

Potential of Croatia as an Attractive Tourist Destination for the Russian Market

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Abstract : Europe is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, in which tourism occupies a significant place among the most relevant economic activities, and this applies to the Republic of Croatia as well. Based on this study, the authors intended to encourage and support the creation of an effective tourism policy in Croatia that would be based on the profiling of certain target groups. Another objective was to compare the results obtained from the customer analysis with the market analysis of the tourism industry in Croatia. The objective is to adapt the current tourist offer according to the identified needs and expectations of a particular tourist group in order to increase the attractiveness of Croatia as a tourist destination and motivate greater attendance of the targeted tourist groups. The current research was oriented towards the Russian market as the target group. Therefore, the authors wanted to encourage a discussion on how to attract more Russian guests. Consequently, the intention of the research was a detailed analysis of Russian tourists, in order to gain a better understanding of their travelling motives and tendencies. Furthermore, attention was paid to the expectations of Russian customers and to compare them with the Croatian tourist offer, and to determine whether there is a possibility for an overlap. The method used to obtain the information required was a survey conducted among Russian citizens about their travelling habits. The research was carried out on the basis of 166 participants of different age, gender, profession and income group. The sampling and distribution of the survey took place between May and July 2016. The results provided from the research indicate that Croatian tourism has certain unrealized potential considering the popularization of Croatia as a tourist destination, and there is a capacity for increasing the revenues within the group of Russian tourists. Such a conclusion is based on the fact that the Croatian tourist offer and the preferences of the Russian guests are compatible, i.e. they overlap in many aspects. The results demonstrate that beautiful nature, cultural and historical heritage as well as the sun and sea, play a leading role in attracting more Russian tourists. It is precisely these elements that form the three pillars of the Croatian tourist offer. On the other hand, the profiling revealed that the most desirable destinations for the Russian guests are Italy and Spain, both of which provide the same main tourist attractions as Croatia. Therefore, the focus of the strategic ideas given in the paper shifted to other tourism segments, such as type of accommodation, sales channels, travel motives, additional offer and seasonality etc., in order to gain advantage in the Russian market, the Mediterranean region and tourism in general. The purpose of the research is to serve as a foundation for analysing the attractiveness of the other tourist destinations in the Russian market, as well as to be a general basis for a more detailed profiling of the various specific target groups of the Russian and other tourist groups.

Keywords : Croatia, Russian market, target groups, tourism, tourist destination

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