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Evaluation of city tourism competitiveness

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Abstract

The main purpose of the paper is to carry out the evaluation of city tourism competitiveness. Seeking to achieve the goal of the paper the methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis were used, including expert evaluation.

The main factors for the evaluation of city tourism competitiveness were selected following the logic of the conceptual model of city tourism competitiveness. The importance of internal and external environment factors was estimated in form of weight coefficients through the analysis of expert evaluation results. According to the expert assessment results external and internal environment factors have almost the same importance. Most important factors of external environment affecting city tourism competitiveness are: status of resort, state's monetary policy, education system. Internal environment factors such as travel agencies, theater, zoo are most important. For the further evaluation the quantitative measures of the analyzed city tourism competitiveness factors should be chosen in order to calculate the city tourism competitiveness index.

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Introduction

Travel and tourism are important part of service economy. According to the data of World Tourism Organization and World travel and tourism council in 2013, Travel & Tourism's total contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of global GDP (US \$7 trillion), not only outpacing the wider economy, but also growing faster than other significant sectors such as financial and business services, transport and manufacturing. In total, nearly 266 million jobs were supported by Travel & Tourism in 2013. Tourism sector is important for Lithuanian economy, because country has no minerals and therefore it's manufacturing results are not very high.

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Various territorial units (countries, cities, regions, etc.) compete attracting incoming tourists. This reason encourages to study, evaluate and compare competitiveness of appropriate territories. The experts of United Nations state, that by now half the world's population lives in cities. Cities are recognized as major "economic engine" of global economy: here is economic and social capital concentrated, they are important centers of economic, scientific-technological and cultural progress of human. Cities compete with each other for investment, for new technologies, for financial support from European Union and other sources, as well as for incomes, which can be earned from tourists.

The theoretical contribution. Scientist (Go and Govers, 2000, Wahab, 2001, Hassan, 2000, Crouch and Ritchie, 1999, Enright, Newton, 2004, Yoon and Uysal, 2005, Dwyer and Kim, 2003, Navickas, Malakauskaite, 2009, Das, Dirienzo, 2012, Jackman, Lorde, Lowe, Alleyne, Antonio, 2011) who have analyzed the tourism destination competitiveness confirmed its importance and emphasized that it is related to the well-being of local people. Tourism destination competitiveness is associated with the area's ability to provide goods and services to tourists better than others do.

Authors analyzing urban competitiveness (Bovaird, 1993, Chesihre, Kresl, 1992, Lever, 1993, Meijer, 1993, Cheshire, Gordon, 1998, Sinkiene, 2008, Paliulis, Činčikaitė, 2011, Bruneckienė, Guzavičius, Činčikaitė, 2010, Kresl, Singh, 2012) emphasize that cities are competing to attract investment, population, labor, funds, tourists and so on. Thus, the city's competitiveness includes the conditions that make it attractive not only to entrepreneurs wishing to invest, incoming tourists or residents, but also for existing residents and businesses.

City tourism competitiveness reflects the ability of the city to highlight its attractiveness for tourists, provide goods and services for tourists better than other cities do. Conceptual tourism city competitiveness model (Čibinskiene, 2012) covers the factors of internal and external environment. In order to evaluate the city's tourism competitiveness, it is necessary to distinguish competitiveness factors of external and internal environment and evaluate their impact to the city tourism competitiveness, estimating their weight coefficients.

Research question: how to evaluate city tourism competitiveness?

Purpose. The main purpose of the paper is to carry out the evaluation of city tourism competitiveness.

Methodology. For the research to be conducted the methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis are used, including expert evaluation.

1. City tourism competitiveness model

City tourism competitiveness evaluation is carried out on the basis of the conceptual model of city tourism competitiveness (Čibinskiene, 2012). This model represents that city tourism competitiveness is formed by factors of internal environment, which are influenced by external environment factors. Factors of internal environment, in other words microenvironment are described by Labanauskaite (2008) as personified phenomenon. It is underlined that every business subject creates its own microenvironment. Factors of this environment can be more or less controlled. External environment emerges because of direct actions of institutions, regulating activities of economic subjects, as well as influenced by natural processes, therefore external environment is not personified. Such division of environments explains, that internal environment can be controlled, changed, etc., contrarily external environment is not changeable in short terms and needs to be evaluated in order to adapt business to it. In the conceptual model of city tourism competitiveness internal environment, influenced by external environment forms city tourism competitiveness.

2. Factors of city tourism competitiveness

For the evaluation following factors of internal and external environments are chosen (fig.1.). When we analyze city tourism, we realize, that it is influenced by external environment factors, such as political and legal, economic, social – cultural, ecological and natural and technological factors. These factors describe national business environment which is more or less the same for all kinds of business, so it is hardly changeable in terms of the city. In order to evaluate external environment of city tourism competitiveness, sub factors of external environment were distinguished (fig. 1.), paying attention to their importance for tourism business sector. In fig.1. there is no technological factors as factors of external environment, because they represent some sub factors of internal

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