

INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF A TOURIST DESTINATION – THE KEY FACTOR IN ACHIEVING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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Abstract

The dynamic changes in the global tourism market require qualitative transformation of nearly every segment of a destination's tourism supply. The survival of tourism destinations requires an intensifying tracking of trends relating to a continuous improvement of the tourism supply quality.

In the new economic, social and cultural frameworks of the tourism market areas of new dialogue are emerging that treat the tourists as individuals rather than mere demographic segments of the target market. There is a large number of ways that brings to a competitive advantage of a tourist destination and all are based on the interaction on what tourists consider as the superior value – the value for money or a quality tourist product at the right price. This indicates that the changes in the habits of tourists require the implementation of integrated quality management (IQM) in a tourist destination as a fast and efficient response to consumer preferences and the increasing competitiveness of destinations in the world tourist market. Taking into account the above starting points, the main view is to recognize and describe the integrated quality management model of tourist destinations and to highlight the major factors of a qualitative tourist base on the examples of Opatija and Porec as a precondition for building a competitive and market recognizable tourist destinations.

JEL Classification: L15, L83

Keywords: tourist destination, integrated quality management (IQM), competitiveness, Qualitest

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is rightly called “the industry of the 21st century”¹(Pirjavec & Kesar; 2002, 5) and is characterized by the constant changing trends in tourism demand and the development of new travel motivation. In addition, in the world tourism market one must systematically answer the challenges of a competitive environment (Schaumann; 2004, 103). This requires a tourist destination’s proactive stance in the way of thinking and acting. On the one hand, the supply tracks the changes in demand preferences, while on the other hand, the demand’s expectations grow and it is increasingly difficult to meet it. The model of a tourist destination as a system deals with the processes within which many elements or subsystems such as accommodation, entertainment or transportation transform inputs into outputs (Dwyer et al.; 2011, 43).

In a world of growing competition the quality was no longer an option but an integral part of strategic responses of a company as late as the 1990s. Quality is achieved through a combination of better processes, better approaches, techniques and efforts of those who create products and service (Barković; 2011,192-193). At the same time, the quality of a tourist destination’s effects can be measured by the survey results that are achieved by perceiving the quality of the respondents-tourists and their experiences.

In search of new solutions to enhance the competitiveness and monitoring trends in the world tourism market a new concept of integrated management of quality of tourist destination has been established and it occurs in response to actual changes in behavior and differentiation of tourist demand resulting from the new impacts on all aspects of life.

The paper defines concepts such as tourist destination and integrated quality management and highlights their characteristics. The emphasis is put on the understandings and the views tourists, residents and destination management express, and the correlation of the results obtained from the study in perceiving the quality of the tourism supply on the examples of Opatija and Porec. Based on the presented analysis data, the appropriate attitudes will be set forth, which incorporate certain views regarding the realization of a higher quality in these tourist destinations.

¹ Although here is used this trendy term for tourism, it should, however, be emphasized that the definition of tourism introduced by Hunziker and Krapf in 1942, and later adopted and implemented by AIEST, reads:” Tourism is the sum of relationships and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, Insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity.”

1. The integrated quality management model in support of the competitiveness of a tourist destination

It is known that, due to the high degree of tertiarization, tourism directly and indirectly affects the positive development of the tertiary sector, especially trade, catering industry, hospitality management, service trades and transportation in a particular tourist destination. Tourism is a field that is now being rapidly transformed in the supply and demand spheres, which greatly affects the intensity and quality of tourism development in many tourist destinations. The term “tourist destination” implies an optimally combined and market-adjusted environment that, by developing important and dominant skills, advisedly creates assumptions that will enable it to achieve long term and good tourist results compared to its competition (Magaš; 2003,16).

The tourist destination is the reason for travel and tourism products make tourists visiting it (Getz; 2008, 403-428). Tourists’ return in the same tourist destination depends upon the quality of the tourism product. From the point of view of the tourist, the quality of a tourist destination is defined by the following elements (Avelini Holjevac; 2002, 156): an image of the destination prior to arrival, information prior to arrival, reservation, journey to destination, arrival (reception), information at the destination, place of staying, place of eating, attractions, infrastructure and environment, farewell and return journey, contacts and memories (impressions) upon return.

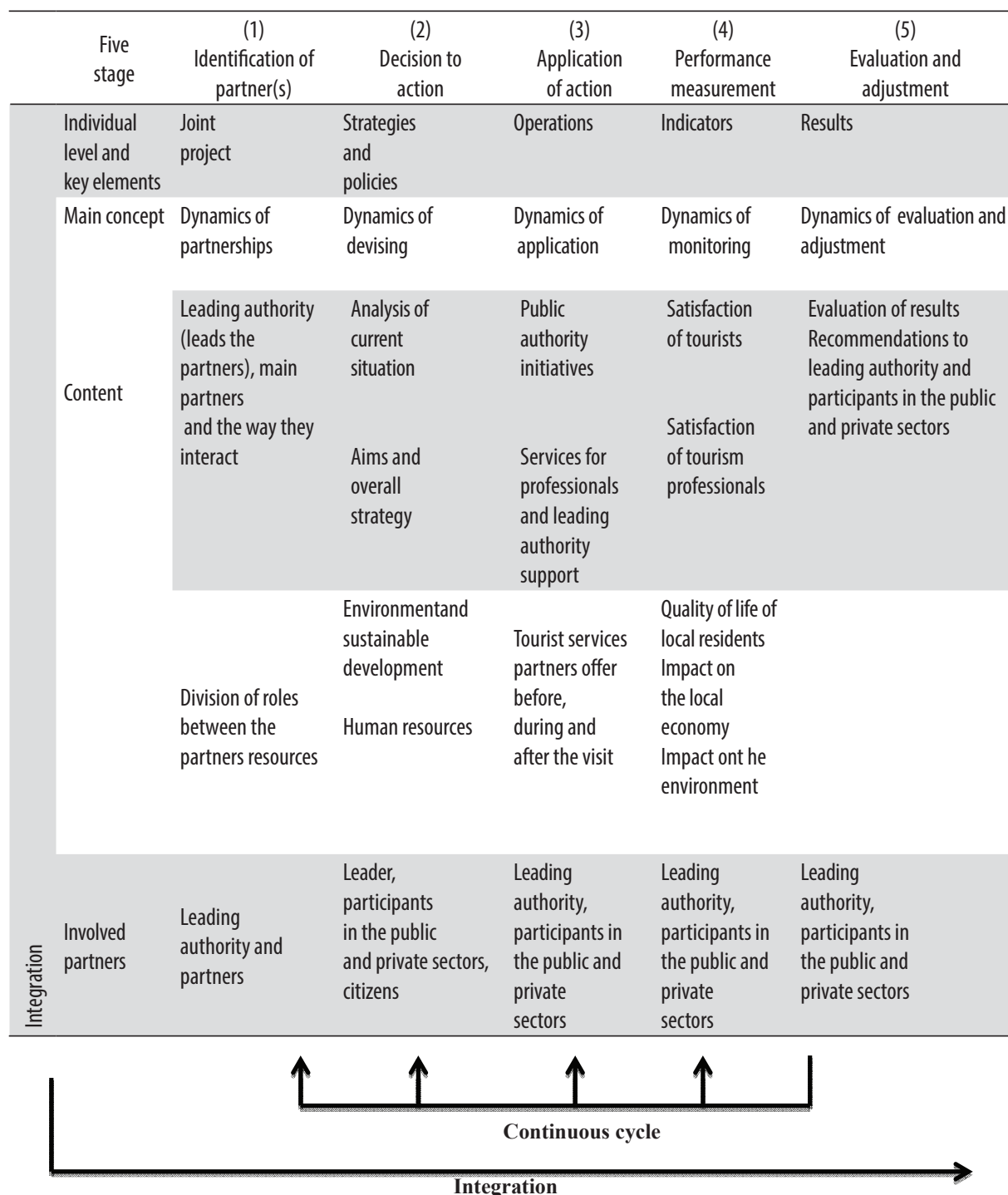
Furthermore, the World Tourism Organization emphasizes the importance of the quality segment that a tourist perceives in a certain tourist destination. Therefore, there are at least ten reasons for the introduction of the quality system in the tourist destination management: (Camp; 1989,81) quality enables a competitive advantage; quality services and products are more easily sold in the market; quality products and services encourage customer loyalty; quality brings higher profits; quality management brings to the stability of the tourism industry and protects jobs; improving quality better the quality of life of the local population; quality management facilitates access to financing; an effective monitoring of progress reduces repetition of costly mistakes; carefully collecting data provides the tools to make the right management decisions; monitoring progress in quality management enables the understanding that encourages proactive management.

In this direction, the IQM model serves as a support for the activities of restructuring and repositioning of the tourism destination whose task is to ensure a

higher level of quality elements in the structure of the tourism product. Integral quality management (IQM) is a relatively new concept in the management of a tourist destination that developed in the 1990s as a response to competitive pressures on both the supply and the demand side. At least three reasons can be cited to explain the late appearance of this concept: (European Commission; 2000, 13) a more intense pressure of the competition both on the supply and on the demand, a delayed emergence and development of quality management in the service sector that occurred not earlier than in the 1980s; a complex nature of the overall quality management of tourist destinations.

The approach to integrated quality management (IQM) recommended for tourist destinations includes (European Commission; 2000,19): a comprehensive plan supported by a leader who is capable of influencing and coordinating all the partners within the destination; an access to the draft strategy and policy that requires an integrated management (human resources, natural resources, quality of life, cultural heritage, etc.) which can also be expressed in a formal form by the partners involved, under the supervision of the authority; the foundations for the implementation of measures by the various public and private service providers are laid at this stage; the partners involved and the principal authority measure the effectiveness of approaches with the help of various indicators to track the satisfaction of various target groups, the integration into the community and the conservation of resources from the perspective of sustainable development; in this interactive process the authority that leads the plan ensures that the results are analyzed and that findings are deduced from them in order that corrections and additions which are considered important could be inserted at every level of a chain to ensure the proper functioning of the chain as a whole.

Here below is an overview of the scheme of the integrated quality management (IQM) of a tourist destination.

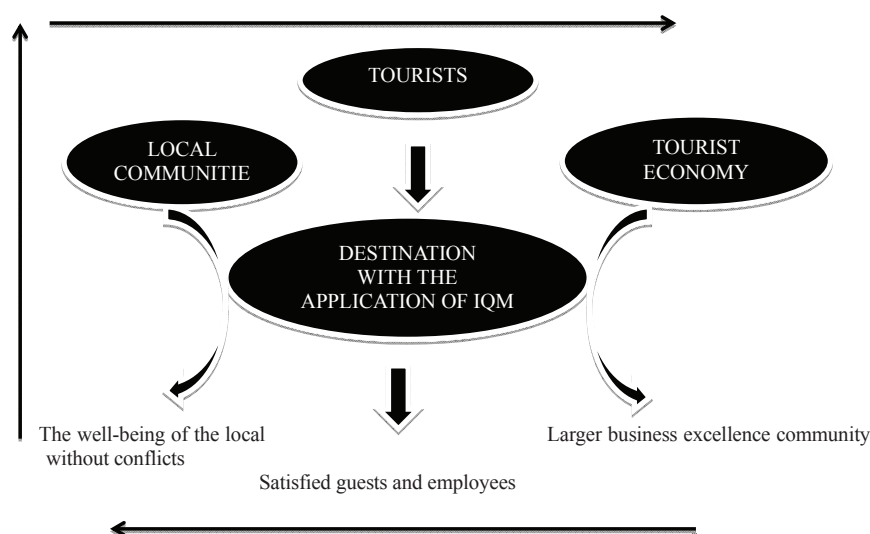
Scheme 1. Overview of the integrated quality management (IQM) of a tourist destination.

Source: European Commission: Towards quality coastal tourism; Integrated quality management (IQM) of coastal tourist destinations and towards quality urban tourism; Integrated quality management (IQM) of urban tourist destinations, Bruxelles: Enterprise Directorate-General Tourism Unit, 2000. p. 19

IQM approach connects the five stages that mark the chain of the quality management applied to a tourist destination. This approach also seeks to explain the most important driving forces, content and participants in each phase. It allows, and thus also requires a vertical and horizontal integration. At the same time, the integrated quality management (IQM) can be accessed in several ways, most of which derived from the private sector. If any of these approaches want to be applied to a tourist destination, they should be adjusted in two ways: they must integrate the public dimension, and must take into account all public and private agencies involved in the process as well as the complexity of their interrelationships.

The European Commission defines IQM as a systematic effort for internal and external quality, i.e. an economic growth in the short term and local development in the long term (European Commission; 2000, 19). The inner or internal quality is the value that tourists receive through a chain of experiences from the initial information about the tourist destination to the “after-sales” services upon their return in the place of residence. Internal quality includes chain services in the public and private sectors. The outer or external quality refers to the sustainable development of tourism with the rational use of renewable and non-renewable natural and other resources in order to prevent possible unintended consequences (Ritchie & Crouch; 2003, 86).

Unlike traditional approaches to quality management - that refers to specific tourist companies - integrated destination management involves coordination of tourism and other tourism-related activities such as infrastructure, environmental protection, protection of cultural heritage and equally satisfying qualitative needs of tourist/visitors, local population and tourism service providers-management of tourist destinations (Scheme 2).

Scheme 2. Integrated approach to quality management of a tourist destination

Source: author analysis according to European Commission: Towards quality coastal tourism; Integrated quality management (IQM) of coastal tourist destinations, Bruxelles: Enterprise Directorate-General Tourism Unit, 2000, p. 31

The connection of the above structures in a joint operation can be achieved by encouraging the organization of interest groups, meetings of local communities, common supervision, control and evaluation of the results of the research and so on. Experience shows that the quality of the destination management generally begins to apply for tourist destinations that recognize their stagnation and when their successful future is questioned and in this way quality management is introduced in order to stop the negative trends. Thus, the qualitative approach is used more as a corrective rather than preventive measure, which is wrong (Blanke & Chiesa; 2007, 22-25).

The integral quality management is usually part of a strategy of the developed tourist destinations for specific providers of tourist services such as tour operators, travel agents, hotels, restaurants and so on. However, from the standpoint of tourists, the satisfaction with a particular tourist destination does not depend solely on the experience of the providers of tourist services, but also on many other more general factors such as kindness and hospitality, security at the destination, sanitary and health conditions, traffic and management of tourist flows.

It can be concluded that many factors affect the tourist perception of a destination, and ultimately they influence the decision of tourists to visit again and/or recommend a tourist destination to potential visitors.

2. The Qualitest concept as a support to integrated management model of a tourist destination

To implement an integrated system of quality management (IQM) in practice, it is necessary to choose an adequate methodology and integrate several internationally recognized standards of quality management in one system. For this purpose it is necessary to create conditions for the continuous monitoring of satisfaction of tourists/guests, in parallel to the evaluation of the satisfaction of the participants in the structure of the tourism supply. One of the modern tools that allow the measurement, monitoring and comparing of the elements of the quality system in a tourist destination with its competitors is Qualitest.

Qualitest is a tool that ensures different types of information according to the needs of the destination management. It provides supervision of the achieved phase of quality at different hierarchical levels in a tourist destination.

Qualitest is an integral measurement and control test of the achieved level of quality of internal relevant tourism supply factors over a period of time. It is also a reliable basis to compare one's own performance with that achieved in similar tourist destinations (European Communities; 2003, 3).

The starting point of quality indicators at Qualitest model is showed here below (Table 1).

Table 1. Instrument of tourism destination management

	Fields		Perception indicator of quality requirements		Indicators of quality management		Indicator of quality results (performance)
Quality of a destination	1. Ability of local tourism industry						
	2. Satisfaction of local population						
	3. Support to local tourism industry						
	4. Marketing and publicity	→		↔		↔	
	5. Safety and security						
	6. Air quality at destination						
	7. Quality of environment						
Quality of a tourism product	8. Communication before arrival						
	9. Availability						
	10. Transportation						
	11 Accommodation						
	12. Information	→		↔		↔	
	13. Food and beverage						
	14. Activities						
	15. Quality of bathing water						
	16. Value for money						

Source: adapted according to A Manual for Evaluating the Quality Performance of Tourist Destinations and Services Enterprise, DG Publication, European Communities, 2003. p. 8

Qualitest is a practical tool comprised of 16 indicators that complement the integrated management of quality tourism destination in a way that focuses on the evaluation of four main elements:(European Communities; 2003, 2) satisfaction of the needs of tourists with quantitative and qualitative elements of the tourist supply; local people's satisfaction with quality of life in the tourist destination and

the effects of tourism at the local level; participants' satisfaction with local tourist attractions achievements in the domain of the range and quality of supply as well as their relationship with customers; finally, with satisfaction of all the participants from the quality of the environment, the implementation of sustainable tourism development, the impact of tourism on the environment of tourist destinations, concern about the historical and cultural heritage.

Some of the tourist destinations use the Qualitest model along with its indicators to evaluate the achieved level of quality, and it can be used by all interested and responsible people for the quality management of tourist destinations (European Communities; 2003, 5): a local DMO (destination management organization) who intends to apply the concept of integrated destination management and needs a tool for measuring and tracking (monitoring) the quality, and to compare the results with similar destinations or competition; other public administration institutions interested in improving the quality of the tourism sector and looking for practical advice and recommendations; providers of tourist services, from accommodation and food to the various activities that want to acquaint themselves with the key points of measurement and monitoring their own performance and results in the area of quality, tour operators and agents interested in monitoring the implementation of quality systems at destinations they send their clients and intend using the indicators as a basis for the dialogue with the destination's local managers.

The paper provides an overview of the research elements of the tourist supply and through comparative analysis compares perceptions of each target group of the same elements of tourist attractions of Opatija and Porec as destinations.

3. Comparative analysis of tourist supply in Opatija and Porec as tourist Destinations

In 2011 the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija conducted an empirical research on the topic "Assessment of Kvarner's tourism supply"² For the purposes of this study separate data will be used for the tourist destination Opatija and there are also explored the attitudes of tourists, local residents and

² More about it in „*Ocjena turističke ponude Kvarnera*“, 2011 (Assessment of Kvarner's tourism supply, 2011)., -research results of the project "Tourism Regionalization in global processes" (a project funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, no. 011,603, previous research in the same project was published in a special issue of the scientific journal *Tourism and Hospitality Management* - Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija

tourism management towards the quality tourism supply and the quality of Opatija as a tourist destination. In 2011, in parallel with the above survey, a research was conducted by the author with the same approach to Porec as a tourist destination.

For the purposes of this study there will be used primary data of the research within the project “Assessment of Kvarner’s tourism supply”(interest limited to Opatija as a tourist destination), in comparison with the data obtained relating to Porec as a tourist destination and conducted by the author of this paper. The emphasis is placed on the examination of attitudes and perceptions of the target respondents about the quality of common and specific elements of both tourist destinations.

The empirical research was conducted by the author in Porec during the year 2011 (from May to October) by using a survey questionnaire³ customized for each target group of respondents (tourists, local residents and management of tourist destinations). The survey was anonymous on a one-shot single stratified sample. Besides Croatian, questionnaires were translated into three languages (English, German and Italian). In the data collection it was mostly used the method of personal interviews while the method of self-completion was used only in a small part of the survey. The questionnaires were designed in such a way that each group of respondents was asked specific questions relating only to that target group of respondents, while the second part of the questionnaire (survey about the satisfaction with elements of the tourist supply) was identical for all target groups of respondents. Both indoor and outdoor types of questions were used in the survey, as well as the Likert 7 -degree scale (from 1 the worst to 7 the best). In Porec there were surveyed 284 tourists, 162 residents and 32 tourism managers. It was analyzed a total of 478 properly completed surveys out of the planned 600, which represents a 79.7 % feedback. Each studied element is represented with an arithmetic mean. The collected questionnaires were encoded and all data were analyzed using statistical methods and the SPSS computer program, as shown in the sequel. These data cannot be fully accepted as relevant but they indicate some important facts while considering the qualitative tourism supply in Opatija and Porec as tourist destinations.

³ It was used the same type of survey questionnaires as those used in the project “Assessment of Kvarner’s tourism supply, 2011” - conducted by the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija in 2011

4. Tourists' satisfaction with the elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec as tourist destinations

As a group of respondents, tourists assessed their own level of satisfaction with the elements of the tourism supply in both tourist destinations (Opatija and Porec). In the evaluation it was used the Likert's scale of priorities (from 1 to 7) for all 37 elements of the tourist supply, in which 1 indicates extreme dissatisfaction and 7 extreme satisfaction with that element, as shown in the following table.

Table 2. Tourists' satisfaction with the elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec

ELEMENTS OF TOURISM SUPPLY IN OPATIJA AND POREC	Opatija	Porec
SPACE – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT		
Climate	5,69	5,89
Beauty of the landscape	5,73	5,84
Preservation of the environment	5,46	5,58
Cleanliness of the sea	5,53	5,71
	5,60	5,75
POPULATION, EMPLOYEES		
Kindness of the population	5,41	5,45
Kindness of the population employed in tourism	5,50	5,64
Knowledge of foreign languages of the population employed in tourism	5,38	5,51
	5,43	5,53
RECOGNITION, SAFETY, INFORMATION		
Feeling of safety and security	5,48	4,84
Tourist information prior to arrival at destination	5,10	4,98
Tourist signs at destination	5,09	5,18
Souvenirs	5,29	5,37
	5,24	5,09
LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION AT DESTINATION		
Transport accessibility	4,85	4,32
Local traffic	4,38	5,23
Car parks	3,93	4,01
Care for the appearance of the town	5,63	5,19
Urban harmony	5,31	5,11
Promenades (Opatija)/Old Town (Poreč)	5,88	5,53
Parks and green spaces	5,82	5,38
Tidiness and cleanliness of the beach	5,30	5,39

Crowded beaches	5,38	5,48
Opening hours in the service industry (banks, shops)	5,35	5,31
Opening hours in catering facilities	5,47	5,40
Shops	5,49	5,45
	5,23	5,16
FACILITIES		
Events	5,11	5,00
Historical and cultural heritage	5,30	5,29
Facilities for children	5,08	5,12
Accommodation facilities	5,56	5,74
Catering facilities	5,53	5,81
Cultural facilities	5,22	5,42
Entertainment facilities	5,35	5,60
Sports facilities	4,95	5,14
Conferences and congresses	4,88	4,75
Health tourism facilities	5,31	5,21
Nautical offer	5,17	5,24
Excursion offer	5,34	5,30
Local cuisine	5,68	5,74
Price and quality ratio	5,19	5,24
	5,31	5,32
	5,36	5,38

Source: Survey of the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality in the project "Assessment of Kvarner's tourism supply," - tourist destination Opatija, and the author's analysis according to the questionnaires related to the tourist destination Porec

The above table presents the comparative attitudes of tourists for each group of elements at tourist destinations Opatija and Porec. It can be noted that the tourists tested in both tourist destinations are extremely satisfied with natural resources such as landscape beauty, cleanliness of the sea and preservation of the environment and climate. Tourists rated very high (mark 5.73) the beauty of the landscape of Opatija, while in terms of natural resources the highest mark (5.89) got the climate in the tourist destination Porec. Tourists rated the elements *"population, employees"* very high giving them more than five points in both destinations, which can be interpreted that the most important asset in both tourist destinations are people. A slight difference is perceived in the higher rating of courtesy of employees in the tourism sector in Porec in relation to the destination Opatija. The third element assessed by the tourists is *"recognition, safety, information,"* of a tourist destination.

It should be emphasized a slightly higher average score (5.24) of the tourist destination Opatija in relation to the tourist destination Porec in the sphere of this group of elements of tourism, *“recognition, safety, information,”* because tourists in Porec rated slightly lower the element of a sense of safety and security, which requires further research in this tourist destination in order to take action to improve them systematically. Within the group of elements related to the organization of both destinations it can be noticed that the best marks obtained the promenades in Opatija (5.88) and the Old Town in Porec (5.53). In the above mentioned groups the *“car park”* obtained the lowest score which is a significant problem both in the tourist destination Opatija and in Porec. For the assessment of service quality of a tourist destination the largest number of elements is classified in the group *“destination facilities”*. Within this group tourists rated with the highest mark (5.68) the quality of the local cuisine in Opatija, and in Porec the quality catering facilities received the highest score which is associated with the promotion of gastronomy and enology that is being nurtured in the whole Istrian region.

5. Local population's satisfaction with the elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec

Tourist offer should be based on the principles of sustainable development and - with the satisfaction of preferences of increasingly demanding tourists – it should also contribute to meeting the needs of the local population. Therefore, the population was also required to evaluate all elements of the tourist supply, in the same way as assessed by the tourists. By analyzing the responses, it is possible to examine the attitude of the population toward certain elements of the tourism supply.

Table 3. Local population's satisfaction with the elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec

ELEMENTS OF TOURISM SUPPLY IN OPATIJA AND POREC	Opatija	Porec
SPACE – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT		
Climate	5,93	5,97
Beauty of the landscape	6,06	5,92
Preservation of the environment	5,14	5,03
Cleanliness of the sea	4,73	5,10
	5,47	5,50
POPULATION, EMPLOYEES		
Kindness of the population	4,99	4,83
Kindness of the population employed in tourism	4,46	4,67

Knowledge of foreign languages of the population employed in tourism	4,11	4,54
	4,52	4,68
RECOGNITION, SAFETY, INFORMATION		
Feeling of safety and security	5,58	5,42
Tourist information prior to arrival at destination	3,73	4,48
Tourist signs at destination	3,71	4,29
Souvenirs	3,62	4,93
	4,16	4,78
LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION AT DESTINATION		
Transport accessibility	4,34	5,04
Local traffic	3,35	3,83
Car parks	1,81	2,97
Care for the appearance of the town	5,10	4,79
Urban harmony	4,60	4,70
Promenades (Opatija)/Old Town (Poreč)	5,76	5,29
Parks and green spaces	5,85	5,11
Tidiness and cleanliness of the beach	4,30	4,38
Crowded beaches	3,86	4,02
Opening hours in the service industry (banks, shops)	4,36	4,31
Opening hours in catering facilities	5,10	4,95
Shops	4,60	4,68
	4,42	4,50
FACILITIES		
Events	3,88	3,90
Historical and cultural heritage	5,56	5,65
Facilities for children	3,78	4,10
Accommodation facilities	5,06	5,30
Catering facilities	3,78	4,22
Cultural facilities	4,11	4,12
Entertainment facilities	3,25	3,89
Sports facilities	3,34	3,57
Conferences and congresses	5,19	5,29
Health tourism facilities	5,04	4,81
Nautical offer	4,94	5,00
Excursion offer	4,89	4,96
Local cuisine	5,16	5,31
Price and quality ratio	4,36	4,68
	4,45	4,63
	4,60	4,82

Source: Survey of the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality in the project “Assessment of Kvarner’s tourism supply,” - tourist destination Opatija, and the author’s analysis according to the questionnaires related to the tourist destination Porec

From this table one can deduce that the local population is satisfied with the tourist supply in Opatija and Porec. The local population of both tourist destinations ranked the elements of beauty of the landscape and climate at the top of all elements. Also other elements based on natural resources are ranked very high, which represents the best rated segment of the tourism supply. All three elements related to “*local population and employees*” are rated on the high second place in the overall assessment of satisfaction of the population with the existing elements of their tourist destination (4.52 for tourist destination Opatija and 4.68 for tourist destination Porec), annotating that in the overall segment the population is much more critical than the tourists, who gave much higher marks to all those segments. Elements of the tourism supply such as “*recognition, safety, information,*” were rated relatively poorly by the local population. *Safety* achieved the best rate in the segment (5.58 for Opatija and 5.42 for Porec), although this score is lower than that given by the tourists in the same category. The population perceives the elements of traffic as the biggest problem in both destinations, local traffic in Opatija was evaluated with 3.35, while in Porec with 3.83 and the element of parking places deficiency (in Opatija 1.81 and in Porec 2.97). In the segment “*facilities*” population of both destinations worse rated some additional features such as events, activities for children, entertainment and sports facilities, indicating that qualitative changes are necessary. Population positively perceived cultural and historical heritage (tradition of tourism in Opatija).

6. Management’s attitudes towards the elements of tourism supply in Opatija and Porec

The continuation of the research related to the assessment of perceptions of tourism management in tourist destinations Opatija and Porec, i.e. whether they met the expectations of tourists about individual elements of tourism supply in a destination. Based on the survey results, management’s attitudes of both tourist destinations will be presented hereafter.

Table 4. Management’s attitudes towards the elements of tourism supply in Opatija and Porec

ELEMENTS OF TOURISM SUPPLY IN OPATIJA AND POREC	Opatija	Porec
SPACE – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT		
Climate	6,00	5,99
Beauty of the landscape	6,00	5,95

Preservation of the environment	6,17	5,98
Cleanliness of the sea	5,33	5,44
	5,88	5,84
POPULATION, EMPLOYEES		
Kindness of the population	5,00	5,23
Kindness of the population employed in tourism	5,67	5,97
Knowledge of foreign languages of the population employed in tourism	6,00	5,56
	5,56	5,58
RECOGNITION, SAFETY, INFORMATION		
Feeling of safety and security	6,33	6,00
Tourist information prior to arrival at destination	4,67	4,18
Tourist signs at destination	5,00	5,22
Souvenirs	4,33	4,60
	5,08	5,18
LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION AT DESTINATION		
Transport accessibility	5,67	5,51
Local traffic	3,50	3,82
Car parks	2,67	2,78
Care for the appearance of the town	6,17	6,23
Urban harmony	6,00	6,02
Promenades (Opatija)/Old Town (Porec)	6,50	6,10
Parks and green spaces	6,50	6,09
Tidiness and cleanliness of the beach	4,17	4,38
Crowded beaches	3,50	4,00
Opening hours in the service industry (banks, shops)	4,83	4,83
Opening hours in catering facilities	5,17	5,27
Shops	5,00	5,01
	4,97	5,00
FACILITIES		
Events	5,00	4,97
Historical and cultural heritage	6,33	6,05
Facilities for children	3,17	3,12
Accommodation facilities	5,83	5,99
Catering facilities	5,33	5,45
Cultural facilities	4,50	4,48
Entertainment facilities	3,50	3,41
Sports facilities	3,50	3,52
Conferences and congresses	5,83	5,71
Health tourism facilities	5,17	5,05
Nautical offer	4,67	4,79
Excursion offer	5,83	5,99
Local cuisine	6,00	6,46

Price and quality ratio	6,00	5,98
	5,05	5,07
	5,31	5,34

Source: Survey of the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality in the project “Assessment of Kvarner’s tourism supply,” - tourist destination Opatija, and the author’s analysis according to the questionnaires related to the tourist destination Porec

The table 4 shows the comparative management’s attitudes about the elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec. In the opinion of the management of both tourist destinations, natural resources arguably represent a significant comparative advantage in these destinations. The management evaluates something better the group of elements of the tourism supply that refers to “*population, employees*” (5.56 to Opatija and 5.58 to Porec). In the group of elements referring to “*recognition, safety, information,*” the element “*a sense of security and protection*” is placed on the top of the chart in both destinations – it gained more than six points. In Porec, the management evaluates as the most critical the quality of tourist information (4.18) tourists receive before arriving at the tourist destination. The results obtained in the group of “*organization*” are equal but there are minor differences in favor of Porec. Specifically, in Porec the highest marks are highlighted as follows; appearance of the town, the Old Town, urban harmony and arrangement of parks and green spaces. Furthermore, in the same group of elements in Opatija the highest marks obtained are for the following: promenades, arrangement of parks and green spaces and urban harmony of the facilities. For both tourist destinations the management is critical in terms of the lack of parking places and an inadequately organized local traffic. The highest ranking score given by the management within the group of elements “*facilities*” for both destinations (more than 6 points) refers to historical and cultural heritage and local cuisine. At the same time, the tourism management in both tourist destinations expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of facilities for children, as well as with entertainment and sports elements of the tourism supply (rated less than 4). Despite the quality offer of autochthonous events and excursions, the management believes that the quality elements from the group “*facilities*” are not adequately offered and are unrecognizable in the wider tourism market, which should certainly be improved.

CONCLUSION

An indicator of the degree of the impact of tourism on economic, social and cultural prosperity of the local population is the tourists' satisfaction with the tourism supply and the satisfaction of the destination management with the economic effects of their activities. The emphasis is placed on the local population's perception of the economic effects of tourism. The need for an as harmonious coordination as possible and the implementation and control of all aspects of tourism destinations occurs accordingly.

Only an innovative and integrated destination management can manage a tourist destination based on a IQM model, with the support of local authorities, the tourist supply and the local population, that are funneled by the tourist demand. The aim is to realistically consider all relevant elements of the tourist supply and to achieve a higher level of competitiveness in the tourism market by valorizing the available resources with the help of their optimal structuring and effective use by the principles of sustainable development.

In this paper, the perception of the target group "*tourists, residents and tourism management*" of the same elements of the tourism supply in Opatija and Porec has been compared through a comparative analysis. Synthesizing information has led to the following conclusions; the obtained results are similar in both destinations but minor differences were observed in favor of Porec. Furthermore, all tested target groups highly ranked the natural resources supply and this may be considered the greatest comparative advantage of both tourist destinations in the world tourist market. Deficiencies are perceived in the group "*organization and facilities of tourist destinations*" in both destinations, which leads to the conclusion about the absence of effects of tourism management in making and implementing significant business decisions to improve the quality of supply in both tourist destinations. This may positively direct both tourist destinations to a destination management organization as a cohesive force that unites and integrates all the decision makers in linking the needs and desires of tourists by taking into account the views of the local population, and the application of the concept of sustainable development based on the principle of IQM model.

Finally, it is necessary the use of the integrated management quality (IQM) in the tourist destinations Opatija and Porec, which will provide them with a competitive advantage in the market competition with the world's tourist destinations, aimed at the same target groups.

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