
The lack of a comprehensive national program for hospitality development	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
The lack of internationally qualified hotel and tourism managers and other key professions	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
The lack of staff in new tourism occupations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Nonadjustment of professional curricula contents to new profit-driven requirements of tourism-hospitality sector	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Insufficiency in number, regional distribution and professional capacity of existing schools for basic occupations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
The lack of labor mobility in tourism	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Inflexibility of employment system (dual occupations, seasonal work, flexible working hours, etc.)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Uncompleted comprehensive legal regulation of the employment system and labor relations in tourism	■	■	■	■	■	■				

| OPPORTUNITIES											
Availability of European funds aimed at developing human resources base of Serbian tourism											
A large labor market of Serbian expatriates											
Implementation of the European solutions and legislation in the field of labor and employment											
The interest of foreign educational institutions in the field of tourism and hospitality in cooperation with Serbia											
Internet access to educational information and intelligence systems in the field of tourism											
THREATS											
The low quality of service and high level of customer dissatisfaction											
The slow growth of productivity and performance of Serbian tourism and hospitality during the initial stage of development											
Losing the starting competitive position and competitive advantages in the field of human resources											

Source:(Horwarth Consulting Zagreb, 2005, Ministry of Trade Tourism and Services, Strategy of tourism development in Serbia: First phase report, p. 95.)

Starting from the modified matrix of the Boston Consulting Group, the so-called Cluster strategy, this part of the tourism system should be placed in Quadrant III. This outcome resulted from the following:

First step: Comparing the significance of strengths and weaknesses (52 versus 70). Since the total significance score of weaknesses is above the total significance score of strengths, we put the examined system into the right part of coordinate system (in this way, Quadrants I and II are rejected, i.e. max-max and max-min strategy groups). Min-max and min-min strategies are only available. Which one of these two strategy groups should be selected will depend on the balance of power between threats and opportunities factors.

Second step: Comparing the significance of opportunities and threats (38 versus 25). Since the total significance score of opportunities is above the total significance score of threats, now we put the examined system into the upper right part of coordinate system, i.e. Quadrant III, where the min-max strategies group is (we reject Quadrant IV and min-min strategies group). Thus, the final score puts the examined system in Quadrant where the best thing to do is to apply **min-max strategic directions of development**, i.e. strategies that minimize weaknesses and at the same time maximize system opportunities. However, since there was not found a big difference in scores between opportunities and threats as well as in scores between strengths and weaknesses, it is also necessary to apply measures for minimizing threats, because those factors can lower the significance of opportunities and strengths (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: The optimal strategy selection
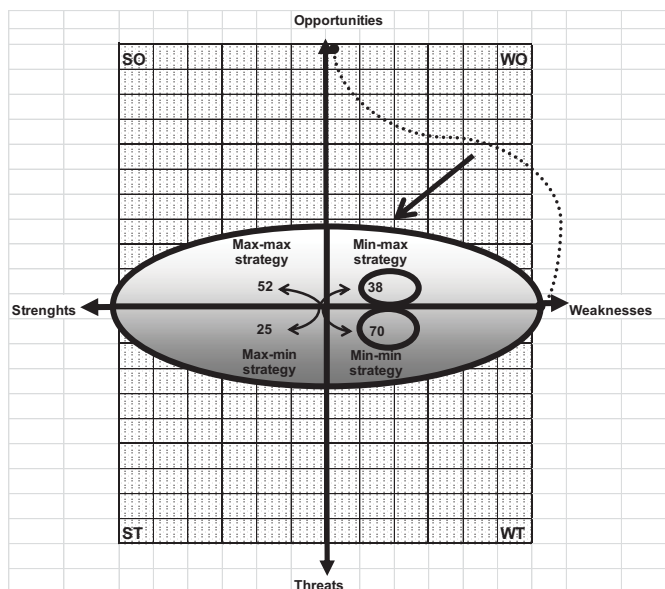
Source: (Original research by the paper authors, 2013)

7. Conclusion

Tourist activity is one of the few in which the practice outwent the theory. In the past people first had started to travel and much later the first scientific formulation of basic tourist notions appeared. Due to this fact, developed countries attach a great deal of importance to Tourismology and its development, for theory to catch up with practice somehow. In 1962, the first generation of students enrolled in graduate study program of tourism in the Group for Geography at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Belgrade. In that year, about thirty students from the former SFRJ, including some lawyers, economists, geographers, philologists and ethnologists, attended the classes. That year can thus be regarded as the beginning of organized university education of human resources for the tourism in Serbia. However, Serbia still gives much higher priority to practice than to theory, despite the fact that a tourismologist that is bad in theory, can never be good in practice. Since tourism is a phenomenon that 'suffers' permanent changes, it is essential for tourism workers to follow modern trends in tourism development, to improve themselves and to make constant progress.

In addition to this original problem, Tourismology as a scientific discipline in Serbia is also facing a problem regarding the lack of scientific-professional papers in the field of tourism. The tourism science in Serbia, especially in recent years, has actively been following the modern trends in the world. Although the Serbian tourismologists' results are still not valorized adequately in leading international journals, they are recognized and noticed at numerous meetings of international scientific importance. Indeed, one of the main shortcomings of the home scientific tourism thought and at the same time an obstacle to its further development is insufficient number of national scientific and professional journals in the field of tourism.

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