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PERCEIVED ADDED VALUE AS SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN URBAN TOURISM DESTINATION

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Abstract

Marketing added value is one of the key concepts of successful differentiation in an increasingly competitive tourism market. This paper examines the impact of perceived added value as a source of differentiation on the competitive advantage of urban tourism destinations. The main goal of the paper is to determine that tourists who perceived partial components of added value in destinations give advantage to a particular destination, compared to tourists who didn't perceive the added value. Primary research among 468 tourists on a repeat visit was conducted to achieve the goal. Chi square test and binary logistic regression were employed to analyze the findings. The results indicate that the components of tourism destinations which delivered added value ensure a better position among the competitors.

Key words: perceived added value, competitive advantage, urban destination, binary logistic regression

1. INTRODUCTION

In every system, especially in the tourism system where tourists participate in formatting the final product, it is necessary to observe from the consumer aspect using their needs, desires and preferences as a starting point, and continuously monitor and research their perception of value as a ratio of perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice (Christopher, 1996). The research of perceived value in tourism is of recent date and, compared with other concepts

such as quality of service and satisfaction which dominate tourism research, it is still not present to a significant extent in scientific literature. In the area of tourism, the intention of re-purchasing (repeat visits) and loyalty were mainly predicted by measuring satisfaction and/or quality, while the literary corpus on perceived value is meagre. The first research of perceived value in tourism is linked to a hotel industry study by Jayanti and Ghosh (1996) and Bojanic (1996). The results suggest that for consumers the value plays a central role in tourism, highlighting the need to change the focus from managing quality to managing value for consumers. Researchers have shown a more intense interest in perceived value at the start of the 21st century (Williams and Soutar, 2000; Petrick and Backman, 2002; Petrick, 2004; Al-Sabbahy et al, 2004; Komppula, 2005; Duman and Mattila, 2006; Boksberger and Craig-Smith, 2006; Petrosillo et al, 2007; Andereck, 2009; Chen and Chen, 2010).

Marketing added value as a concept which first appeared in marketing research literature in the 1980s (Reilly, 2003; Nilson 1992) caused a great interest among researchers who held that the basic product or service can be upgraded by adding differentiated forms of value (Gilmore et al, 1999; De Chernatony et al, 2000; Matthyssens and Vandenbempt, 2008). The positive influence of added value on differentiated processes, including the competitive advantage, does not depend on the type and form of the added value, but on adding it.

The objective of this paper is to actualize the importance of perceived added value in the tourism system applying the methods of perceiving added value among tourists in repeat visit and proving the role of adding value in obtaining a competitive advantage for urban tourism destinations observed in the context of an integrated tourism product consisting of partial components of the material, non-material and quasi forms (Meler, 1976; 2000; 2004; 2005). Tourists in repeat visit were chosen because they perceive destination more closely than tourists who make the first visit, and are focused on value above the price. Petrick et al. (2001) have concluded that tourists in repeat visit are more sensitive to quality and are focused on the effect of the experience, while those in the first visit are more sensitive to a price and are focused on the information they have. The intention of fulfilling the objective of the research has focused the article solely on added value and its role in achieving a better position for the tourism destination on an ever more competitive tourism market. Namely, for the tourist who has perceived added value of tourism product (destination) it is more likely to give advantage to that destination above competitors compared to the situation when tourist did not perceive added value.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the 21st century, the most frequently asked marketing questions are related to shaping the value of products and services in order to satisfy customers, consumers and clients and surpassing the competition. The reason behind the exceptional importance of value is closely related to the provision of niche

markets, increasing the market share and market leadership. Value is a concept that might suggest methods to modify or "rejuvenate" the product, as well as show the ways how consumers perceive and experience that product and options to modify it (Murphy et al., 2000). The value for consumers is a theoretical construct that summarizes the consumer's opinion about the product (Huber et al., 2001). In other words, value is a concept that is the result of the consumer's perception, experience of the product or service and its modifications, and is synonymous with the perceived value for the consumers. Consequently, as such it will be considered in this study.

Back in 1995, Nauman found that value is positively correlated with a higher market share, lower operating costs, greater consumer loyalty, repeat purchase and positive attitudes of employees and consumers (Nauman, 1995), while two years later Parasuraman showed that the value for the consumer is one of the most important measures for achieving competitiveness (Parasuraman, 1997). If the product or service has a higher value, or if it is superior to those available, it is more likely to conquer, and subsequently retain the market niche, as well as to achieve a leading competitive position.

The value of a product or service is inseparable from consumption and represents the consumer's overall assessment of the usefulness of the products and services based on the perception of difference between what is received (quality, usefulness, value) and that which needs to be sacrificed in order to acquire and use the products or services (cost, effort, time) (Zeithaml, 1988; Woodruff, 1997).

Regardless of whether it is the product or service, it has no value until what is offered is used - the experience and perception are key to determining the value (Leroi-Werelds and Streukens, 2011). The value for the consumer is not in the purchase, but in the experience that comes from consumption (Holbrook, 1996). Whatever the value that the business subject delivers to its customers, it is often difficult for them to assess this value in advance (Porter, 1985). If we take as an example the assessment of the value of a tourism destination as an integral tourism product, it is impossible to measure its value before arrival, which is to say in advance. No matter how much funding is invested in promotional activities, the value can be perceived only after consumption of the tourism product, i.e. after the arrival and stay in a tourism destination. In the tourism system, the tourist creates an image of the expected value before purchasing the tourism product based on the visual and auditory stimuli, whereas the experiential value based on the stimuli of all five senses comes only after the consumption of the partial components. The integrated tourism product incorporates differentiated partial components, which include the intangible elements (experience, image and atmosphere) that can be identified only during the consumption stage, and can be assessed only at the stage of evaluating the overall purchasing process.

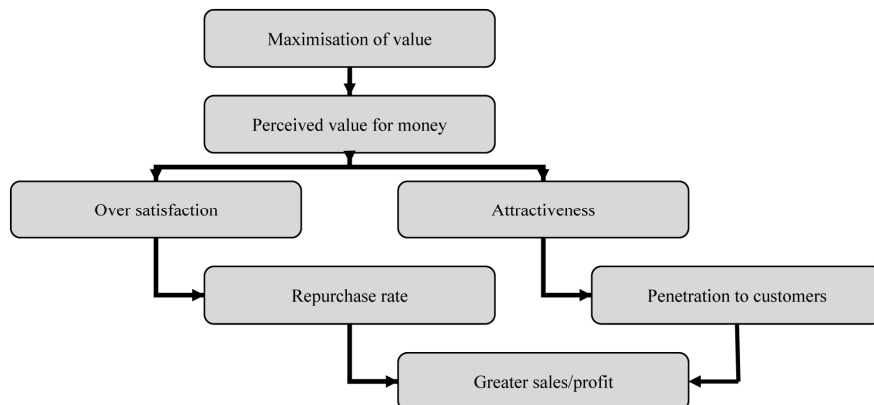
Parasuraman (1997) argues that the value is perceived differently at different stages of contact between the consumer and the provider of the offer (consumer who consumes the product for the first time, a consumer loyal in the

short term, a consumer loyal over the long run and the consumer "stolen" from the competition). A consumer who consumes the product or service for the first time has the highest perception of the value that attracted them to the product or service, while loyal consumers are more inclined to perceive value that is superior in comparison with the competition.

Previous theoretical approaches to the concept of added value generally recognize the economic and accounting framework, while the controversy within the broader framework of marketing are of a later date. Definitions of added value from the economic and accounting standpoint emphasize the finished product or service and the revenue that is generated, and deal solely with the monetary result of production. Marketing as a discipline has a tendency of accepting concepts from other fields, as is partially the case of added value. Marketing theorists translate added value as the consumer's benefit rather than as a sum of money (Wood, 1996). Added value is everything done to something from the period starting with the moment of purchase, including the management of the same, until the moment of resale (Reilly, 2003). Reilly argues that the added value has both quantitative and qualitative characteristics. Quantitative characteristics are those that are tangible, visible, measurable and based on performance. This includes, for instance, an increase in the market share, reduced costs, higher productivity and increased competitiveness. Qualitative characteristics of added value are more subjective and intangible, and are difficult to measure. They create positive feelings among customers about a product or a service, and exert a greater influence on what you are, rather than what you do (Reilly, 2003). Qualitative characteristics of added value include the philosophy of management, brand name, company's reputation, goodwill that has resulted in consumer loyalty, etc. Reilly also holds that the quantitative part of added value is based on its own major characteristics, while the qualitative part of the added value implies profit. It is possible to conclude that the quantitative characteristics of added value are more important for the offer providers, while the qualitative characteristics are responsible for causing a positive perception among the consumers.

Superiority in relation to others can only be achieved by maximizing the perceived value and/or perceived added value, which Nilson refers to as added value marketing (Nilson, 1992). Maximization of perceived value and/or added value marketing will create a higher than expected level of attractiveness and satisfaction with the company's products, i.e. over-satisfaction, which will result in finding customers more easily, and, more importantly, a higher rate of repeat purchases (Scheme 1).

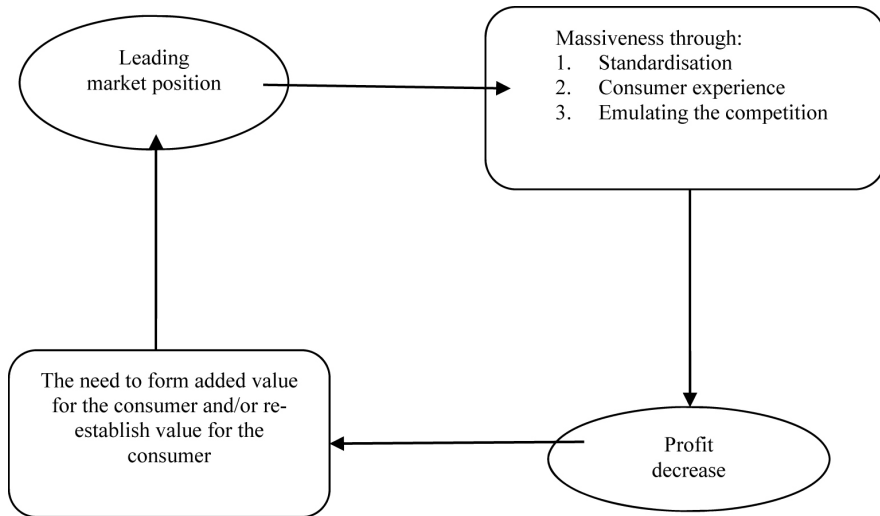
Scheme 1 Added value marketing process



Source: Nilson (1992), p. 43

In Scheme 2, Matthyssens and Vandembemt explained their view that all products and services sooner or later reach the status of massiveness and that the life-cycle is shorter and shorter. They assumed that a business subject holds a leading market position based on a strategy of differentiation, and that it has a competitive advantage. Market power in terms of standardization, increased consumer experience of the existing market supply and emulating successful business practices by competitors all cause massiveness. Massiveness decreases the differentiation of the business subject on the market, while the consumers perceive products and services as more or less identical, which strengthens their bargaining power. The business subject is then faced with spending their financial gain. Competitive competition and consumer bargaining power reduce the prices with a simultaneous increase in the expenditures of the business subject in the form of attempts to regain consumers and investment in sales, marketing and branding. At this point, it is of utmost importance, through a strategy of differentiation in the form of adding value to a product/service, to return to the leading market position. The authors are also of the opinion that the business subject can be protected from falling profits by shaping and applying a strategy of building an offer of a non-price value. "... Business subjects affected by massiveness can redefine value for consumers by adding additional non-price value" (Matthyssens and Vandembemt, 2008, 318).

Scheme 2 Added value as an element of deflection of the massiveness status of products



Source: *Matthyssens Vandembemt (2008), p. 317.*

Managers of tourism destination are business subjects who manage destination, that is in this paper observed in the context of an integrated tourism product consisting of partial components of the material, non-material and quasi forms. Management of tourism destination is more complex than management of business subjects due to the fact that tourism destination similar to tourism product consists of products and services which are produced and delivered by different number of activities. Managers of tourism destination should know how to create and add value to the product in order to get positive reaction from consumers and to realize competitive advantage at the same time.

Taking into account the definition of perceived value as the relationship of perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice and/or cost of ownership, perceived added value can be defined as the positive part of the relationship of perceived benefits and perceived sacrifices, with the perceived benefits measured using material, non-material and quasi components of the tourism product, and the perceived sacrifice being the total cost of the purchase, including the monetary and non-monetary parts.

The competitiveness of a destination (whether it is macro or micro destination) is an area of exceptional interest for scientists who are fully or partially involved in the research of tourism movements. The increase in the number of tourism destinations has resulted in an increasingly more aggressive struggle for obtaining an increasing number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays, and has brought the importance of competitiveness in

the foreground. For example, 15 major tourism destinations accounted for almost the entire total number of international tourist arrivals in 1950, while 60 years later, that number dropped to 57% (Bâlan et al., 2009). Given that the number of arrivals during the same period increased, the change is the result of an increase in the number of tourism destinations which came about due to the globalization process, which caused the change in the fundamental task of managing tourism destinations from attracting more tourists to achieving a competitive advantage of the destination. The question is whether a competitive advantage can be achieved through a differentiation strategy by adding value?

3. RESEARCH METHODS

According to the main goal of the paper, the following hypothesis was set: Adding value to a tourism product by managing components that make it specific, i.e. differentiated, contributes to a higher level of competitive advantage of a tourism destination. In testing the above-mentioned hypothesis, quantitative research was carried out using the survey method with a structured questionnaire with undisguised objectives of the survey. The partial components of the tourism product were evaluated according to a modified ordinal semantic-differential scale – the Stapel scale. Semantic differences are a very widespread technique in researching attitudes, primarily in researching the impression that consumers acquire of a destination, travel agency or any other study subject (Marusic and Prebežac, 2004). The semantic-differential scale in tourism literature is used to measure the perception of a tourism destination (Driscoll et al., 1994), and is designed to highlight the subtle nuances of meaning that the respondents attach to words or concepts (Foxall, 2007). The advantage of the Stapel scale over the semantic-differential scale is that it is not bipolar (hot-cold) and simultaneously measures both the direction and the strength. The respondents were asked to assess on a scale from -3 to 3 the value of the partial components of an integral tourism product, i.e. a tourism destination, as a difference between the expended effort and the value received, bearing in mind that at 0 the effort expended is equal to the received value, in points 0 to +3 the received value is greater than the effort expended, and in points from -3 to 0 the received value is less than the effort expended. Judgemental sampling was used to select a sample of tourists on a repeat visit to Dubrovnik in the past five years, staying a minimum of three nights. The reason for this sample is the assumption that only tourists on a repeat visit and with a minimum stay of three nights at a destination are capable of perceiving value and added value.

The study was conducted in the City of Dubrovnik, situated in southern Dalmatia in the Republic of Croatia, where it is one of the leading urban tourism destinations. It possesses a number of key attributes that

urban areas possess i.e. it draws tourists to its attractions because these are often much better developed than in other types of destinations; it is easily accessible through airports and scheduled services; it possesses large stock accommodation built to serve the business traveller and, finally, it appeals to a number of different tourism markets as it offers the communication, transport, services and facilities which meet tourist needs (Law 1996 in Edwards et al., 2008). It is the top city in coastal Croatia according to the number of tourist arrivals and third according to the number of tourist overnight stays (behind the cities of Rovinj and Poreč in northern Dalmatia). The study was conducted during the period from May to September 2013. A total of 468 tourists who visited Dubrovnik in the last five years more than once and spent more than three nights in Dubrovnik were questioned. The questionnaires were distributed to hotels, hostels and private accommodations.

The material components group included the following variables: authentic food and drinks, Dubrovnik souvenirs/handicrafts and shopping opportunities.

The intangible components group included the following variables: cultural events (events/festivals), nightlife (night clubs and discos), entertainment (cinema, theatre, museums, galleries), sports activities, adventure sports, accommodation, tourist information and advice, highlighting attractions, safety, political stability, quality/organization of public transport, parking, connectivity (road, air and sea), response to complaints, knowledge of foreign languages, tourism worker expertise, excursions to the surrounding areas, telecommunications networks and Internet access. The size of this group supports the viewpoint of certain scientists that the tourism product for the most part consists of services.

The quasi-components group included: climate, natural beauty, cleanliness, peace and quiet, flora and fauna, nature parks, sea/beach (cleanliness and development), fortifications, fortresses, churches, monuments, friendliness and hospitality of the local population.

The material components are, as the name suggests, the elements with a tangible nature, intangible elements consist of services, while the quasi-components are natural and social attractions of tourism destinations.

Barcelona, Athens and Venice, as competitive tourism destination, were chosen because:

- they are all Mediterranean destinations
- at the time of the research they were in the same phase of the tourism destination's life cycle
- they are all promoted as destination of history and culture

There were three stages in the data analysis. First, the confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the suitability of the variables using the component method with varimax rotation. Prior to implementing the confirmatory factor analysis, an evaluation was made with regard to the suitability of the data for a factor analysis. Reliability for each factor was obtained using the calculation for Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Considering that Peterson suggested that the value of Cronbach's alpha of 0,6 is criterion in use, all analyzed factors that were below that criteria were excluded (Peterson, 1994). In order to test the paper's hypothesis, and for the purpose of measuring the dependent variable on a nominal scale, the binomial (binary) logistic regression was used (the third stage). Before analyzing with the binomial logistic regression, the χ^2 test was used to determine within which variables a statistically significant correlation was visible (the second stage).

4. RESULTS

The structure of respondents by gender shows a roughly equal number of women and men. Most of those surveyed (49.5%) were between the ages of 26 and 45 years. Among the re-visits to Dubrovnik in the past five years, the structure of the surveyed tourists shows that these are mostly British, Americans and Spaniards. Most respondents (66.6%) were highly educated, with completed undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate studies. The largest number of respondents have an annual income ranging from EUR 20,000 and 80,000, while those with the incomes above EUR 100,000 were the least represented. Respondents usually stayed between four and seven nights in Dubrovnik, and over 70% used different categories of hotels. The results of this research on the organization of the travel type indicate a low level of relevance and presence of intermediaries in the tourism system. In fact, almost all respondents came to the destination using their own travel arrangements, and not through organized travel. They were usually accompanied on their trip by their partner and family members (73.7%). Research results on the type of transport to Dubrovnik confirm the view that Dubrovnik is a strong flight destination, since over 80% of the respondents arrived to Dubrovnik by air. The motivation for arriving to the destination is still to the greatest extent the rest and recreation (almost 85%). Respondents on a repeat visit to Dubrovnik use their own experience from previous visit(s), as well as recommendations from friends and relatives as the basic source of information about the destination, which indicates the low cost of promotional activities for the destination.

Table 1

Rating of the correct grouping within the partial components of the tourism product

Material components of the tourism product	Cronbach alpha	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement of sampling adequacy 0.560		
	0.4	Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate χ^2	43.819
			Df	3
			Sig.	0.000
Non-material components of the tourism product	Cronbach alpha	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement of sampling adequacy 0.714		
	0.76	Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate χ^2	2030.614
			Df	78
			Sig.	0.000
Quasi-components of the tourism product	Cronbach alpha	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement of sampling adequacy 0.687		
	0.757	Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate χ^2	2473.148
			Df	210
			Sig.	0.000

Source: Research results

Cronbach's alpha for the first group of components is only 0.4 which is justified by the small number of units (only three units) (Tavakol and Dennick, 2010). The KMO measurement for all three groups was above 0.5, while Bartlett's test of sphericity is below 0.05. The results from Table 1 indicate the data fits the dimensions well and analysis can continue with confirmatory factor analysis.

Variables that, in confirmatory factor analysis, had a loading factor below 0.4, i.e. those which were poorly connected to the component to which they belonged were excluded from all three groups of tourism product components.

On the basis of the shown analysis and the decision to exclude certain elements from further statistical processing, the dimensions of the tourism product or group of partial components with their sub-components are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Breakdown of the dimensions of the integrated tourism product with partial components

Material components group	Autochthonous food and drink
	Souvenirs/handicrafts
	<i>Shopping</i>
	Cultural events
	Night life

Non-material components group	Entertainment
	Sports activities
	Adventure sports
	Tourism information and instructions
	Signs of attractions
	Safety
	Political stability
	Maritime connections
	Responses to complaints
	Tourism worker expertise
	Excursions offered to the surrounding areas
Telecommunications network	
Quasi components group	Natural beauty
	Cleanliness
	Fortifications
	Fortresses
	Churches
	Monuments
	Hospitality of the local population

Source: Created by the author based on the previously shown statistical analysis

Table 3

Connection of the components with the competing destinations

		Barcelona	Venice	Athens
Material components of the tourism product	χ^2	0.114	0.243	6.547
	df	1	1	1
	α	0.735	0.622	0.011
Non-material components of the tourism product	χ^2	5.472	1.060	0.161
	df	1	1	1
	α	0.012	0.303	0.688
Quasi-components of the tourism product	χ^2	3.620	21.159	0.894
	df	1	1	1
	α	0.057	0.000	0.345

Source: Research results

After identifying a statistically significant correlation within the variables, binary logistic regression was used in further analysis.

Table 4

Reliability of classification (overall probability of correct classification)

	Advantage of Dubrovnik in relation to Barcelona	Advantage of Dubrovnik in relation to Venice	Advantage of Dubrovnik in relation to Athens
Material components of the tourism product			67.6
Non-material components of the tourism product	51.4		
Quasi-components of the tourism product	51.7	81.7	

Source: Research results

Table 5

Variables in equation

	Sig.	Exp. (B)
Material components (Athens) with added value	0.013	2.473
Non-material components (Barcelona) with added value	0.028	3.547
Quasi components (Barcelona) with added value	0.062	2.170
Quasi components (Venice) with added value	0.000	0.183

Source: Research results

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant connection of the material components with giving an advantage to Dubrovnik over Athens, non-material components with giving an advantage to Dubrovnik over Barcelona, while quasi components are significantly associated with giving an advantage to Dubrovnik over Venice (level of significance 0.05) and over Barcelona (level of significance 0.1).

Table 4 shows a very high overall probability that the correct classification was achieved (hit rate) and using statistical vocabulary, that the model for all groups of components is a "good hit". The reference category or categories in relation to which the observation was conducted is "Without added value."

Tourists who perceived that the material components of the tourism product have added value, in comparison with tourists who did not perceive the added value, are 2.473 times more likely to give priority to Dubrovnik compared to Athens when planning their next trip. The probability that the tourists who perceived added value of intangible components of the tourism product will give priority to Dubrovnik in comparison with Barcelona is 3.547 times higher than for tourists who perceived intangible components without added value. Also, tourists who perceived quasi components of the tourism product with added value are 2.170 times more likely to give priority to Dubrovnik over Barcelona compared to tourists who perceived quasi components without value added.

As far as Dubrovnik's competitive advantage over Venice is concerned, tourists who perceived quasi components with added value are 0.183 times more likely to give priority to Dubrovnik over Venice on their next trip, in comparison with tourists who did not perceive added value of the quasi components.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this research prove the set hypothesis that adding value to a tourism product by managing components that make it specific, i.e. differentiated, contributes to a higher level of competitive advantage of a tourism destination. The results also indicate the growing importance of adding value to the intangible (non-material) components of the tourism product (cultural events, night life, entertainment, sport activities, adventure sport, tourism information and instructions, signs of attractions, safety, political stability, maritime connections, responses to complaints, tourism worker expertise, excursions offered to the surrounding areas and telecommunications network) in relation to the material and quasi components, because these components achieve the greatest competitive advantage and have the highest probability of providing an advantage over other competing destinations.

In addition to the scientific value, the results of this research also have a very large applicative value, as a basis for decision-making to the management structure of a tourism destination. They point to the necessity of giving up the cost management strategy and focusing instead on a differentiation strategy by adding value to all partial components of the tourism product or destination. Destination management could add value to partial components of tourism product through different elements, for example through authenticity, originality, human resources, promotion, presentation etc.

The limitation of research is connected to the lack of previous research that would have a comparative function and with which the conducted study could be compared. So, while on the one hand original scientific research was conducted, on the other, this same research at the moment does not allow for a comparative analysis of the results and conclusions of the empirical part of the work. The following limitations of the study are connected to the characteristics

of the sample. The study included tourism demand only, while ignoring the perception of the value added by the tourism offer. A comparative analysis of the added value perceived by both the tourism demand and the tourism offer and its role in the competitive advantage would integrate two types of qualitative indicators, which would result in more representatives, reliable and suitable data. For this reason, future research should certainly include the investigation of perceived added value of identical components by tourism experts and/or tourism offer. Within such research, it would be interesting to explore how the tourism demand, as well as the tourism offer, rank the competitive advantage factors based on the perception of added value.

Since this study has used convenience sample it represents the basis for further research. The research has been conducted only in the Dubrovnik city as one of leading urban destination in Croatia and results are limited to this level only. Having in mind the general nature of these results it can be expected that the results can be used in different settings. To achieve generality, the same research should be conducted in other urban destinations.

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**PERCIPIRANA DODANA VRIJEDNOST KAO IZVOR
KONKURENTSKE PREDNOSTI U URBANOJ
TURISTIČKOJ DESTINACIJI*****Sažetak***

Marketing dodane vrijednosti jedan je od ključnih koncepata uspješne diferencijacije na sve konkurentnijemu turističkom tržištu. U ovom radu istražuje se utjecaj percipirane dodane vrijednosti kao izvora diferencijacije na konkurentsku prednost urbanih turističkih destinacija. Glavni cilj rada jest utvrditi da turisti koji su uočili neke komponente dodane vrijednosti u destinacijama daju prednost određenoj destinaciji, za razliku od turista koji nisu uočili dodanu vrijednost. Kako bi se postigao cilj istraživanja provedeno je preliminarno istraživanje na uzorku od 468 turista koji su ponovno posjetili destinaciju. Analiza dobivenih podataka provedena je pomoću hi-kvadrat testa i binarne logističke regresije. Rezultati ukazuju da su komponente turističkih destinacija koje su pružile dodanu vrijednost osigurale bolji položaj među svojim konkurentima.

Ključne riječi: percipirana dodana vrijednost, konkurentska prednost, urbana destinacija, binarna logistička regresija

JEL klasifikacija: I83, R11, Z3

