

Extending the brand of Hvar

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Extending the brand of Hvar

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Abstract

Sustainable Tourism has been shoved aside in favor of quick earnings, leading to deterioration of the destination. This research was conducted to find out if people are willing to visit the Island of Hvar during the winter season, in order to provide wider selection of activities, as well as improving the quality of life for the residents of the Island! Eighty Seven participants were surveyed to help best determine future plans for the destination itself!

Keywords: Seasonality, Sustainable Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Off season, Sports Tourism , History Tourism

Literature Review

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to showcase the off-season tourism potential on the Island Of Hvar. The problem the island is currently facing , is a problem with which the whole country grapples with. Since our whole economy is mostly based upon the tourism season (Kožić, 2013), we face problems with sustainability, work force, and proper resource management. Such is the problem within the whole county, but in this research paper, I want to focus on the island of Hvar, its current issues and showcase some of the problems which are holding the destination back from its full potential.

The primary issue when delving into this topic is when you start discussing the off season period on the island . While the summer seasons yield good results, the same doesn't hold true for the winter season of the year. Namly the island is overcrowded during the summer, and dead during the winter. One of the main factors which contributed to this situation, is That Hvar has branded itself as a destination for young people and partying. By doing so, the island as a destination restricted itself to a certain demographic, but in the process forsaking the elements which could drive it to its maximum potential. As stated before, the island's prime focus is party tourism, focused in the biggest city on the island, the city of Hvar! By doing this, it has narrowed their targeted demographic, which is too narrow and too seasonal! Out there lies the whole unexplored market of potential visitors, but nothing is being done about that. People are satisfied with the existing demand, and make no efforts to generate demand out of an already existing market!

The research project will observe the trends, demographics of the people who have visited the island in the last ten years, to help better determine the space to grow and improve the offer , and target more demographics of people and their interests, and enrich the whole destination in the end!

The main research purpose is to find out would people be interested in visiting, and their interest in other activities which could be implemented into the offer! What I hope to achieve is to showcase the tourism of Hvar can be sustainable for its inhabitants during the whole year, and shift the frame from party tourism to other branches like : Agrotourism, Sport Tourism, Heritage and Escapism!

The research question I want to focus on Is how to EXTEND THE BRAND of the island Hvar. The way I want to go about this is to do the research on already existing visitors in previous years, and investigate the correlations in demographics and interest people show in other branches of tourism that could be implemented on the location. Besides the demographics and results gained from the questionnaire, Emphasis should be on the facilities and equipment required for certain activities, and if it really be realistic to implement them!

Seasonality

Seasonality as a term describes the distribution of tourists , consumption and demand over a certain destination (Butler 1994). It can be perceived as a fluctuation in supply and demand during a period on a destination. While this may be one way to look at the phenomena, other scientists have offered a different approach (Baum & Lundtorp 2001), by separating seasonality into two different categories. The first category is deemed”natural” because it

addresses the weather and temperature of the destination. The other category focuses on the more institutional aspects such as traditional family holidays, festivals, holiday periods and regular events!

How it relates to the topic is to help me provide my point. Since the destination discussed suffers from the uneven “distribution” of seasonality, it showcases how focus and concentration on only peak tourist seasons may have negative impacts on the destination in the long term such as tourism pressure, leading to reduced quality of service and potential environmental damage as proven by a research done on the matter! (Ruggieri,2014)

Heritage

History is something we humans cling to with hearth and passion, to learn from it, and avoid the mistakes done in the past. As you can imagine, since mankind is so intertwined with its history, there's a possibility for a branch of tourism to bloom, and grant an opportunity to people around the world to learn about history and heritage. When discussing heritage tourism, we have to keep in mind that it is a relatively new branch or expansion of tourism that was sparked after World War 2 (Lyck, 2014), to highlight and preserve the cultural heritage which may be considered priceless to the future generations! The first case in recent history of the awareness of the culture and heritage happened in Egypt in 1954, where the Egyptian government wanted to build the Aswan Dam, but building it stopped across the valley filled with reassurance from the times of Ancient Egypt. UNESCO acted upon this and started a campaign to preserve the heritage lying beneath the sands!

Even though it might be considered a newer practice, we can find evidence from ancient Greece. Even in those ancient times there was demand and interest in cultural heritage, especially for monuments with great significance in those times(Lyck, 2019). One of the first

signs of interest in the cultural heritage is a ten volume travel guide, written by Pausanias(100 B.C), which rose to providence during the middle ages, and later when Renaissance peaked people's interest in culture and arts! Heritage tourism also brings more benefits for the destination, since the monuments and heritage sites have to be preserved (Li, 2003), thus creating sustainability and dampening the environmental impacts of people on the site, since it has to be well preserved, for the sake of the generations that are to come, and the destination itself. If guided and developed properly it may prove to be a “pull factor” and the reason for the destination development (Lyck, 2019). History and Heritage are not something new for the Island of Hvar, since it has seen its fair share of history. When talking about the historical significance of hvar, it should be kept in mind that it has a long history. It was settled in 385 B.C by the Greek people (Novak, 1960). This is one of the oldest cities in the whole country, Stari Grad (Old Town), with more than 2400 years of history, heritage and tradition! It was influenced by more than one culture (Wilkes, 1992), due the fluctuation of control during time. Some of the different cultures which once inhabited the Island are Greek, Romans and from the 7th century Slavs!

Agricultural Heritage

We have touched upon the importance of heritage and culture, and its potential as a driving point for a development of destination, but now we have to understand more than just physical heritage, we must also have a grasp of the importance of cultural customs and traditions of the people. Even though this type of heritage isn't tangible, the knowledge and tradition are carried on. This type of tourism is also known as the Agricultural Heritage

System Tourism (AHST) . AHST can be defined as “remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development”(FAO 2008). The intangible heritage presented in this manner teaches and showcases the systems (hence the name) which have ecological, cultural and aesthetic impact. In the time of rapid upgrades and modernisation, many people strive and already have moved into big cities. The rapid urbanization that has taken place in the last century, has caused the ways of rural life to be forsaken. And thus we can see the opposite effect on the display at the moment, where people who live in big cities seek experiences, knowledge and comfort of the rural ways of life (Tian, 2016).As the FAO claims(Food and Agriculture Organization) This is both an opportunity for the traveler and for the people in Agriculture. On one hand, the visitor will learn new techniques and traditions, all while preserving those traditions. And the people giving the offer can use the income to increase the agricultural gains from the income acquired from the AHST. (FAO 2008; Jansen-Verbeke and Mckercher 2013; Min et al. 2007). When considering the agricultural heritage of the Island Hvar it should be considered that it was the way of life for the people, on the island one of the only ways to survive and thrive! As a matter of fact this is how people make due even today, because of the lack of options during the winter period! One of the most famous sites being the Starogradsko Polje (Old Town Fields), a plain stretching across the plain on the island, consisting of countless smaller fields divided by drywalls. It is the best surface for cultivation on the island, and thus growing and becoming a landmark listed in UNESCO. People even today have passion for the agricultural benefits and its development, there should be no reason not to develop the branch of tourism devoted to one of the most significant factors of the destinations! It would not only provide additional activities and learning opportunities for the visitor, it would benefit the local economy and development tremendously!

Sports Tourism

And now to talk about the branch that is a bit different from the rest presented, but still manages to find its properties and way to connect individuals. I'm talking of course about sports and how they can be utilized to boost the attractiveness of a location! It is a good way to point your tourism towards, but it should be kept in mind that sports tourism works the best when combined with other activities (WTO, 2019), since the people coming for the sports will seek to learn about the culture and other attractions that the destination may offer. It is also important to keep in mind that the organized event should be related to local customs to enhance the experience of the location, leading the boost of seasonality, since the events boost the amount of the visits of the destination. This branch may be a bit more difficult to implement when talking within the text of the discussed location. Since it requires Venues and equipment which the Island currently lacks for the most part. But I firmly believe that resources should be poured into this branch, since it encourages interactions, increases job opportunities for the locals and the overall wellbeing of the visitors! This niche should be combined with the ones of the aforementioned niches to get the most out of it!

Hopes and expectation

What I intend to do with my research is to find alternative branches of tourism that can be implemented on the island of Hvar! With my research I really hope to find that there is interest in other activities other than partying, and I believe those other options wouldn't be

challenging to implement due to the island's infrastructure . Just keep in mind, I'm not making an argument for forsaking the party tourism. By doing that I would just do what I am already trying to combat. The Brand of the island should not solely be focused on one aspect, rather it should utilize other branches and combine their benefits! We should not just be happy with the existing demand and strive to generate interest, rather than people coming just for the sake of it! To understand quality one should study all approaches, rather than the way of quick and easy profit!

Method

The purpose of this research was to find out people's interest in different branches of tourism in order to improve the activities offered on the island of Hvar for the benefits of sustainable tourism and for the sake of extending the off season!The instrument used in this survey was a questionnaire, written in English .The instrument was modified based on the ResearchGate questionnaire.

The survey consisted of 13 questions divided into three different sections.The first three questions of the survey were related to the participant's overall travel preferences.The questions were to determine the preferences of visitor's travel schedules, and if they obtain it themselves (Self made),or the travel schedules already made by Travel agencies. It was also to determine the preferred length of the stay and the accommodation they prefer. The next set of questions consisted of one multiple choice question and 6 Likert scale questions. The Participants rated these questions with the scale ranging from "Extremely Unlikely" to "Extremely Likely" and "Not at all important" to "Very Important".The point of the Likert scale questions were to determine levels of importance and likelihood to visit if certain activities were involved and promoted!The participants rated the likelihood to visit based on Sports

and Cultural activities as well as relaxation! Questions were about inclusion of Sports activities, Organized Sports Events, Historical sightseeing, Agricultural activities and Workshop and escaping the urban way of life! The last set of questions was related to the demographics of the participants, including their age, gender, and country of residence!

The survey was conducted online, with Google Forms and was distributed on Reddit and Facebook to different Travel groups in hopes of reaching a wider audience of different demographics. The targeted participants were foreign travelers who would potentially visit Croatia, and find out which activities will peak their interest the most! The data collected includes 87 participants and the data was gathered between 11.04.2022 and 18.04.2022

Results

When inspecting the gathered results and checking the question with utmost priority, are the people willing to visit outside of the summer season! And the final results show that the majority (54 62%) state that they would visit Hvar during the off season! The average (Mean) being

| | |
|-------|------|
| Mean | 2,56 |
| Stdev | 0,60 |

The next question was used to determine the level of interest in activities the participants would prefer during their stay. The activities were separated into three different options and the question was multiple choice! The options were Sport and

Recreation, Culture and heritage and Rest and relaxation. The end result shows us that the overwhelming number of participants chose Culture and Heritage(53,) , followed by Rest and Relaxation (51)and Sports (13) in last place! From this data we may conclude that the people are the most interested in a combination of Culture and Relaxation!

| Descriptive Statistics | Number | % |
|------------------------|--------|--------|
| Rest and Relaxation | 51 | 58,62% |
| Sports and Recreation | 13 | 14,94% |
| Culture and Heritage | 53 | 60,92% |

After finding out more about people's general preferences, I focused on the next set of questions to revolve around more specific activities within the three main first groups!

The result of the first of Likert's scale questions shows us that the majority of the participants feel neutral or think that they are moderately important about sports activities during their vacation! With the actual average of $M=3,70$, showing us that there is a variety of responses. And that being evident by a rather high Standard Deviation measuring at 1,56

I also wanted to look into people's opinions about organized sports events to find out if people show more interest in sports when talked about in context of events, referring back to the increase of Seasonality! From the gathered data we can

conclude that most of the participants showed that the organized sports events wouldn't play a big factor in their stay with an average showing 2,85, with the most answers being neutral or unlikely!

Next questions put the emphasis on Cultural and Agricultural aspects of the destinations and the willingness of people to participate in agricultural activities , learning about the history and sightseeing! First question was about sites and history, and I am pleased to receive positive feedback, with the majority stating they would be extremely likely to visit to learn more about the Cultural aspects of the destination , with an average of 3,87! The follow up question regarding the Agricultural heritage and participating in agricultural activities, also yielded a pleasing result. 54% of the participants claimed they would be more likely to visit and participate ! The average being 3,80!

For the last of the Likert scale questions I wanted to find out if escaping the urban way of life is important for the participants, since the destination offers just that! The end results point to most people wanting to experience the rural lifestyle and escape the city! But the level of importance per participant varies which can be observed from the high standard deviation of 1,43! And the mean being 4,75 meaning the participants find it Moderately to Very important part of their journey!

Demographics

For the demographics three questions were in order! The questions were set to determine the age, Gender and country of residence of the people surveyed!

Country of residence

I had participants from all over the world participate, but the pools from which i found the most respondents were From Germany (14%) USA (13%) and UK (17%)

Age

| Age | Number | % |
|-------|--------|--------|
| 18-24 | 27 | 31,03% |
| 24-35 | 24 | 27,59% |
| 35-44 | 18 | 20,69% |
| 45-54 | 14 | 16,09% |
| 55-64 | 4 | 4,60% |
| 65-74 | 1 | 1,15% |

Gender

| | Number | % |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 39 | 44,83% |
| Female | 47 | 54,02% |
| Non-Binary | 1 | 1,15% |

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find out the level of interest by people willing to visit Croatia during the winter! Thus giving us more opportunities to bolster our offer and possibly make a year-long tourist on the Island Hvar a reality! From the gathered data it is glaring that there is massive potential within the branch of tourism surrounding Culture and Heritage, as well participating in agricultural activities, and thus involving themselves with the agricultural heritage of the destination! I expected more people to be more enthusiastic about Sports tourism, but needless to say, it shouldn't be completely discarded! It should be implemented over time, since it requires a higher level of structural development, which might be lacking on the island, but always kept as an option for those who are willing! I am especially glad that there was a positive response for agricultural heritage, since it provides many benefits for local farms, and the relationship between those local farms and local hotels! Local and fresh food can be served to people, while allowing them to harvest and experience what's going on, on their plate! This is a mutually beneficial interaction for both parties! I believe that the best way to utilize this information is to create an offer for people which Combines Rest ,relaxation , History, Agriculture and Heritage! Most of the people

claimed that they would like to escape the city so i believe these needs would be targeted by the destination and what it offers! This also proves many benefits for locals, since it offers a job all year long. The people of the island used to rely on agriculture to survive, but since our culture has moved to Tourism and hospitality, many people left seeking better opportunities. In this case we can combine the ways of the old and current to create a sustainable way of life for the citizens of Hvar! In retrospect, I wish I had calculated the age/activity correlation between the participants and the activities, to find more detailed information about group preferences! But keep in mind, my research sought to make an offer for everyone, in order to tap into a bigger market ! The marketing pool of the destination is limited as it is and I didnt want to repeat that mistake myself!

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Instrument:

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