

Lesson Learned: The Success Story of Zagreb Christmas Market! How Can We Make It Sustainable?

Sporiš, Marko

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2019

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **RIT Croatia / RIT Croatia**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:229:810024>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#)/[Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-02-23**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[RIT Croatia Digital repository - Rochester Institute of Technology](#)



Lesson Learned: The Success Story of Zagreb Christmas Market! How Can We Make It Sustainable?

Student:

Marko Sporis

Mentor:

Milena Kuznin

RIT Croatia

Dubrovnik, April 2019

ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the challenges of making special event tourism sustainable. The importance of special events tourism has already been proven by numerous authors, yet without clear instruction on how to convert them into sustainable. The research has proven that specific factors such as price or location could affect the creation of loyal customers. Therefore, an inquiry about Zagreb market segments has been analyzed through the online observation technique. Further, this paper seeks to raise awareness about how the perception of special events could contribute to its overall growth. For that reason, additional research has been proposed to support such a statement.

Key words: destination management, sustainability, tourism planning, special events

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality industry count for a large portion of the worldwide economy, and it continues to grow fast. The growth, if not managed, can cause the destination to suffer from a wide range of negative externalities, and even transcend the benefits. At present, a commendable goal of those successful tourism destinations is shifted toward the creation of a sustainable system that would keep attracting guests, while keeping velocity with guest's core values and believes. Therefore, sustainable tourism is not just about destination preservation, rather it must reflect upon local's welfare, too (Marco Cucculelli, 2015) (Gunn, 2002).

Complex and thorough, a sustainable system is being built on the pillars of those proven tourism planning models.

The aim of the paper is to further analyze two out of many tourism planning models and examine if the certain elements were implemented during the Zagreb Christmas market planning process.

TOPIC AND THE RESEARCH GOAL

Tourism is accentuated as an interrelated system that tries to provide a full packaged product to an end user. Tourism is tumultuous, and it may change as quickly as the guest preferences, making it difficult for destination planners to implement a sustainable tourism planning model (Stoffle, 1982).

There are a couple of concerns when talking about sustainability. The first thing about a sustainable destination is that it should attract people throughout the entire year, contrary to season-based tourism (Orovic, 2018). Special events, like Christmas Market in the city of Zagreb, become prime contributors in attracting various groups of visitors and extending the marketing voice across the borders (Marković, 2018).

According to Pine & Gilmore (1998/1999), “Unique and memorable experience is an important part of consumer’s lives and the best way for suppliers to gain competitive advantage”. From the 2015 grand opening, the Zagreb Christmas Market tries to gain a competitive advantage by extending the list of its offer, enhancing the local residents’ cordiality and with keeping pace with some recognized tourism sites, like Vienna and Budapest, comparison to which would be addressed later in this paper (Tušak, 2017).

The second point, to understand what sustainable tourism is, one has to understand tourism as a multidisciplinary field; a multidisciplinary field that is caused by two major powers: supply and demand (Gunn, 2002). Gunn further states that destination managers to accomplish to become sustainable only if establishing a web-like network of specific, realistic and actual objectives, which then serve as a framework on how further sustainable policies should be both developed and implemented.

According to the Zagreb official website, significant and constant growth was noticed in guest visits and overnight stays. As reported by the European Best Destinations, the City of Zagreb was recognized three times as the best Christmas Market in Europe, and Zagreb did manage to overcome all the infrastructure challenges, as opposed to some beliefs.

The aim of this study is to find out whether special events do affect the overall tourism planning and development of the cities, and if, how can we increase the competitiveness of those smaller tourism destinations. This paper would answer the research questions by using the case of the City of Zagreb; best Christmas Market in Europe (2016-2018).

This topic has been in the recent media focus. Radmila Kovacevic from *Vecernji* newspaper is just one of the many authors who argue that contemporary tourism is growing and flourishing. In an article written on 10th September 2018, Kovacic points to a moment

when the city of Zagreb managed to leap the reputed “July hole”, implying that season may be prolonged, but without a significant increase in the overall number of tourists coming.

Gunn would claim that this is due to an overall misunderstanding of tourism and emphasize the term as a system. Sustainable tourism goes beyond pure products. It is an interrelated system, and there should be no hidden hand to guide planners and developers to act in synergy. In order to provide the end service, both planners and developers of tourism must act in coordination, since neither of them has complete control over its destiny. Gunn defines it as a tourism system and claims that destination can do well, only if supply side partners are working jointly, in both predicting and relating to the market demand (Gunn, 2002).

The model created by Gunn (the so-called Demand-Supply model) is still relevant and used for analysis of the viability of destinations (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

Tourism runs on the premise of demand and supply. According to Gunn, successful developers are those who anticipated the importance of those sides and cope with for success. A demand-supply model is dynamic, and one affects the other. Tourism stretches beyond the product, so the manufacturers must focus on four major factors: motivation, financial ability, physical ability and time (Gunn, 2002).

On the other hand, the supply side may be defined as the market answer on demand. In order for the market to meet demand, a site must respond by introducing different objects, services and a broad range of unique attractions. As a response to the popularity gained by the first-year award, the city of Zagreb matched the supply by introducing the wide range of attractions and festivals, but also increasing their accommodation and carrying capacities, which would be statistically shown in the further text (Tušak, 2017).

As tourism has emerged during the late 20 century, so did the research on what makes one destination more appealing from the other. The concept of destination competitiveness gained on its popularity as there seem to be more people traveling and distinctions among continents, countries or cities are less noticeable (Crouch, 2007). Concerns, that tourism product is becoming the actual place itself, invokes governments to start taking greater action on the community assets and promote the destination throughout its character- people, culture, landscape, etc. (Perrottet, 2016). Crouch uses the term “determinant attributes” as for distinguishing factor among different attributes and their level of the influence that each one brings to the overall competitiveness of a specific tourist destination.

The number of attributes that a destination can compete against another, may go as high as to 36, such as climate, safety, and security, accessibility, infrastructure...etc. (Crouch, 2007). Sustainable tourism is the act of successful experience economy, and experience economy must be accomplished through special and unique experiences. Different festivals and events could be conceptualized as singular and exceptional, but have to keep pace with the market demand and persist on their constant enrichment (Marković, 2018).

Therefore, if a certain attribute is considered to be important, it does not imply its determinant role in gaining destination competitiveness. Crouch provides an example by using climate as one of the destination competitiveness attributes and emphasize the fact that if two competitive destinations are sharing the same climate then the climate would be considered as important, yet not as a determinant attribute of the relative competitive position of both destinations (Crouch, 2007).

Destination competitiveness is not a new term and still a great amount of research studies have been done in order to outline a model that would help destinations to determine whether their position in the competitive chain slopes positive or negative. Therefore, Crouch

had developed a Model of Destination Competitiveness that aims to alleviate the process and points to critical points when making progress (Crouch, 2007). The complete model is in the Appendix 1, Figure 2 to this paper.

In a tourism context, success is being determinant by looking at both competitive (micro) and global (macro) environment. Crouch claims that fall in the number of guests visiting a destination is a result of inappropriate visualization of one of the following pillars.

Therefore, a destination is in the balance once the destination competitiveness is established once resources endowments are parried to its capacity to deploy those same ones. Core resources are determined and given. They are what they are and up upon them a destination should upgrade and come up with certain elements of experience economy. (Crouch, 2007) In order to provide the end product that is unique and special destination must have certain resources available for disposal. For that reason, human, physical or capital resources are needed to lift above the competition.

Despite the complexity, destinations keep fighting for new guests. Destination boards should act on both micro and macro level, organizing a profound organizational system that takes close care on both human resource and visitor management and create a positive marketing image in the global market.

The very top of destination management should look for preserving its values and respecting the carrying capacity that one should provide (Crouch, 2007).

Part of Crouch's top pillar of the sustainable model is conceptualized from idea coined in the early beginning of 20th century when Lord Harold Samuel said: "There are three things that matter in property: location, location, location" (Safire, 2009).

For that reason, location is considered as one of the qualifying elements of the conceptual model, since its vicinity may serve as a crucial factor in 1) determining market segments, 2) destination positioning branding and 3) quality of overall service experience. States and countries with a similar culture are more congruent, and for that reason, the end product would be of better quality (Crouch, 2007).

Events like Christmas Market appear to become an important part of destination identity (Suzana Marković, 2018), and each year visitors from around the world choose to travel in order to see the uniqueness of different places. From the planning perspective, destination should work on the cooperation between planners and developers and create a visual map of area's potential zones (Gunn, 2002). Therefore, destinations should mark the events as the part of their branding strategy and cooperate with different stakeholders in order to ensure their triumph growth is well managed (Perrottet, 2016).

Perhaps the strongest advantage of the city of Zagreb is the endorsement of its people toward tourism (Orovic, 2018). The authenticity of Zagreb is preserved and carried to a mechanical stage. Orlovic states that managing a city to pulsate for locals, is what tourists are seeking and what they recognize as unique. From a planning perspective, the city of Zagreb does have quality food and drink festivals, a wide range of concerts, local choirs, and craftsmen stores (European Best Destination), but what makes the difference is a quality exploitation of its geographical, historical and other resources, while transmitting the vibration that tourist is just another local inhabitant for a certain time. Comprehensive planning is supplemented with a dose of anti-tourism and creates the strongest distinction attribute (Orovic, 2018).

Parallel with the city of Zagreb is this year's winner of best Christmas Market Award, the city of Talin. A continuous presence of tourism made Talin to convey the message of a

dream-like Christmas city. Among the many planning features, tradition, coziness and circular smell of the warm mulled wine are mentioned as factors to produce desired outcome. An essential part of the city of Talin is the historical location and well-preserved medieval buildings.

Streets of this Estonian city are prevalent with numerous historical lovers, families with kids, and gourmets who are seeking an ultimate experience that succeed teasing all of the senses. (<https://www.europeanbestdestinations.com>)

Budapest is another country that stands for excellence on EBD's list. Dozens of historical tourist sites, appealing squares and a wide range of cultural programs encloses Budapest to cultural lovers and young adults, looking for a day-long experience. According to the Budapest official Christmas website, Budapest goes beyond pure Christmas offer, but rather it markets its additional key resources too. Moreover, Budapest is marked as a "City of Baths". For that reason, additional revenue is being generated, since visitors rarely leave the city without seeing a Christmas market. (<http://budapestchristmas.com/>) As for the measurement of Budapest competitiveness success, EBD listed Budapest among the top five destination choices in 2018/2019, even throughout the time of Christmas events.

Therefore, the Budapest Christmas market had a portfolio of 26 000 votes collected in 2018 and Advent Fest at the Basilica is slowly becoming more recognizable and successful. (<https://www.europeanbestdestinations.com>) Based on the Crouch and Ritchie model, tourists are receiving values not just from the primary sources but also from the top pillars of their model. Therefore, sustainability and competitiveness are connected and both are pointing to a destination ability to remain in condition, and maintain innovative upon the services that it provides (Marco Cucculelli, 2015). Despite the importance of tourism planning, there are

certain notions that tourism planning does not contribute to the overall competitiveness of a destination.

This paper seeks to create a higher awareness about the importance of proper tourism planning for sustainable and competitive development using some of the models available through the secondary research.

Christmas market is a traditional event, organized from the city of Zagreb and promoted by Zagreb Tourist Board, which acts as a local destination management organization (<http://www.infozagreb.hr>). Despite the long tradition of the Christmas market, it became more viral in 2015, once the city adopted certain elements of tourism planning and decided to focus on special event tourism (Tušak, 2017). However, any kind of development would not lead toward long term sustainability and should not be considered, if economic development is brought upfront as a crucial goal to our planning. For that reason, Markovic points to the Gilmore's ideas, which emphasize the importance of experience economy and creation of memorable attractions (Suzana Marković, 2018). According to the official Christmas Market webpage, Zagreb strives towards creativity and keeps introducing new attractions each year. In 2018 Christmas Market, expanded and was introducing several new attractions among which this paper lists three.

First attraction included a complete transformation of “Maksimir Zoo” in order to create a unique point which invites everyone but celebrates families and youngest. Further, Zagreb motto of 2018’ Christmas Market was to bring true holiday environment, rather than promoting profit nature. Second attraction was “Advent Stara Tkalča”, which setup invites both foreign and local visitors. The “Stara Tkalča” is a recognized Zagreb street, and for the purpose of 2018, it was transformed into an open exhibition of old crafts and domestic food, along with many others souvenir shops and handmade crafts. The whole program was further

enriched by a variety of musical concerts, festivals and other interactive workshops which were free of charge. Some of the workshops that locals could attend included: knitting of socks and baby shoes, traditional wood crafting and many others.

The third attraction introduced was the movie advent that was held in the traditional setting of “Europa Cinema”. The concept included everyday projections of different Christmas movies, which were carefully picked, in order to suit to every generation. Projection program followed the paradigm of those greatest Christmas classics and awarded movies from around the world. Therefore, the projection list included *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*, *Brothers of the Wind*, *Christmas Miracle*, etc.

The movie advent came as the answer to the growing appeal of the local community toward a less commercialized version of Zagreb Christmas Market (HINA, 2018). For that reason, these attractions have been influential for sustainable tourism, since in order to rectify the problem, Zagreb’ Tourist Board implements a different set of new attractions that are both nonprofit based and useful to local residents while determinant to maintain an educational intent. (<http://www.adventzagreb.com/>). For every business and for tourism, planning process depends upon the past success of different events and projects. For that reason, planners and developers must understand that importance of the customer feedback, but also include that feedback, once developing the feasibility study (Gunn, 2002).

City of Zagreb is a recognized tourist destination that attracts different market segments, yearlong. For that reason, the city event offer is rich and diverse, yet a largest number of visitors were attracted due to Zagreb Christmas Market. (<http://www.infozagreb.hr>, 2019)

Therefore, visitors voted and elected Zagreb as the best Christmas Market Destination in the Europe, competing to some recognizable cities, such as Vienna and Budapest (<http://www.adventzagreb.com/>, 2019), that were mentioned previously in the paper.

Among the several indicators, carrying capacity seems to have an important role in designing, advancing and sustaining the destination's offer (Tušak, 2017). The implementation of Christmas Market and its constant improving causes it to become recognizable and appealing to customers. Therefore, there is an increase number of visitors that are coming to visit Zagreb, and who are mostly staying in hotels and hostels, followed by staying at private accommodations (<http://www.infozagreb.hr>, 2019). The carrying capacity should be prone to adjusting to the local environment and built within acceptable time frame so it can serve as a main pillar that support others; destination management, destination planning and those qualifying determinants, once there is need for it (Crouch, 2007). According to the statistical data that are listed on the Zagreb official website, following tables are to be drawn. (Figure 3,4,5)

In 2016 Zagreb had 56 hotels that could accommodate 7831 people (the number of beds available). The data for 2015 are not listed in the table above, yet according to the statistical data collected from the Zagreb official webpage, the hotels were able to host 7165 people. For that reason there is a visible increase in hotels carrying capacity. In 2016 the number of hostels was 41, and their carrying capacity was 2056 beds.

In 2017 Zagreb had 60 hotels that could accommodate 8076 people (the number of beds available). In comparison to the 2016, there is a slight increase in number of beds offered from the hotels. For that reason there is a visible increase in hotels carrying capacity. In 2017 the number of hostels was 46, and their carrying capacity was 2287 beds, which points to increase as well. In 2018 Zagreb had 66 hotels that could accommodate 8338 people (the

number of beds available). In comparison to the 2017, there is a slight increase in number of beds offered from the site of the hotels. For that reason there is a visible increase in hotels carrying capacity. In 2018 the number of hostels was 48, and their carrying capacity was 2262 beds, which points to slow decrease of this type of accommodation.

As an additional part to the secondary research, the author chose to conduct a professional interview with two directors of tourist boards in order to examine is there a unique plan toward the development of more sustainable tourism. The two directors listed were Martina Bienenfeld (Zagreb Tourist Board) and Romana Vlastic (Dubrovnik TB). Selected directors are experienced tourist workers, who are working on their position for at least one year and have a direct impact on decision making strategy for the town they represent. The author of this text was transferred to bylaws and statute when defining the role of stated Tourist Boards. However, Dubrovnik stated clearly that they see themselves as a destination marketing organization as opposed to destination management organization.

From the interviews, it gets clear that both tourist boards are aware of the rising impact of domestic population and are willing to include them in different programs (English language courses, quality surveys, financial aids) in order to provide the better service or maintain the quality of existing one. The author further noticed different approaches toward sustainable tourism and the impact that tourism has on the environment. The Dubrovnik TB redirects us to City of Dubrovnik as same as Zagreb TB redirects us to the city of Zagreb. Still, both mentioned that there is a positive trend of increasing environmental awareness in both domestic and foreign population.

The last question was about how this TB sees the future development of their cities. Romana Vlastic from Dubrovnik Tourist Board states that in the future emphasize should be transferred to people who will be the first promoters of sustainable tourism, and act as the

patroness of Dubrovnik's unique heritage. Martina Bienenfeld from Zagreb Tourist Board points the important of year-long tourism and reviles further ambition for Zagreb to become a yearlong destination. Therefore, it predicts tourism growth, but also its stagnation, to whom the City of Zagreb will then respond to. Therefore, it will increase destination positioning, image, and branding approach in order to enrich the current offer and attract more visitors.

METHODOLOGY

The author of this research chose to conduct content analysis as its primary research. The content analysis, a method that separates big pile of information into smaller conceptual chunks who are then named or coded in order to simplify the final information. (Wilson, 2011) This research uses qualitative analysis, since the author develops different categories throughout the process of information evaluation. The noticed strengths of when using content analysis according to Wilson includes easier trend forecasting (due to numbers, statistics that it includes), more relevant historical insights and generally data collected have valid proof of their reliability. The content analysis has been done in the form of online reviews, collected from the Trip Advisor official website and included the three most appealing and recognized sites that the city of Zagreb offers. The sample included the entire population, both domestic and foreign visitors, who wrote the review in the period between the month of December and month of February.

The following data were collected randomly and the reviewer status was not taken as one of the segmentation factors. The time range was set in accordance with the duration of the Zagreb Christmas Market, as it has been analyzed for the purpose of this study. The main goal of the primary research was to determine what were some of the pull factors that consumers recognized as important and whether they reflected towards Zagreb's sustainable tourism; especially the Zagreb Christmas Market.

Data were collected for the above stated period and are the reflection of the first 15 reviews that were listed on the first two pages of trip advisor web site. The three locations that were analyzed were: "King Tomislav Square", "Zrinjevac" Park and Zagreb' Upper Town. The content analysis results are shown below in the section results. For easier understanding, the author of this text did come up with an excel spreadsheet, that included six different categories.

For each category the author used (+) for the positive review, (-) for negative review and zero if the certain category was not mentioned in the review. Note, that if an entire category is marked with zero, meaning it has not been mentioned in either of reviews than the author listed that category as NOT APPLICABLE. (Ex. the price category was not applicable for "Zrinjevac" Park area).

The categories listed were the following: Food and Beverage, Christmas Advent, Street and Infrastructure, Park and Green Surfaces, Price and Star rating that each comment did receive. The following categories were chosen due to the secondary research and should serve as the direct indicator of customer appreciation of effort involved in promoting Zagreb Christmas Market, as the best Christmas Market in Europe. The current content analysis was valid since it reflected the 15 most recent reviews, come down with a cumulative grade and look for what were the pull factors that customers were seeking. This study investigated consumer perception of last Christmas Market and should provide with a clear suggestion about potential areas for improvements.

RESULTS

Three areas that the paper took under the examination were: Tomislav Square, Zrinjevac Park and Upper Town of the city of Zagreb.

The Tomislav Square was the first out of the three analyzed areas. The total cumulative grade after analyzing 15 reviews was 4.8 out of maximum 5 points. For the Tomislav Square there was not a category listed as not applicable, since each category received at least one review. According to the results the strongest pull factor of the Tomislav Square was its streets and the infrastructure with total of 73% of people rating it as positive. It is to mention that a lowest grade received for street and infrastructure category was 3 due to the square over-crowdedness. Further, 10 out of 15 people mentioned the Christmas Market program held on Tomislav Square as positive. The same respondents would come back. The other categories, including food and beverages and parks, were positive, with no negative review written. The price category was mostly not mention, yet there were 2 positive reviews, slightly indicating that prices are considered as cheap.

The results for Zrinjevac Park were the following: the total cumulative grade after analyzing 15 reviews was 4.8 out of maximum 5 points. For the area of the Zrinjevac Park there was one (1) category listed as not applicable. The category listed as not applicable was price, since the park is a public good and no fee is charged for entry. According to the results the strongest pull factor of the Zrinjevac Park was its Christmas Market program that was rated positive (12 out of 15 people) which represents the 80% of the investigated population. Zrinjevac scored low in street and infrastructure with 5 people rating it positively and 2 people rating it negatively. The negative comments were given due to the lack of amenities and the size of the park. The results shown that guests were somehow satisfied with the food with 7 out of 15(47%) people mentioned it as pull factor.

The third location chosen for analysis was the Zagreb Upper Town. Out of all three locations, Zagreb Upper Town had most reviews, with a total of 2024 being written since April 4th. For the period between December and February, there was a total of 182 reviews from which the author analyzed the first 15 in order for research to be valid. The total cumulative grade for the Zagreb Upper Town was 4, 73 out of a maximum 5 points. The category that was listed as not applicable was the park and green surfaces, since this part of town is mostly industrial area, and no parks are surrounding it. The food was graded from 8 reviewers and the results were all positive, counting for 54 %. Further, 6 reviewers mention Christmas Market program as the Upper Town pull factor, counting for 40%. Strongest pull factor of Christmas Market program according to the review were Christmas decorations and food eating points. The street and infrastructure category were the most graded rubric with 11 out of 15 respondents mentioned it in their reviews. Nine of those 11 rated it positively, while in two other reviews the grade was negative. It is to mention that the lowest grade received for street and infrastructure category was 4 due to the over crowdedness. Moreover, the guests described it as “hordes of people”. The price category was mostly not mentioned, yet there were 3 positive reviews, slightly indicating that prices are considered as cheap.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the previous research, the authors have already defined 36 attributes that identify areas in which destinations can compete against each other. One of these attributes is the creation of special events, and it has been made evident that this plays an important role in the overall development of an all-year-long destination. Zagreb Christmas Market came as a response to the existing demands of guests in a period where the season gap does seem to be shorter, but the overall number of visitors remains the same. In order to make this event even more successful and attract more visitors, the management of the festival must look for synergy among supply-side partners as well as to seek sustainability as much as their current resources allow them to do so. Gunn claims that sustainable tourism goes beyond pure product, therefore, Zagreb should rely less on the product itself and give more autonomy to elective bodies (TB) in order not only to market the destination but rather to manage it toward the veracious path.

There are different factors that can have a negative impact on the stagnation of tourist destinations similar to the city of Zagreb, but most often this happens because of the misunderstanding of what tourism as social phenomena is, and how complex it can become as a system if it wants to retain its sustainability. Sustainable tourism goes beyond the product, which means that the offer of Zagreb Christmas Market should not be enlarged. On the other hand, the services provided should become more personal to the end users.

It is already known that there are several other destinations in the area that are currently competing with the city of Zagreb and are also turning to year-long sustainable tourism, such as Vienna, Talin and Budapest, which makes the efforts of the City Council and the Tourist Board to make Zagreb more recognizable even more.

Based on the results of the research, the author of the paper claims that the emphasis in this process of the city growth should be given more to building people's character, to increasing culture as a mark of pride and, finally, to respecting landscape in general, since those marks and those steps will prevent the tourism industry being observed (only) as an actual place. The role of the Zagreb Tourism Board, therefore, is not solely to do marketing; rather they should monitor and inspect each individual stand and provide that the level of service promised is the same as the level that the customer received.

Current attribute points of Zagreb, according to the research, are Food and Infrastructure, yet grades received in those two categories were only average while solely a couple of 15 reviewers mentioned them as unique and special. For that reason, an additional effort is recommended to improve those categories and, for visitors, to start observing the food received not just as an object, but rather through an eye of the person who is making it. What seems to be another possible challenge is the fact that the top level of authority expects the level of demand to decrease and, moreover, this same person chooses rather to take a more reactive rather than a proactive approach to this process. The triumph growth was the result of a long and laborious job and it must actively be promoted as part of Zagreb branding strategy, in order to ensure its continuance.

It also needs to be remembered and stated that local residents play an important role in the implementation of this event. The concept of experience economy does not start in the office rather it starts with people who, with some real activities and actions have a huge influence on any visitor's perception. It is obvious that those locals need to have some financial benefit from this approach immediately, before this approach becomes a norm and/or form of a standardized behavior. Moreover, this is a long-lasting process and the government should provide incentives to those who are involved in the organization of this event or who choose to participate. The author of the paper further states that financial asset

should not be the ultimate form of incentives. By transforming forgotten city points into areas where locals can enjoy and create a memorable experience, the local government support both the foreign (economic) and domestic sector. The already existing example of the usage of the park “Maksimir Zoo” as well as the implementation of different workshops that would enrich the offer as for the tourist, so for the locals as well are more than welcome in the future period.

The use of tourism planning models is a valuable tool for determining what the key attributes of a specific destination are. Zagreb as a city fails to use those models and should anticipate using them in the future, as demand for the main events would start to decline. Nevertheless, the city of Zagreb does move towards the implementation of sustainable tourism. The author has already listed in this paper several motives for the implementation of sustainable tourism, however, the key attribute that makes the whole process to pay off, is the idea that the tourism and the city itself will keep on growing. For that reason, idea that is presented is that perception of tourist must be changed, as much as one becoming temporary inhabitant. On that note, Zagreb must strive to step into experience economy and make the overall living standard as high as its economy would allow. The visitors would appreciate that, and so would also the domestic people as well.

The findings of this research confirm that the City of Zagreb has managed to create a brand of its own that attracts a significant number of people from all around the world throughout the whole year. Nevertheless, it remains still to be seen if this trend will continue and if this destination will keep its position on the touristic market.

REFERENCES

- Crouch, G. I. (2007). *Modelling destination competitiveness : a survey and analysis of the impact of competitiveness*.
- Gilmore, P. &. (1998). *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. Harvard Business Review.
- Gunn, C. A. (2002). *Tourism planning; fourth edition*. Routledg.
- HINA. (2018). ADVENT U ZAGREBU NA TRI NOVE LOKACIJE: 'Pokušat ćemo smanjiti konzumerizam, a građanima vratiti blagdansko ozračje'. *net.hr*.
- <http://budapestchristmas.com/>. (n.d.). Retrieved 2019
- <http://www.adventzagreb.com/>. (2019). Retrieved 2019
- <https://www.europeanbestdestinations.com>. (n.d.). Retrieved 2019
- <https://www.zagreb.hr/>. (n.d.). Retrieved 2019
- Marco Cucculelli, G. G. (2015). Does sustainability enhance tourism destination competitiveness? *Elsevier*.
- Orovic, J. (2018). Follow The Purgeri: A Sustainable Tourism Model In Zagreb. *Total Croatia News*.
- Perrottet, J. (2016). The impact of tourism: How can we all do this better? *The World Bank*.
- Safire, W. (2009). Location, Location, Location. *The New York Times*.
- Stoffle, R. W. (1982). *Reviwed Work: Tourism Plannin by Clare A. Gunn*. American Anthropological Association.
- Suzana Marković, S. R. (2018). Empirical validation of demographic characteristics's role in visitor experience: The case of Zagreb Christmas Market.
- Tušak, N. (2017). *Manifestacijski tuizam na primjeru adventa u Zagrebu*. Karlovac: Veleučilište u Karlovcu.
- Wilson, V. (2011). Research Methods: Content Analysis. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*.

Appendix

Figure 1. Gunn Model

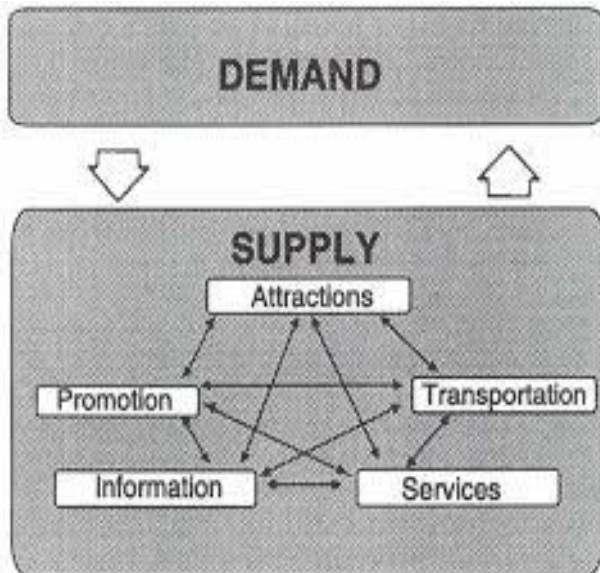


Figure 2. Ritchie and Crouch model

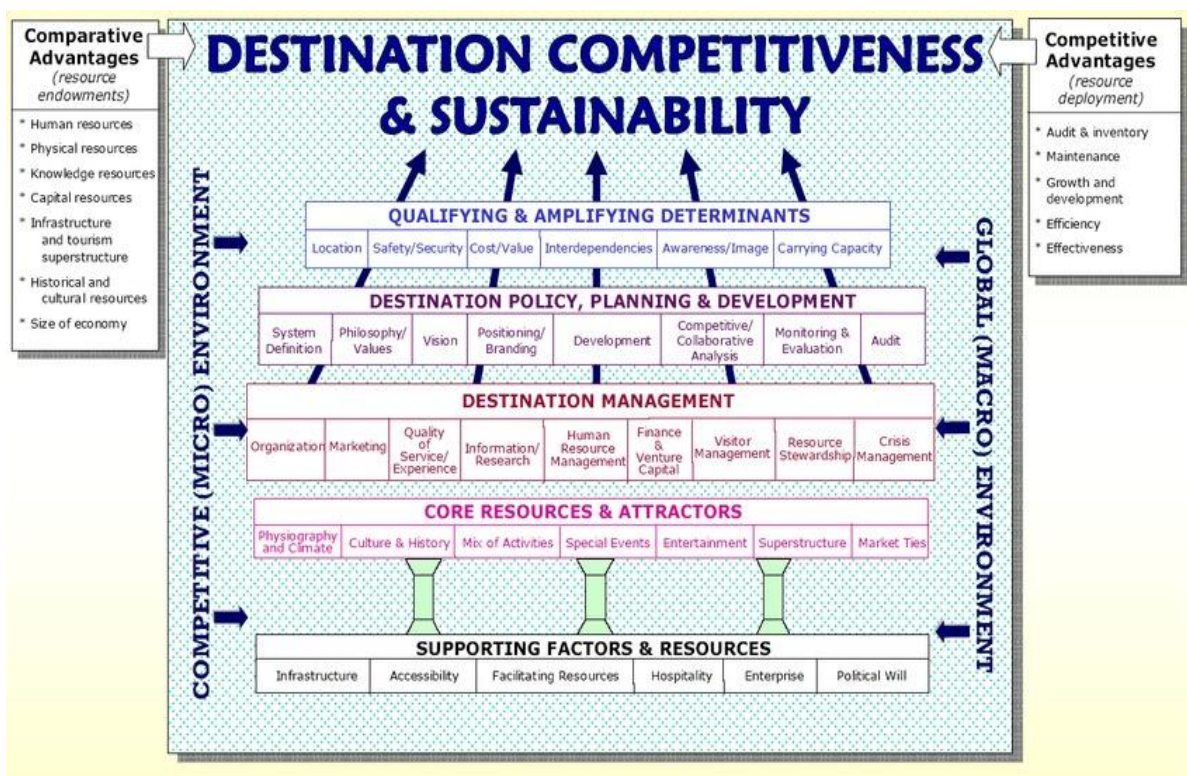


Figure 3. Carrying capacity in 2016

	Objects	Number of units		Number of Beds
		Rooms	Apartments	
TOTAL	192	5045	1307	15429
Hotels and similar	56	3898	189	7831
Hotels	51	3612	148	7235
Rooms, studio-apartments, vacation houses	92	442	1118	5047
Hostels	41	588	-	2056
Other	3	117	-	495

Figure 4. Carrying capacity in 2017

	Objects	Number of units		Number of Beds
		Rooms	Apartments	
TOTAL	323	5261	1776	17012
Hotels and similar	60	4037	196	8076
Hotels	54	3739	155	7440
Rooms, studio-apartments, vacation houses	213	562	1580	6578
Hostels	46	633	-	2287
Other	4	29	-	71

Figure 5. Carrying capacity in 2018

	Objects	Number of units		Number of Beds
		Rooms	Apartments	
TOTAL	337	5541	2162	18560
Hotels and similar	66	4278	182	8338
Hotels	60	3791	105	7191
Rooms, studio-apartments, vacation houses	227	641	1980	7960
Hostels	44	622	-	2262
Other	-	-	-	-

Personal communication with the major stakeholders in Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Rijeka

Who

Why (titles, orgs)

According to Ms. Bienefield..

1. Economic – According to your opinion, what sustainability projects are most important to the residents and business owners in the city of Z, R, or D?
 - a. What type of research did you conduct?
 - b. How do you measure the sustainability of projects that you mention?
2. Social – There has been a substantial growth in tourist objects (hotels, accommodation apartments, rooms). Did you support that growth with the adequate education of the local population in order to maintain the quality of their service?
 - a. To what extent are the residents included in the decision making about the tourism planning?
 - b. In your opinion, what is more important to assure the quality of the service: informal or formal education (non-degree or degree programs)
3. Environmental – How would you rate the impact of economic factors on environmental issues (water, waste disposal, air quality)
 - a. Are tourists aware of the need to be environmentally friendly? Residents?
 - b. Measures undertaken to raise the environmental concerns?
4. Cultural – Would you say that the focus on specific project(s) is preventing you in considering the tourism as a whole (Rijeka 2020, Zagreb Advent, Dubrovnik – Summer Festival), If yes, why, if not, please explain which tourism planning tools/models do you go by?
 - a. 70% visitors are foreign, 30% domestic – what are the main attractions for the visitors compared to other similar destinations (price, quality of the offer, location, etc.)
5. Management – What is the role of your office (TZ) in positioning, branding and image creation? Do you see your office as a DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION or DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION?
6. The future development of the destination – your opinion, next steps, etc.?