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Perspectives of Development of Luxury Nautical Tourism in the Republic of Croatia

Abstract:

Nautical Tourism represents one of the most important and significant elements of today's Croatian tourism product. This specific form of tourism experienced significant qualitative changes over the years due to the changes in the preferences of today's yachtsmen, who are still very interested in experiencing natural attractions of the destination they reside in and in spending active holidays. Besides, they are increasingly oriented towards maximum quality and luxury of the tourism offer more than ever and are willing to pay for it significantly. The most recent results indicate that today's yachtsmen show a significantly high level of satisfaction with the Croatian nautical tourism offer. However, in order to be able to satisfy their growing needs, it is necessary to introduce additional improvements of the current tourism offer elements, as well as new elements, with the primary focus on satisfying the need for luxury. The main purpose of this paper is to present the current state of the Croatian Nautical Tourism and the importance of introducing elements of luxury in its offer, all with the goal to provide a greater level of satisfaction for yachtsmen and to position Croatia as a competitive nautical tourist destination within the world's nautical tourism flows.

Key words: Nautical tourism, luxury, nautical tourism of Croatia, competitiveness

1. Introduction

Over the years tourism has acquired new dimensions, properties and directions in the context of a fast changing world and forces of geographical transformation, globalization and international migration [7, 15], which resulted in a development of a new and modern tourism product adjusted to the needs of new tourists. Globalization had a tremendous influence on today's tourism trends, which impose new perceptions of tourism, as well as the emergence of "new" tourists. Today tourists are in search for new and unique experiences, they express an increasing number of needs not only during their stay in a destination, but also during the entire process of travelling to a destination, during which they want a personalized approach. In order to achieve further business success and competitive positioning on the tourism market, the already

present destination elements need to be enriched by additional activities and destination excellence needs to be measured by tourists' realized expectations and experiences. The diversity of needs and motives is the precise reason why people choose to visit and stay in a particular destination, as well as the reason why a destination is capable of achieving a qualitative shift from the standard tourism offer. The main accent of success must be on the provision of a constant quality of a tourism product [41]. The focus on quality has become one of the key success factors for tourism service providers [13, 187] and has shown a tremendously strong influence on the future development of every single form of tourism offer, one of them being in particular Nautical Tourism. Gračan [20] emphasizes the fact that over the years Nautical Tourism has reached significant proportions of mass migrations, where movements of a significantly large number of people along seashores have become more expressed from year to year. Tourists are becoming more and more oriented towards using seawater, not just for the traditional tourism offer of Bathing tourism but rather for spending their time sailing in the open sea, recreating, and enjoying various forms of water sports with the goal of having an active rest away from the daily routine.

When considering Nautical Tourism and all the characteristics of its offer, the term quality automatically comes to mind. The reason is that contemporary boaters possess high purchasing power, they are willing to spend significant amounts of their hard-earned funds during their holidays and are constantly in search of experiencing luxury and achieving the appropriate value and experience for money.

Croatia started developing Nautical Tourism very late; the beginning of its development was registered in the 1960's. For a considerable period, the development of Nautical Tourism in Croatia had not been supported by the appropriate social politics and no significance had been given to the planning of its development [20, 196]. However, this has changed over the years, and Croatia is registering positive movements in terms of quality of the Nautical Tourism offer. Yet, the question is, considering the current level of development of the Nautical Tourism offer, whether Croatia is capable of providing quality to the point that it could be considered luxurious. The purpose of this paper is to present the importance of luxury as an integral part of the Nautical tourism offer, while the goal is to present the need for further improvement of the Nautical tourism offer in Croatia through the inclusion of luxury elements. The paper is structured as follows: after the introduction and within the first chapter titled Basic Characteristics of Luxury Tourism and its Significance as a part of a Contemporary Tourism Offer the author provides theoretical insights into the importance of luxury as a part of a modern tourism product. The second chapter, titled Nautical Tourism Offer of the Republic of Croatia -Presentation of the Current State reflects the newest insights into the present situation, as well as the profile of today's yachtsmen. Within the third chapter titled What are the Potentials for Developing Luxury Nautical Tourism in Croatia? Proposition of Developmental Guidelines, the author provides, based on the results from the second chapter, suggestions on how to improve the current Croatian nautical tourism product. Finally, there follow conclusion remarks.

2. Basic Characteristics of Luxury Tourism and its Significance as Part of the Contemporary Tourism Offer

The world tourism continues recording a strong growing trend year after year, as witnessed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization [40] that tracks the trend movements. The most recent publication from 2018 states that in 2017 international tourist arrivals registered the total of 1.326 million, an increase of approximately 86 million in relation to the year 2016. Europe continued to lead with its share of high 51%, followed by Asia and the Pacific (24%), Americas (16%), Africa (5%) and Middle East (4%). Receipts are also registering growth, respectively in 2017 world tourism registered approximately 1.340 billion of American Dollars, within which Europe again continues leading (519 million), followed by Asia and the Pacific (390 billion), Americas (326 billion), Middle East (68 billion) and Africa (37 billion). Within the continuously growing industry, luxury tourism shows a growing trend [36, 90] that is confirmed by the data from the report *Shaping the Future of Luxury Travel Future Traveller Tribes 2030* [2]. The projections within this report state that in the future it is expected that the growth rate of outbound luxury trips in the following ten year period will experience an increase of 6.2%, which exceeds by one third the projections for the overall travels (+4.8%). The following chart presents the expectations of future growth of luxury travels by the distance.

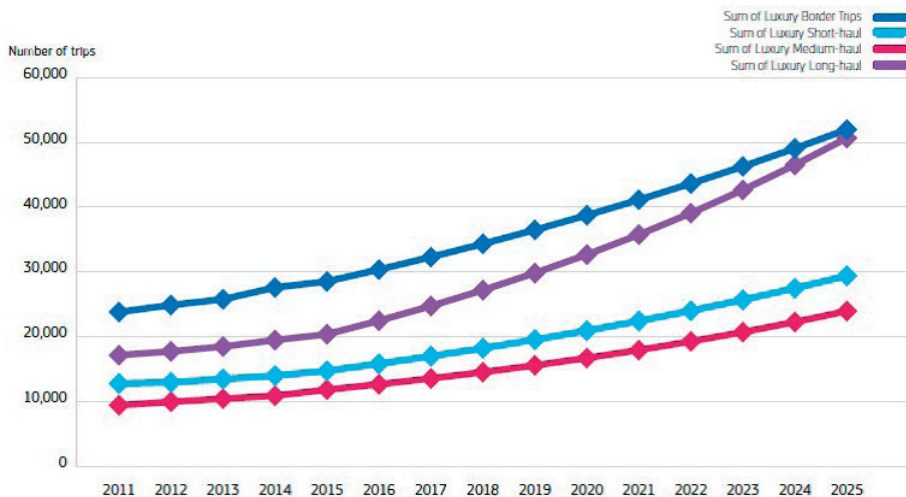


Figure 1 – Growth of luxury travel trips by the distance [2]

According to the data presented in the preceding chart the luxury border and long haul travels are expected to have the highest growth, followed by luxury short and medium haul travels. Northern America and Western Europe are currently accounting for 64% of the world's outbound luxury travels despite the fact that they make only 18% of the entire world population. As for Asia and the Pacific, it is expected that there will be a faster overall growth than in Europe, of 7.1% in the period 2011-2025. However, a deceleration is expected there in the period 2015-2025, unlike in the European region where a steady growth of 6.3% up by 2015 is expected to continue [2]. These encouraging figures clearly emphasize the need for further investments in the development of tourism product of many destinations. However, in order to be able to reach that high level of development of the tourism product, it was (and still is) necessary to truly understand what is to be considered luxurious in tourism, in which regard there have been many researches carried out so far.

The term Luxury refers to everything that is possible to obtain that is different, unique and exclusive. Luxury products do not respond to the tourist demand, they are not aimed at satisfying the need of the masses, however, these products and services are offered to everybody, but not everybody can use them due to their purchasing power and high prices these products and services are offered at. In the tourism industry, luxury has taken a form that places a strong emphasis on the value rather than the price, and it is tourists' overall experience in a destination that the value of a tourism product or a service is measured by [27]. Luxury has become the topic of many researches in the contemporary society [3, 37, 42, etc.], but the highest attention has been given to it in the tourism industry, the most developed part of the world economy [4, 6, 24, 25, 28, 36, 39, 43, etc.], what is justifiable considering that no tourist destination can competitively position itself on the tourist market without having luxury within its tourism product.

Within today's tourism flows, Europe is most definitely the key market for luxury tourism, especially due to the fact that Europeans tend more and more toward giving preference for new and unique experiences over material possessions, which is a strong stimulus for further development of the luxury tourism market [5]. All this places a difficult task before many destinations that are trying to maintain their current or achieve even greater competitive position on the tourism market. All destinations need to determine what elements of their tourism product are most desirable and for what kind of tourists, and focus their activities towards further development of their tourism offer in order to attract tourists and satisfy their needs. Despite the fact that the Croatian tourism product has been still based mostly on classical Bathing tourism offer, other specific forms of tourism are recording significant growth, one of them being Nautical Tourism. In the following chapter the author analyzes the current state of the Nautical Tourism offer and tries to determine whether Croatia possesses all the necessary pre-conditions for the development of the luxury Nautical tourism offer.

3. Nautical Tourism Offer of the Republic of Croatia - Presentation of the Current State

The Republic of Croatia is situated along the north coasts of the Adriatic Sea. The surface of its mainland amounts 56.542 square miles, and the surface of the territorial sea 31.067 square miles. Croatia is a maritime country with a long history and tradition of maritime industry and tourism. The main natural resource for the development of Nautical Tourism is the Adriatic Sea with an indented coastline 6.176 km long, of which 4.398 km belong to the coastline of its 1.244 islands, islets and rocks, with 50 of islands being inhabited. For many years now Croatia has been intensely developing Nautical Tourism. There are two groups of factors that have the most significant share in building the competitiveness of Nautical Tourism: 1.) general factors: climate conditions, attractiveness and cleanliness of the sea, attractiveness of the landscape owing to the richly indented coast and islands including settlements; 2.) special factors: traffic infrastructure availability to the nautical tourism port of departure in relation to the main markets, personal safety and safety of sailing, the number, special distribution and equipment of nautical tourism ports, mooring capacities for vessels in nautical tourism ports or at designated places within public ports, hospitable and qualified personnel, availability of other facilities necessary for the maintenance and equipment of vessels, attractiveness of facilities on the mainland, cultural offer as an important factor of tourism, and nautical services at competitive prices, regulations connected with vessels' sailing and stationing, and taxes [34, 7-8]. According to the Croatian Tourism Development Strategy until 2020, [14], Nautical Tourism (yachting/cruising) is among the dominant products of the Croatian tourism. Due to its geo-traffic situation and one of the most indented coasts in the world, pleasant climate and suitable winds, Croatia is today one of the most desirable nautical destinations in the world. This has been proven by the achieved business results in Nautical Tourism over the years and particularly in the prolonged tourist season, what is of significant importance in a view of the fact that Croatian tourism is still, despite positive movements, marked with seasonality.

Nautical Tourism represents a specific form of contemporary tourist movements as well as one of the most expanded forms of tourist recreation. Over the years, man has managed to overcome natural obstacles in the sea with the help of science and technology developed within the maritime industry, what has provided a solid basis for the development of Nautical Tourism. This specific form of tourism managed to attract significant attention at the global level and it is justly considered to be one of the priceless segments within the entire family of tourism. This specific form of tourism is indispensable for the Croatian tourism offer that is based on the advantages brought forward by its successful development [20, 185], which is why it has become one of the most important research topics in Croatia from various points of view. Over the years significant emphasis was given to the development of new theories and

definitions of Nautical Tourism [31, 32, 33] and how this specific form of tourism is important for the economic development of Croatia as a tourist destination [29, 30]. Favro's work is oriented towards the analysis of natural resources as a precondition for the development of Nautical Tourism offer [9, 10], importance and formation of international standards in the development of Nautical Tourism [11], sustainable yachting [8], effects of construction of Nautical Tourism ports [i.e. 12], etc. Gračan is focused on rethinking Nautical Tourism from many different aspects as well, mostly on its importance as a part of the strategic development of the Croatian (nautical) tourism product and its repositioning on the world tourism market [16, 17, 18, 23], its ecological aspects and its development within the Mediterranean tourism flows [15, 21, 22], how Nautical Tourism can contribute towards branding the Croatian nautical tourism offer, and Croatia as a tourist destination [19], and many others. Today Nautical Tourism represents one of the most important elements of the Croatian tourism offer, with the biggest potential of contributing towards achieving Croatia's even greater competitive positioning on the tourism market. The main goal needs to be further development of a unique and recognizable tourism product that will contribute towards better formation of the identity of Croatia as a nautical destination, with the tourism offer based on preserved natural resources and a long-time rich tourism tradition. In addition, the destination must strive towards profiling itself as a destination of high quality and excellence that will be able to provide luxury services for yachtsmen and enable them to achieve value for money [1]. In order to be able to rethink new ways of the nautical tourism offer development, the primary task must be to determine the current state of development of Nautical Tourism using appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators. The following table presents the number of vessels permanently moored in ports of Nautical Tourism by the vessel's flag in the period 2014-2018.

The data indicate that in 2018 the total number of vessels in Croatia decreased by 1.28%. However, according to vessels' nationality, the highest increase rate was registered for vessels from France (124.66%), Poland (76.67%), Finland (71.43%), Slovakia (32.90%), Netherlands (29.50%), Belgium (28.30%), Czech Republic (27.40%), Norway (21.40%), other European countries (12.88%), other non-European countries (8.51%) and Croatia (4.34%). All the other countries recorded a decrease (Austria, Italy, Israel, Germany, Russia, USA, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom).

Table 1 – Vessels mooring on a permanent basis in ports of Nautical Tourism by the vessel's flag in the period 2014-2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018/2014
Total	13.793	13.399	13.422	13.433	13.617	98.72
Vessels using only sea moorings	11.664	11.487	11.756	11.641	11.742	100.67
Vessels using only mainland moorings	2.129	1.912	1.666	1.792	1.875	88.07
Austria	1.993	1.904	1.977	1.917	1.851	92.87
Belgium	53	69	75	82	68	128.30
Czech Republic	135	130	139	146	172	127.40
Finland	7	7	11	11	12	171.43
France	73	90	100	138	164	224.66
Greece	1	1	2	2	1	100.00
Croatia	4.957	5.013	5.039	4.944	5.172	104.34
Italy	635	601	591	545	496	78.11
Israel	4	3	2	1	1	25.00
Hungary	129	129	113	112	130	100.77
Netherlands	139	132	138	173	180	129.50
Norway	23	25	21	25	28	121.74
Germany	1.840	1.748	1.863	1.858	1.781	96.79
Poland	90	104	101	119	159	176.67
Russia	11	6	7	6	4	36.36
USA	193	147	131	117	95	49.22
Slovakia	155	152	154	153	206	132.90
Slovenia	598	601	575	578	599	100.17
Sweden	40	40	47	43	38	95.00
Switzerland	81	69	80	77	73	90.12
United Kingdom	281	268	302	304	261	92.88
Other European countries	132	135	139	153	149	112.88
Other non-European countries	94	113	149	137	102	108.51

Source: Author according to [38]

Table 2: Achieved income of Nautical Tourism ports in the period 2014-2018 in thousands of HRK (without VAT)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018/2014
Republic of Croatia	716.555	753.412	768.938	855.166	856.550	119.54
Mooring rents	527.811	519.360	539.210	598.191	618.150	117.11
Permanent moorings	424.090	416.154	422.755	469.601	483.553	114.02
Transit moorings	103.721	103.206	116.455	128.590	134.597	129.77
Repair services	48.340	57.185	60.202	65.862	69.761	144.31
Other incomes	140.404	176.867	169.511	191.113	168.639	120.11

Source: Author according to [38]

It is evident that in the period 2014-2018 total income of Nautical Tourism ports reached a 19.54% increase, of which the major portion came from repair services (+44.31%), transit (+29.77%), other incomes (20.11%), and mooring rents (17.11%) of which 29.77% from transit moorings, and 14.02% from permanent moorings.

In order to obtain a clearer picture of current attitudes of yachtsmen concerning the current Nautical Tourism offer of the Republic of Croatia, the author will present the most recent findings of Attitudes and Consumption of Yachtsmen in Croatia TOMAS Nautica 2018 published by the Institute for Tourism Zagreb in the Republic of Croatia. According to the age, the majority of yachtsmen belonged to the age group 36-45 (29.4%), followed by 46-55 (25.8%), 26-35 (21.1%), 56+ (16.6%), and up to 25 (7.1%). The majority of them is highly educated, with university degree or higher (50.6%), 36.3% college (2 or 3 years) degree, and 13.1% secondary education or lower. They possess a high buying power, respectively 26.9% of them have monthly income of 3.501-5.000€, followed by the yachtsmen with monthly income of 3.001-3.500€ (17.3%), 5.001-7.500€ (13.7%), 2.501-3.000€ (9.7%), 7.501-10.000€ (8%), 10.001+€ (7.3%), 2.001-2.500€ (6.4%), 1.501-2.000€ (4.8%), 1.001-1.500€ (3.5%) and up to 1000€ (2.5%). They are very loyal to Croatia as a nautical destination, 27.1% of them visited Croatia 6 times or more, followed by 3-5 visits (23.2%), 2 visits (18.2%), while 31.5% visited Croatia for the first time. Internet is still the most used source of gathering information about the Croatian Nautical tourism offer (38.4%), as well as experiences during the previous stay (31.1%), and recommendation of friends and family (23.7%), while for 17.5% no information were necessary. The majority prefer to stay in Croatian nautical destinations 4-7 days (59.4%), followed by 8-14 days (26.3%), 15-21 day (7.7%), 22+ days (4.6%), and only 2% prefer to stay for only 1-3 days. According to the number of visited marinas during the sailing, 27.8% prefer to visit one marina, 26.5% two marinas, 24.8% four and more marinas, and 20.9% three marinas [26, 31-37].

Table 3: Activities of yachtsmen during their stay in the Republic of Croatia

Activities	%
Visiting restaurants	95.9
Shopping	84.2
Visiting pastry shops, coffee shops, etc.	53.2
Scuba diving	47.9
Walking in nature (hiking)	40.2
Fishing	33.8
Visiting national parks/protected natural areas	33.0
Visiting the sights, museums and exhibitions	32.1
Other sports activities in the sea (beside swimming and bathing)	30.6
Visiting local parties	29.9
Dance or disco	20.2
Sports activities on the land	15.8
Visiting concerts, theatre, and manifestations	14.6
Visiting theme/water parks	11.0
Visiting wine and oil roads	8.7

Source: Author according to [26]

It is visible from the above table that during their stay in a marina or a port yachtsmen tend to be very active as guests, considering that a significant percentage of them (96%) tend to explore the gastronomic and oenological offer, and they are very much interested in shopping (84%). Other activities they are interested in are visiting pastry shops, coffee shops, etc. (53.2%), Scuba diving (47.9%), Walking in nature (hiking) (40.2%), Fishing (33.8%), Visiting national parks/protected natural areas (33.0%), Visiting the sights, museums and exhibitions (32.1%), other sports activities in the sea (beside swimming and bathing) (30.6%), etc.

Table 4: Evaluation of the level of tourists' satisfaction with the elements of the Nautical Tourism offer in the Republic of Croatia

Elements	Level
Nature and landscape attractiveness	Very high
Personal safety	Very high
State of the boat (correctness, tidiness, equipment, etc.)	Very high
Staff service in marinas	Very high
Acceptance in the marina**	Very high
Richness of gastronomic offer in the destinations	Very high
Traffic availability to the starting port	Very high
Spatial layout of the marinas	Very high
Water supply (cold and warm) in marinas	Very high
Accessibility of water and electricity connections in marinas	Very high
Ecological preservation	Very high
Availability of information in marinas about the tourism offer of the destination	Very high
Reception at the airport **	Very high
Total offer for yachtsmen	Very high
Arrangement and cleanliness of the environment in marinas	Very high
Moorings (width, correctness)	Very high
Quality of technical repair service (speed of repairs) in marinas	Very high
“Value for money” of total offer for yachtsmen	High
Diversity of cultural manifestations	High
Quality of restaurant services in marinas	High
Diversity of entertainment facilities	High
Sanitary facilities in marinas	High
Richness of sports facilities in the destinations	High
Possibility of shopping in marinas	High

Source: Author according to [26]

*** Only for yachtsmen in Croatian charter*

The preceding table presents the yachtsmen's level of satisfaction with the nautical tourism offer in 2017. Yachtsmen show a very high level of satisfaction with the significantly high number of elements of nautical tourism offer, like the sense of personal safety, staff service in marinas, richness of gastronomic offer, ecological

preservation, ability to obtain the necessary information in marinas about the tourist destination, total offer for yachtsmen, quality of technical repair services, etc. Value for money for yachtsmen, quality of restaurant services in marinas, diversity of entertainment facilities, possibility of shopping in marinas, etc. were graded slightly lower, as High.

Table 5: Yachtsmen's average daily consumption on their voyage/sailing in EURO according to the vessel ownership in the Republic of Croatia [26]

Yachtsmen's average daily expenditure on their voyage/sailing according to the vessel ownership	(€)
Total	126.18
Boat expenditures	87.60
Expenditures for renting vessels	46.53
Expenditures for a skipper (unless they are not included in the lease)	4.70
Expenditures for renting moorings (not including the expenditures for permanent mooring)	11.90
Expenditure for the fuel	20.97
Expenditure for the repair service and other expenditures	3.51
Other expenses during the sailing	38.58
Accommodation on the mainland	1.38
Restaurant services	19.40
Shopping	12.58
Culture, entertainment, sports, recreation and one-day trips	3.78
Other	1.44

Source: Author according to [26]

*** Only for yachtsmen in Croatian charter*

In 2017 the average daily consumption amounted 126.18 EUR of which the major portion was related to the expenses related to the boat: renting vessels, fuel, and skipper (if not included in the price), etc. The other expenses amounted to 38.58 EUR per day, of which 19.40 EUR was spent on restaurant services, 12.58 EUR on shopping, 3.78 EUR on cultural, entertainment, sports recreational and one-day trip activities, etc.

Within this chapter the author presented the current state of the Nautical Tourism offer of the Republic of Croatia. Previously presented quantitative indicators of the number of permanently moored vessels in Nautical Tourism ports by the flag are unsatisfactory, considering that a decrease was registered at the state level, as

well as from some of the countries with a high buying power such as Austria, Italy, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, etc. As far as qualitative indicators are concerned presenting the level of satisfaction and consumption, the situation is rather different, considering that the yachtsmen expressed mostly a very high level of satisfaction with the elements of nautical tourism offer, as results evident from the registered nautical tourist consumption. However, further actions are necessary to improve the elements for which the yachtsmen expressed a high level of satisfaction (i.e. Value for money of total offer for the yachtsmen, quality of restaurant services in marinas, diversity of entertainment facilities, possibility of shopping in marinas, etc.). Improvement of these elements of nautical tourism offer is of extreme importance considering that without being able to offer total quality to the visiting yachtsmen, it is impossible to profile itself as a luxury nautical tourist destination and compete with the competitive destinations on the tourism market.

4. What are the Potentials of Developing Luxury Nautical Tourism in Croatia? Proposition of Developmental Guidelines

Over the years, Croatian Nautical Tourism has recorded growth in terms of qualitative improvements as visible from the most recently published results of Attitudes and Consumption of Yachtsmen in Croatia TOMAS Nautica 2018 presented in the preceding chapter. The results indicate that Croatia is not developing its nautical tourism product solely on the basis of natural attractiveness (indented coastline, islands, attractive landscape, clear blue sea, climate, etc.), but it has been improving the quality and diversity of its tourism offer. However, additional improvements are still necessary in order for Croatia to be able to position itself on the tourism market as a luxury nautical destination.

It is advisable to conduct the following activities [1, 35]:

- To define a very clear luxury nautical offer based on total quality (it is advisable to monitor and implement the best practices of the competing nautical tourist destinations);
- Yachtsmen have shown a high level of interest in exploring gastronomic offer. The level of satisfaction with the gastronomic offer in the destination was marked as very high, unlike the level of satisfaction with the gastronomic offer in marinas that was graded a bit lower, i.e. as high. It is advisable to maintain the current activities, yet aiming at the same time towards additional improvements of restaurant services (in marinas in particular). Particular attention needs to be aimed towards introducing in luxury restaurants a carefully developed gastronomic and oenological offer according to the world's trends of good practice, while at the same time preserving Croatian authenticity as one of the most important stimuli for visiting Croatia;
- Introduction of casinos as a part of a tourism product;

- Building indoor and outdoor swimming pools;
- Stronger introduction and development of cultural manifestations which would reflect the tradition of the destination in which the yachtsmen are currently residing;
- Improvement of the offer of sports facilities;
- Improvement of possibilities for shopping in marinas (foreign and domestic branded products, domestic authentic souvenirs, etc.). Shopping was ranked as the second activity for which yachtsmen show significant interest during their stay in a marina or a nautical port, but the level of satisfaction was marked as high, which clearly points to the possibility of further improvements;
- The price of the nautical tourism product must be completely harmonized with the quality of a nautical tourism product and adapted to the targeted market niche;
- Determine the way of distribution of a tourism product (direct or indirect);
- Form a unique and recognizable nautical tourism brand;
- Undertake appropriate marketing activities aimed at successful promotion of the luxury nautical tourism offer on the tourism market and constantly monitor the success of marketing activities.

Implementation of presented activities will enable tourism offer developers to additionally improve the current Nautical tourism offer and bring it to the level of luxury which will attract a higher number of yachtsmen with high purchasing power (especially from the countries that recorded a decrease of visiting vessels in the last four years). It is justifiably expected that this would have a positive influence on the growth of yachtsmen's consumption and competitiveness of the tourism offer, since they would be able to achieve their value and experience for money, and recommend Croatia as a luxury nautical destination definitely worth the visit.

5. Conclusion

In this paper the author presented the key characteristics of the current state of the Nautical Tourism offer of Croatia, as well as the importance of luxury as a feature of a (nautical) tourism product. This specific form of tourism is recognized as one of the most significant parts of Croatian tourism, as witnessed by the fact that tourism offer developers are continuously working on the improvement of its quality and diversity that in the end resulted in tourists not only returning multiple times, but also expressing mostly a very high level of satisfaction with the elements of nautical tourism offer. Croatia is observing current trends on the nautical tourism market and is making efforts to implement good practices taken from the competing destinations. However, in order to be able to achieve its maximum success, it is mandatory for Croatia to undertake further previously proposed actions of development of the nautical tourism product that will be based on luxury, and will thus enable the return of the previous

yachtsmen with high purchasing power from the countries that registered a decrease in the number of visiting vessels, attracting new tourists who still haven't visited Croatia, and finally positioning Croatia on the European and world tourism market as a destination of high quality and excellence.

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