

Danijel Drpić, M.Sc.

Privredna Banka Zagreb in Rijeka, Croatia

Đure Šporera 3, Rijeka

Telephone: +385 95 197 1765 Fax: -

danijel_drpic@hotmail.com

Vedran Milojica, M.A.

Rijeka, County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Croatia

Telephone: +385 51 672 497 Fax: -

vedran.milojica@gmail.com; vedran_mi@yahoo.com

Julijana Petrovska, M.Sc., Ph.D. Student, Teaching Assistant

Faculty of Tourism, University of Tourism and Management in Skopje

Partizanski odredi Boulevard 99, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia

Telephone: +389 02 30 93 209 Fax: +389 02 30 93 213

j.petrovska@utms.edu.mk

**MANAGING AND PROMOTION OF EVENTS IN FUNCTION OF
ACHIEVING⁵⁹ COMPETITIVE TOURIST OFFER OF EASTERN
CROATIA**

**UPRAVLJANJE I PROMOCIJA DOGAĐAJA U FUNKCIJI
OSTVARENJA KONKURENTNE TURISTIČKE PONUDE ISTOČNE
HRVATSKE**

ABSTRACT

Tourist events represent a highly valuable element of an integral tourist product, so it is necessary to dedicate significant attention to them, considering that their uniqueness enables high positioning of a tourist destination on the tourist market and creating additional value of tourist offer. Eastern Croatia is abundant with various and unique events based on tradition and cultural heritage, which take place all year round, and which can, through use of adequate knowledge and skills, and marketing activities, contribute significantly to the competitiveness of its tourist offer and creation of a recognizable brand. The purpose of the paper is to point out the importance of managing events with a goal of enriching and diversifying the tourist offer of Eastern Croatia, while the goal of the paper is to present the current offer of events of Eastern Croatia, and give a proposition of strategic and promotional guidelines for improving and expanding tourist offer with a goal of strengthening competitive advantages of (Eastern) Croatia as a tourist destination.

Keywords: *tourist events, Eastern Croatia, guidelines of future development, strategic guidelines, promotional guidelines*

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SAŽETAK

Turistički događaji predstavljaju visoko vrijedan element integralnog turističkog proizvoda, stoga je nužno posvetiti im dodatnu pozornost, s obzirom da njihova jedinstvenost omogućuje visoko pozicioniranje turističke destinacije na turističkom tržištu i stvaranje dodatne vrijednosti turističke ponude. Istočna Hrvatska obiluje raznim i jedinstvenim događajima baziranim na tradiciji i kulturnoj baštini, koji se odvijaju tijekom cijele godine, i koji mogu, kroz uporabu adekvatnih znanja i vještina, te marketinških aktivnosti, značajno doprinijeti konkurentnosti turističke ponude i stvaranja prepoznatljivog brenda. Svrha rada je istaknuti važnost upravljanja događajima s ciljem obogaćivanja i diverzifikacije turističke ponude istočne Hrvatske, dok je cilj rada prikazati trenutnu ponudu događaja istočne Hrvatske, i dati prijedlog strategijskih i promotivnih smjernica za poboljšanje i proširenje turističke ponude s ciljem ojačanja konkurentskih prednosti (istočne) Hrvatske kao turističke destinacije.

Ključne riječi: *turistički događaji, istočna Hrvatska, smjernice budućeg razvoja, strategijske smjernice, promotivne smjernice*

1. Introduction

Tourist events are an important element of modern tourist offer, and an important factor in achieving competitive advantages on the turbulent tourist market which is proven by numerous scientific and professional research. If their development is properly managed (while adhering to sustainable development principles), profiling, strategic (marketing) presentation and promotion of their offer on the tourist market, they will enable branding of the tourist destination. The purpose of this paper is to show the importance of management of tourist events pointing to how they contribute to enrichment and diversification of the tourist offer. The objective of this paper is to show the current offer of events in Eastern Croatia with special emphasis on the example of Vinkovačke jeseni 2012 (Vinkovci Autumn Festival), which will show how such an event can significantly contribute to the development and branding of tourist events in Eastern Croatia.

2. Theoretical Considerations of the Importance of Events in the Contemporary Tourist Offer

Tourist events and their impact on competitiveness of tourist offer started to be analysed in more detail in the literature by the end of the 1980s, and most of the research were conducted in the first decade of the 21st century. However, we can say that tourist events have existed since there is humanity so that gladiator games in Ancient Rome, the Olympic Games in Athens, etc. may be perceived as a kind of a precursor of tourist events. According to Getz, with regard to associations that base their activities on realisation of new and different tourist events, Getz states that in 1885, the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) began with a half dozen fairs, while the International Association for Exhibition Management was organized in 1928 as the National Association of Exposition Managers to represent the interests of tradeshow and exposition managers. Established in 1972, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the global community committed to shaping and defining the future of the meeting and event industry. The International Special Events Society (ISES) was founded in 1987 and embraces both event designers/producers and their numerous suppliers. As well, there are associations for carnivals, and many arts and sports-specific associations that deal with events, and they organize at local, national and international levels. In the United

Kingdom, the Association for Events Management Education (AEME) was established in 2004 (Getz, 2008, 405).

Tourist events represent a challenge to contemporary destination management. To realise and develop successful tourist events, numerous skills and knowledge of destination management are required. In terms of their specificity and, so to speak, constant change, tourist events are a remarkable source of sustained competitive advantage of a tourist destination. According to Milohnić, when events, local culture, tradition and customs are celebrated, entertainment and recreation complement each other and cultural and social advancement is ensured. Events are a very important motivator of tourism and they are very present in destination development plans and tourism development strategies (Milohnić's adaptation according to 2010 Hede, Jago & Deery, 2002, 2).

Tourist events can be divided into local, regional, hallmark (typical) events and mega tourist events.

Picture 1 The portfolio approach to event tourism strategy-making and evaluation



Source: Getz, D., (2008). *Event Tourism: Definition, evolution, and research*, *Tourism Management* 29, pp. 403 - 428

The characteristic of local and regional events is their periodicity and taking place „from occasion to occasion“; they attract a small group of visitors, mostly locals, and they do not realise significant financial benefits. Hallmark events can be characterised as highly valuable and highly attended events that represent a characteristic tourist event important for broader community and can be identified with the host country and become a kind of a destination brand (Carnival in Rio de Janeiro). Occasional mega tourist events (the Olympics, soccer championships, etc.) are top tourist events that take place in a specific cyclical period (four years) and globally represent the most important tourist event. Destinations which organise these mega events become attractive for marketing and tourism professionals and achieve, along with substantial costs, exceptional economic benefits for the organisers.

The value of tourist events can be measured (author's adaptation according to Getz, 2008, 407) according to potential growth, market share, quality, image, acceptance of the local community, sustainable income, economic benefits for organisers of the event, sustainability and adequacy of the tourist event itself. Van Der Wagner and Carlos (2008) state that creation of tourist events can be followed through 11 steps. If these steps are complemented by

creating permanent procedures of quality control of organisation, planning, control, promotion, and other steps in the chain, higher level of quality of tourist events is achieved, thus strengthening the satisfaction with the tourist offer, and realises the possibility to raise the tourist event from the local level to regional or hallmark which, by selecting the appropriate marketing tools, managerial knowledge and skills, can become a kind of a mega-brand of the destination.

Picture 2 Steps in managing the creation of tourist events



Source: Authors' adaptation according to Van Der Wagner, L., Carlos, B.R. (2008). *Event Management for Tourism, Cultural, Business and Sporting Events*, Zagreb: Mate d.o.o. pp. 287-290

It is necessary that a creative team in a destination devises the "guiding idea" of the tourist event, followed by organisation of the tourist event and contracting (permits, agreements). Successful and well-designed marketing, but also management, are very significant for a successful tourist event. Special attention should be devoted to elimination of possible weaknesses and threats for successful organisation of tourist events, ensure high quality implementation plans, and ensure permanent improvement and development of tourist events, in the way that they become one of the main motivations for tourists to visit the destination, which is possible by implementing quality standards. By implementation of internal standards (adapted to a specific region or an event of greater importance), or international quality standards such as ISO20 121 Sustainable Development of Events, complete satisfaction of all the stakeholders in the destination is achieved. This is hard to achieve in the Republic of Croatia due to the lack of qualified human resources, statistical data and organisations which would focus on designing, improvement and sustainable quality of tourist events.

3. Characteristics of the Tourist Offer of Events in Eastern Croatia with Special Focus on Vinkovačke jeseni

Previous studies of modern tourist trends point to the growing demand for new and specific events that will provide tourists with a new experience. Non-material heritage is an important element of the tourist offer of cultural tourism, and its presentation in the form of

organisation of traditional events represents an invaluable experience for tourists, given that they experience something new, yet unseen, learning about the culture and tradition of a nation. In case of the Republic of Croatia, it is to highlight the richness and variety of events in its Eastern part (Đakovački vezovi, Vinkovačke jeseni, Tamburitza Music Festival, Eco-Ethno Festival, Osijek Summer Nights, Days of the First Croatian Beer, Days of Wine and Tourism, Festival of Fruit Brandies, Liqueurs, Jams, Pumpkins and Zucchini, National Evaluation of the Slavonian kulen/kulin, Carnival Days in Nova Gradiška, Festival of Amateur Singers Zlatni glas Zlatne doline, Folklore Festival Bekteški susreti, In the World of Fairytales by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, and many others).

These examples of events point to the fact that Croatia has a diverse resource base of events (whether it is gastronomic-enological, cultural or other), which are mainly of local importance. The task of tourist destination management and organisers of tourist events must be designing a new strategic and marketing plan with the goal to raise visibility of the event to a higher level (for example, hallmark). This will be possible by implementing chain of values of designing tourist events in the Eastern Croatia (more about the chain of events in the following text). In the following text, the authors will focus on the significance of Vinkovačke jeseni as an invaluable event in the scope of the offer of cultural tourism and tourism of events in (Eastern) Croatia.

The first Vinkovačke jeseni took place in 1966, and represent a tourist event of invaluable significance for the tourist offer, not only of Vinkovci and the county, but also the Republic of Croatia. Landeka notes that Jeseni in the past four decades evolved from a local event to a large and important Croatian folklore event and thus preserved local Slavonian and Syrmian folklore and significantly contributed to preservation of Croatian folklore heritage. After the political changes in 1990 and the creation of independent Croatian state, Jeseni retained nearly all the events that they had in the previous regime, and are enriched with new contents or added some innovations to previous events (authors' adaptation according to Landeka, 2007,21). The particularity of this event is primarily reflected in the presentation and preservation of traditional Croatian folklore outdoors or indoors, with a variety of additional contents. Performers present their skills in the performance of traditional dances, songs, while wearing traditional costumestypical for Eastern Croatia. It is also important to mention Children's Jeseni (participation of children in the context of this important event such as participation in school activities or activities in cultural associations, which is of great importance for acquiring knowledge about their own culture and tradition, and its preservation), literary autumn festivities (top-quality literary works by Eastern Croatian authors are highlighted through public readings, various festivals, etc.), theatre and musical events of accompanying festivals, art exhibitions, sports activities, etc.). This points to their great importance in the tourist offer, not only of Vinkovci, but the entire county. This is supported by the fact that the Town of Vinkovci initiated Crafts Fair of Vinkovačke jeseni on which over a hundred craftsmen present themselves with the goal to achieve better marketingof traditional products. In addition to entrepreneurship, there isconsiderable potential for the development of selective forms of the tourist offer like rural tourism, ecotourism, gastro-enological tourism, cultural tourism, etc. Through the craftsfair, a direct connection can be made between supply holders and the market, which is especially important for tourism development. Manufacturers of ecological products and traditional tools, textiles, food, and beverages can, by including their offer in the tourist event of Vinkovačke jeseni, achieve a significant increase in the interest inorganic products, by which Vinkovci and the entire Vukovar-Srijem County are promoted as a destination of high-quality indigenous offer and competitive tourist offer.

In order to ensure further development with the aim of improving the overall tourist offer (of events), it is necessary to carry out continuous marketing activities while using cutting-edge

marketing tools, knowledge management, modern technology and best practice examples from the world in order to make information available to potential tourists and to encourage them to visit the tourist destination and to participate in a particular event.

In order to monitor the interest in this event, and its economic effects, it is necessary to monitor the achieved level of tourist turnover at the time the event takes place (tourist arrivals and overnights). The table below shows tourist arrivals and overnight stays of tourists who participated in Vinkovačke jeseni, and their share in total arrivals and tourist overnights in Vinkovci.

Table 1 Presentation of the share of tourist arrivals and overnights of tourists who participated in Vinkovačke jeseni within the total tourist arrivals and overnights in Vinkovci in the period of Vinkovačke jeseni

September	Tourist Arrivals*	Tourist Overnights*	Arrivals total September	Overnights total September	Share of arrivals of %	Share of overnights in %
09.-19.09.2010.	1.128	1.669	3.130	5.725	36,04	29,15
09.-18.09.2011.	1.013	1.677	2.693	5.382	37,62	31,16
07.-16.09.2012.	1.063	1.995	2.714	5.790	39,17	34,46
06.-15.09.2013.	1.336	2.400	3.280	6.195	40,73	38,74

Source: Data received from the Tourist Board of Vinkovci

* - tourist arrivals and overnights realised by the tourists who actively participated in Vinkovačke jeseni

According to the data from the table above, in 2011, there was a small decline in the number of tourist arrivals and overnights; however, tourist arrivals started recording growth. This is also indicated by the data on the share of the realised tourist turnover of tourists who participated in Vinkovačke jeseni in respect of total number of arrivals and overnights in the same period in Vinkovci. To facilitate further growth of this positive trend, it is necessary to develop quality standards in the organisation of this event and propose economic activities as guidelines for successful development.

4. Proposed Strategic and Marketing activities aiming to reposition Vinkovačke jeseni on the Tourist Market

In order to properly design guidelines for the development of tourist events, but also promotional activities of the destination, it is necessary to realistically evaluate all the features of the offer of the tourist destination and the event Vinkovačke jeseni as the basis for the creation of a „mega“ brand of Eastern Croatian region. S.W.O.T. analysis of Vinkovačke jeseni is provided as the tourist event on the basis of which promotional activities will be developed and destination brand created using the umbrella branding concept.

Table 2 S.W.O.T.analysis of the tourist event Vinkovačke jeseni

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Preserved resource base (landscapes of Eastern Croatia) Events based on long tradition High level of authenticity of the event Significant level of involvement of the local community Easily accessible destination Differentiation of the offer on the tourist market Long-term viability of the project	Insufficient level of involvement of Eastern Croatian tourist offer in the offer created at the national level Insufficient involvement of destination management in the creation of individual events Insufficient level of knowledge of all participants in tourist events Lack of clear and measurable indicators for designing the offer of events Lack of clear marketing strategies
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Financing projects of tourist events through Cohesion Funds Raising awareness among the citizens and businesses of the benefits of forming tourist events Higher employment Economic benefits for all the stakeholders in the destination Increase in product quality More available products and services to tourists/customers Creation of special teams for tourist events in destination management.	Intolerance of the local community towards tourists Pollution caused by tourism Violation of authenticity of the event by tourist commercialisation Failure to adhere to the „value for money“ principle Desire for quick profit Low level of quality offer

Source: Authors' analysis

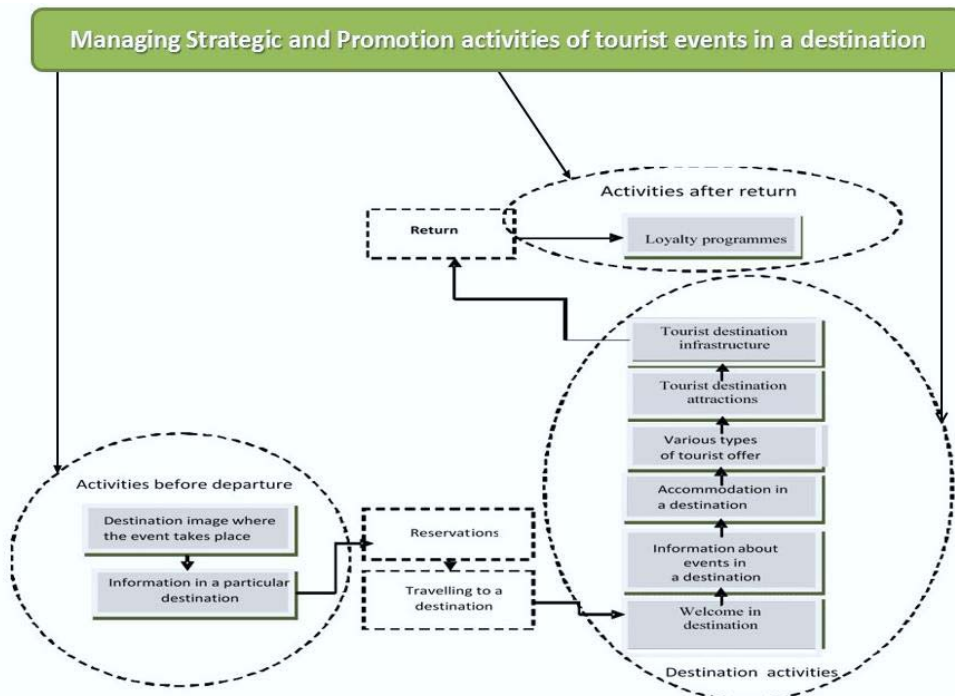
The above SWOT analysis lists the basic strengths and development opportunities of tourist events and creation of a brand of Eastern Croatia, and identifies weaknesses and threats to desired development. Some of the basic strengths are high level of recognition of the event in the Republic of Croatia, which provides a basic precondition for the creation of hallmark events in the region, and preserved resource base that provides the opportunity for continuous upgrading of the existing events with new ones. This is also supported by high level of authenticity of the event with almost non-existing commercial influences. As this is a relatively easily accessed destination (by airplane, train, car), and since local population is significantly involved in the event, it can be assumed that there are significant opportunities for improvement of the existing tourist offer by tourist events such as Vinkovačke jeseni, which achieves recognisability of the entire Eastern Croatia. New financial perspectives which became available after the Republic of Croatia accessed the European Union may be pointed out as developmental opportunities which will enable significant economic benefits for the entire region (higher consumption of tourists, easier access of home-made original products and services to the market, growing satisfaction with the quality of life, new workplaces, etc.). Weaknesses and threats are insufficient level of knowledge and skills management in Eastern Croatian destinations, lack of clear and measurable indicators that would allow creation of events, as well as potential intolerance of the local population towards tourists. In order to reduce the existing weaknesses, there should be constant encouragement of management education, insistence on the establishment of clear rules and measures to achieve quality tourist events and devising mechanisms to protect the authenticity and particularities of tourist events in Eastern Croatia.

4.1. Chain of values of tourist events of Eastern Croatia

What follows is the presentation of the chain of values in the creation of tourist events and marketing approach based thereon, which can be implemented in Eastern Croatia.

Implementation of the chain of values achieves growth of competitive advantages of the destination, emphasises its particularities, and ensures increase in the quality of the offer.

Picture 3 Chain of values – management and promotional activities of tourist events in a destination



Source: Authors' adaptation according to Ivandić, N. (2007): *Panonski turizam: Stručno osposobljavanje za kvalitetni panonski turizam, modul Menadžment i turizam na seoskom gospodarstvu*, pp. 11, <http://www.pannoniantourism.hu/htmls/uitati.html> - Module Management and Tourism on country farms (accessed 15 March 2014)

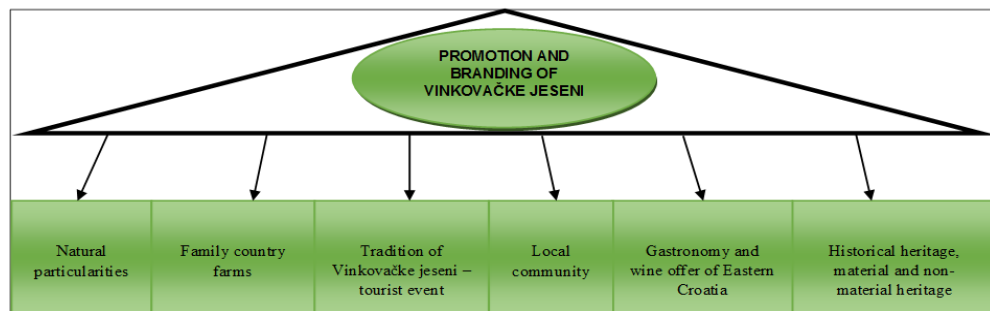
In order to point out and use all the competitive advantages in a particular area, including Eastern Croatia, it is necessary to ensure smooth implementation of all the links in the chain of values. Grey steps indicate parts of the chain of values in which it is possible to achieve continuous and successful communication of a tourist destination with target markets, which is especially important in the formation of tourist events and their promotion since tourist events often represent the highest recognition of a certain destination, and have many positive, but also negative effects on the overall development of the area. The objective of management of the destination and tourist event like Vinkovačke jeseni should be minimisation of negative impacts on the community (loss of authenticity, disturbance of public order and peace, destruction of cultural monuments, intolerance of the local community towards tourists), while at the same time increasing positive effects (increase in economic benefits, increase in the living standard, increase in environmental awareness, etc.). It should be pointed out that the entire process takes place in several stages, and that communication with the markets takes place before, during and after the tourists visit the destination in which the tourist event takes place. It is very important that tourists are provided with complete and timely

information which should be available at all times and at all places (the internet, professional magazines, advertising in the newspapers, radio, TV, through specialised tourism fairs and agencies), which will allow the creation of a positive image of the destination Eastern Croatia. In order to be adequately implemented in the destination Eastern Croatia, the chain of values must be designed in accordance with the desired destination brand that is to be communicated to tourists, which can be achieved through the formation of an umbrella brand.

4.2. The concept of umbrella brand on the model of Vinkovačke jeseni – top tourist event of Eastern Croatia as a tourist destination

Recognisability of a certain region or a country can be achieved by creation of a unique and high-quality tourist offer. In the authors' opinion, this can be achieved by creation of a unique umbrella which forms the basis for overall identity of rural Croatia which is a platform for all other important elements of economic, tourist, social, and demographic identity of rural Croatia which should be interconnected, and new joint force should be used for positioning on the global tourist market. Eastern Croatia must form an integral part of the tourist offer of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. become an integral and recognised part of the „umbrella“. Umbrella brand should stimulate the desire on the target market to visit Eastern Croatia as a highly ranked tourist destination which stimulates the creation of new events based on Vinkovačke jeseni as a recognisable tourist event. Recognition and specificity of Eastern Croatia's tourist products must be clearly defined and recognisable. Creating identity and image of Eastern Croatia is based on determination of comparative advantages, which also achieves high competitive advantage of the destination, and destinations are defined through elements under the umbrella which is designed on the basis of previous analyses presented in the paper (chain of values, S.W.O.T. analysis).

Picture 4 The concept of umbrella brand of Vinkovačke jeseni in the function of realisation of competitiveness of Eastern Croatia



Source: authors' analysis

The following guidelines for the brand development of Eastern Croatia can be derived from the above table, and they are presented in the following table. Elements of the umbrella brand of Eastern Croatia, based on the tourist event *Vinkovačke jeseni*, contain the following important components (see Table 3):

Table 3 Elements of the umbrella brand of Eastern Croatia

Elements of umbrella brand:	Holders/representatives	Preferred associations
Natural particularities	original landscape vistas, thatched roofs, meadows, urban vistas, forests, churches, grain fields...	romance, peace, harmony, connection with nature
Family country farms	accommodation on a family country farm decorated in the traditional architectural style of Eastern Croatia, ecologically grown food, traditional lifestyle	return to childhood, home, warmth, love, sadness, longing, healthy lifestyle, living in harmony with nature
Tradition of Vinkovačke jeseni – tourist event of the highest level	sijela, (evening gatherings in the village), divani (traditional village conversations), musicians, story tellers, Vinkovačke jeseni as a tourist event	return to the past, living in harmony with nature, labour, honesty, openness, cordiality, sincerity...
Local community	dance and folklore groups, craftsmen, farmers, carpenters	return to the past, the patina of the past that can be seen and felt, peace and prosperity, community
Gastronomy and wine offer of Eastern Croatia	representatives of gastronomic and wine offer wine, plum brandy, cheese, kulen and other home-made products (honey, naturally grown vegetables and fruit...)	healthy food, healthy life at every turn, tradition that can be felt – richness of colours, scents and flavours
Historical heritage, material and non-material heritage	manors, castles, architectural heritage, convents and churches...	rich history, cultural heritage, crossroad of cultures of the East and the West

Source: Authors' analysis

The above model is only one of the possible scenarios of its introduction to development of promotional activities of Vinkovačke jeseni as the top „mega“ brand of Eastern Croatia. This model represents only an initial guideline that must be subject to constant changes and new creations, with the objective to meet the needs and desires of modern tourists and the local community, as a basic precondition for successful and permanent development of Eastern Croatia.

5. Prospects of future development of the tourist offer of events of Eastern Croatia with special emphasis on Vinkovačke jeseni

Events are very important for diversification of the tourist offer of a destination on the tourist market. However, in order to achieve the desired level of quality, distinctiveness and diversity of the tourist offer and high positioning on the market, it is necessary to achieve their sustainable and focused development in the way that experts from various stakeholder groups in the destination are included in all the levels of planning of the tourist event (depending on the character of the event), with the goal to meet the needs of tourists (in terms of the offer of value and experience for money, etc.), and achieve benefits for organisers and the entire community.

In addition to successful development of events as a part of an integrated tourist product, with strict adherence to sustainable development principle, it is also necessary to undertake adequate marketing activities with the goal to raise awareness of potential tourists by pointing out particularities, advantages, and quality of the tourist offer of Eastern Croatia with the goal to create a new experience and motive for visiting the tourist destination in which the event takes place and allow tourists to participate in the event (actively or passively), which will achieve growth of tourists' satisfaction with the offer, which will surely have a positive effect

on increase in tourist consumption. Despite the fact that Eastern Croatia has many traditional events, they have not been sufficiently profiled and valued in terms of tourism, and this can be achieved through tourist events designed in accordance with market needs. In the authors' opinion, the most recognisable tourist event Vinkovačke jeseni was used to display all the strengths and weaknesses of the tourist offer of Eastern Croatia, with the objective to draw attention to the necessity of their branding and more active presentation on the international tourist market, and creation of a „mega“ brand and regional/hallmark event. Previous developmental, strategic and marketing activities are, despite undoubtedly large current efforts, insufficient, and it is therefore necessary to devise a set of measures and activities which should be implemented and designed in accordance with realistic possibilities of Eastern Croatia. This can be achieved by establishing models based on the presented chain of values, branding through the umbrella branding concept, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to development of tourist events, in accordance with the S.W.O.T. analysis presented in the paper.

In order to improve the current tourist offer of events (with special emphasis on Vinkovačke jeseni), the authors propose the following developmental guidelines:

- Future development of the tourist offer must be conducted with strict adherence to the sustainable development principle in order to preserve the rich resource base as the basis for development of a recognisable offer;
- It is necessary to monitor contemporary trends in tourism and to implement best practice of competitive tourist destinations;
- Implementation of advanced knowledge and skills, basic competitive advantages in the 21st century;
- Application of the proposed chain of values of management and promotional activities of tourist events in the destination and the concept of the umbrella brand of Vinkovačke jeseni aiming to contribute to the achievement of competitiveness of the tourist offer of Eastern Croatia;
- Education of the local population about the importance of the event for the development of the tourist offer and the area in which the event takes place;
- Tourism development in general as well as development of tourism events should not be designed in the way that results in negative implications on traditional lifestyle and the quality of life of the local population, which would result in loss of one of the main competitive advantages of Eastern Croatia. The objective of destination management should be to motivate the local community by its activities to create new products and services, and to undertake other business activities which will directly affect the development of the entire Eastern Croatia and contribute to growth of the general level of quality of life.

6. Conclusion

Eastern Croatia is rich in material and non-material heritage and centuries-old tradition and culture based on this heritage, which is a basis for creation of competitive, innovative and unique tourist offer, and there are many perspectives in the development of the entire economy of Eastern Croatia. Additional development of the tourist offer in terms of events can be determined as one of the main factors for achieving the previously mentioned goals. Basic elements of a new tourist offer and brand of Eastern Croatia are created by improving and upgrading the existing events, like Vinkovačke jeseni presented in the paper, or by creating new events. Vinkovačke jeseni, for example, due to their numerous advantages which

are reflected in a long tradition of organising the event, educational effects (preservation of non-material heritage – chants, gatherings, dances, etc.), and economic performance of the event, enabling the realisation of added value of the tourist offer and directly affecting the growth of consumption and satisfaction of tourists, achievement of direct contact and empathy between the local community and visitors, while businessmen are provided with the possibility of direct interaction with the demand. More effective quality management of the entire tourist offer of Eastern Croatia through tourist events is possible by implementation of designed strategy of tourism and of general economic development that is accepted by all the stakeholders in the destination as the foundation for achieving competitiveness, and marketing strategy based thereon, presented in the paper, which will provide greater visibility and effectiveness of tourist events (Vinkovačke jeseni and other) on the international tourist market. This will undoubtedly affect the increase in tourist turnover and revenue from tourism and other complementary activities, increase the level of satisfaction of tourists and the local community through higher employment and stronger competitiveness of tourism and economy of Eastern Croatia.

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