KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
LITHUANIAN ENERGY INSTITUTE

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THE COMPETITIVENESS OF NATIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation

Social Sciences, Economics (04S)

Kaunas, 2004

Dissertation was prepared at Economics and Management Faculty, Kaunas University of Technology in 1999-2004

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The official defense of the dissertation will be held at the public session of the Council of Economics Science at the Dissertation Defense Hall of Kaunas University of Technology (Room 403, K.Donelaičio g. 73, Kaunas) at 1 p.m. on 10th of September, 2004.

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Summary of the Dissertation is sent out on 10th of August 2004.

The Dissertation is available at libraries of Kaunas University of Technology and Lithuanian Energy Institute.

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ŠALIES TURIZMO PRAMONĖS KONKURENCINGUMAS

Daktaro disertacijos santrauka

Socialiniai mokslai, Ekonomika (04S)

Kaunas, 2004

Disertacija rengta 1999-2004 metais Kauno technologijos universitete, Ekonomikos ir vadybos fakultete

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Disertacija ginama 2004 m. rugsėjo 10 d. 13 val. viešame Ekonomikos mokslo krypties tarybos posėdyje, kuris įvyks Kauno technologijos universiteto disertacijų gynimo salėje (K.Donelaičio g. 73-403, Kaunas).

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Disertacijos santrauka išsiusta 2004 m. rugpjūčio 10 d.

Su disertacija galima susipažinti Kauno technologijos universiteto ir Lietuvos energetikos instituto bibliotekose.

INTRODUCTION

Problem relevance. In the environment of economic and social-cultural globalization as well as internationalization tourism has become a leading industry in many countries of the world. Seeking to increase competitiveness, destination countries create fair conditions for tourism business development, promoting the development of favorable services infrastructure for tourism, fostering the culture of services offering and hospitality, local traditions, caring of tourists' safety. This makes these destinations attractive for tourists' travels and rest.

Processes of economic integration and the development of international ties with different countries are stipulating international tourism development in Lithuania. Lithuania has a number of advantageous features for tourism development: geographical situation, beautiful nature, mild climate, historical places and hospitable people. All these features set up very good preconditions for tourism development. However these tourism development conditions are not properly used. Lithuania is strongly behind the leading countries in the tourism field according to the tourism development and income level.

Our country is establishing conditions for the tourism business development. Tourism business and its international competitiveness are the concrete expression of national tourism development policy. Lithuanian national policy and its executive activity result in tourism development and growth (during 1998-2003 the annual growth of tourism incomes was 6 %, while in Europe-2.5 %; the contribution of tourism to Lithuanian GDP is about 4 %). As often as not these results are attained due to the decisions, initiated by the experience, experiments and mistakes methods and without the long-term strategic document (Tourism development strategy till 2015 has been confirmed in 2002).

There are several scientific studies devoted to tourism development in Lithuania (D.Labanauskaitė, 2002, R.Ligeikienė, 2003). However there has not been carried out some comprehensive research, intended to tourism competitiveness development, which could ensure tourism development and competitiveness increasing decisions, in Lithuania. This is the reason why tourism policy makers do not always properly make decisions related with the destination competitiveness increase. Such insufficient scientific reasoning determines the danger of alternative costs and inefficient national budget consumption.

Seeking to avoid failures and mistakes in the context of global tourism development directions, Lithuania needs to form appropriate tourism product supply, choose adequate tourism specialization trends and exclude underlying activity fields. While carrying on these decisions, it is important to establish and evaluate main factors, which determine destination competitiveness.

Scientific problem and its investigation level. There are basic scientific studies dedicated to competitiveness problems solutions. The theories of the famous authors (M.Porter, 1990; J.Dunning, 1992; A.M.Rugman, J.R.D'Cruz,

1993; W.R.Cartwright, 1993; D.S.Cho, 1994; R.A.d'Aveni, 1994; P.Krugman, 1994; N.J.O'Shaughnesy, 1996) have been more or less adapted in various business fields. However, their application in tourism development has not been sufficiently investigated.

While studying the competitiveness theory, it is might be noticed that competitiveness increase problems are usually analyzed in traditional products and services sectors, whereas there is some lack in comprehensive research of tourism competitiveness factors, which could be applied in the processes of tourism industry competitiveness increasing solutions. Competitiveness problems in the tourism industry have not been widely dealt with in the world scientific literature. In Lithuania this aspect of scientific research has not been considered.

The importance of competitiveness increase problem is often emphasized in scientific literature, but there is no methodologically based theory, which would point to the main factors, increasing national tourism industry competitiveness. Such insufficient research of national tourism industry competitiveness increase possibilities becomes an obstacle of national tourism industry development.

Considerable attention is attached to competitiveness increase in the world scientific literature. The features of competitiveness can be traced in the works of the 18th century researchers (A.Smith, D.Rikardo, Hecksher-Ohlin), where they have analyzed absolute and comparative advantage. Rather later significant results in this field have been achieved by M.Porter (1990), D.S.Cho (1993), J.Dunning (1992, 1993) A.M.Rugman, J.R.D'Cruz, (1993), W.R.Cartwright (1993), P.Krugman (1994), N.J.O'Shaughnesy (1996), etc. Z.Lydeka, A.Gineitas (1994), J.Urbonas (1999), J.Urbonas, I.Maksvytienė (2002, 2003), G.Startienė (1999), L.Šliburytė (2000), S.Valentukevičius (2000), N.Balčiūnas (2001), B.Barzdenytė (2001), S.Martišius (2001), V.Pukelienė, A.Sabonienė (2001), V.Snieška (2002), D.Bernatonytė (2003) and others have analyzed competitiveness problems in Lithuania. In spite of such a big interest of this scientific problem, the competitiveness theory is one of most confusing and hardly summarized research fields. This is stipulated by indetermination and equivocal competitiveness conceptions, because this phenomenon is studied in different perspectives and context.

Authors A.Sapir (1982), J.D.Palmer (1985), D.Siniscalo (1989), M.Porter (1990) are distinguished in the field of theoretical research of services competitiveness. Though these investigations are mostly directed to the international trade theory and there is no more extensive adaptation of this theory in services sector.

The researches of national tourism industry competitiveness reach the last decade of the 20th century. The scientific works by A.Poon (1993), G.I.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie (1994, 1999), F.Go, R.Govers (1999, 2000), D.Buhalis (2000), P.Murphy, M.Pritchard, B.Smith (2000), S.Hassan (2000), L.Dwyer, P.Forsyth, P.Rao (2000) are noteworthy in this field. The analysis of these researches shows that there are no methodological aspects in the

competitiveness context of the complex tourism activity. This is conditioned by the lack of the common theory and conception of national tourism industry competitiveness.

The main researches in the field of national tourism industry competitiveness have been presented recently (B.Prideaux, 2000; Ch.Kim, 2000; S.Hassan, 2000; G.I.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie, 2000). These authors are explaining the main conceptions of tourism competitiveness in the context of structures and systems. The analysis of these structures has indicated that most of them have clearly defined elements. However, they are linear and only simplex ties among connective parts are exposed. Also moreover methodological validity and particularity as well as factors that influence tourism demand are not considered in detail.

Though there are germs of national tourism industry competitiveness modeling in scientific literature, they lack the comprehensive analysis. Neither of the authors presented the methodologically based model of national tourism competitiveness, which would include the main factors that increase competitiveness of national tourism industry.

The subject of the scientific research is the national tourism industry and its competitiveness determinants.

The purpose of the scientific research is to suggest the model of national tourism industry competitiveness and determine the main factors that increase national tourism industry competitiveness basing on fundamental national competitiveness theories and national tourism industry competitiveness conceptions.

Objectives of the research:

1. Carry out the analysis of Lithuanian and foreign authors' researches related with national competitiveness modeling problems and evaluate the adapting possibilities of these theories in the context of the tourism industry.
2. Carry out the analysis of the main tourism and tourism industry conceptions as well as national tourism competitiveness modeling features.
3. Present the national tourism industry competitiveness model, containing the main factors that increase competitiveness of national tourism industry.
4. Work out methodical principles for the application of national tourism industry competitiveness model and investigate tourism industry competitiveness in Lithuania.
5. Identify the expression of the main factors, which increase national tourism competitiveness, in Lithuanian tourism industry.
6. Foresee further possibilities for the increase of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of three parts which reflect the main objectives of this work:

- The first part deals with the importance of knowledge of

competitiveness increase possibilities in the tourism industry, interpretations of competitiveness theoretical conceptions, national competitiveness conception, national competitiveness theoretical models and their adaptation possibilities in the tourism industry; as well as the main tourism and tourism industry conceptions and national tourism industry competitiveness structures.

- The second part is related to the presumptions of theoretical national tourism industry competitiveness research and the national tourism industry competitiveness model which includes the main factors, influencing the increase of the national tourism industry competitiveness;
- The third part of the dissertation presents the expression of the main factors that increase national tourism industry competitiveness, in Lithuania, evaluates the conditions of Lithuanian tourism competitive advantage as well as substantiates further directions in increasing national tourism industry competitiveness.

Research methods:

The theoretical considerations of the problem have been based on Lithuanian and foreign authors' scientific researches. Investigating and analyzing theoretical aspects of national tourism industry increase, the systemic, comparative and logical analysis has been used.

While performing the empirical research of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness and seeking to evaluate the main factors that increase Lithuanian tourism competitiveness, the experts' evaluation method has been selected. The representation of the results is evaluated calculating Kendal concordation and Cronbach alfa coefficients, asymmetry and variation coefficients, using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel.

In order to complement the experts' evaluation research results, the systematic and comparative analysis of secondary data, related with the factors that increase national tourism industry competitiveness, has been carried out. The World Tourism Organization, European Union, Lithuanian and its countries-competitors statistical data as well as the World Travel and Tourism Council indexes have been evaluated.

Theoretical contribution and significance

- Basing on the scientific literature analysis, the definition of national tourism competitiveness is proposed. The national tourism industry competitiveness is the ability of the tourism market environment, tourism resources and national tourism infrastructure to create the added value, save current resources and increase national welfare.
- The main aspects of national competitiveness models, which are important in the creation of national tourism industry competitiveness model, are presented. The essence of these principles is the methodologically based formation of national competitiveness determinants. Considering these principles, methodological basics for

the creation of the theoretical national tourism industry competitiveness model have been established.

- The national tourism industry competitiveness model has been proposed. The structure of the model includes the main factors which increase the national tourism industry competitiveness, that are macro environment factors, factors conditioning national tourism industry activity, factors conditioning demand of national tourism industry, factors conditioning prerequisites of national tourism cluster formation, strategy and rivalry factors that are increasing competitiveness of tourism enterprises.
- Basing on factors excluded in the national tourism industry competitiveness model, positive and negative preconditions for the creation of Lithuanian tourism industry competitive advantage have been evaluated as well as further directions in increasing Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness have been foreseen. These results can be used in developing tourism strategies of Lithuania and its regions.
- Results of the research have been used in the preparation and implementation of international project Phare SPF "TINKA", committed for tourism development in Lithuanian regions, and in the preparation of specialists in economics and management.

Content of the dissertation

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KEY FINDINGS

In the first part of the dissertation, the knowledge of competitiveness increase possibilities as the important condition of national tourism development is discussed (**chapter 1.1.**). Basing on the problem related with insufficient research of national tourism industry competitiveness, the study of fundamental competitiveness theories, starting from the competitiveness conception and its interpretations, is presented (**chapter 1.2.**). The analysis of the competitiveness conception has indicated that the logic evaluation of this conception is possible in the particular context, so the further studies are related with national competitiveness conception and factors (**chapter 1.3.**). The national competitiveness as the complex phenomenon has to be analyzed on the basis of models, so further fundamental national competitiveness theoretical models and their application possibilities in the tourism industry are evaluated (**chapter 1.4.**). Before going to the more detailed problem interpretation, the principal conceptions of national tourism competitiveness, that are tourism and tourism industry, are studied (**chapter 1.5.**). Then peculiarities of modeling national tourism competitiveness are discussed (**chapter 1.6.**).

The aim of the ***chapter 1.1*** is to discuss the importance of the cognition of competitiveness increase possibilities as the important condition of national tourism industry development. In the influence of economic, social and political globalization processes tourism is becoming the leading industry in the

world. In spite of the great importance of tourism in the present and forecasting periods in the world economy, the economic impact of this industry is often hidden and heavily noticed because of the tourism variety and fragmentary. Tourism is systematic phenomenon, integrating economic, social-cultural and ecological aspects.

Tourism development is increasing the interest of tourism as the scientific research object. The analysis of J.Jafari (1988), D.Pearce (1991), S.Witt, M.Brooke, P.Buckley (1993), Z.Jovicic (1995), N.Graburn, J.Jafari (1997), Ch.M.Echtner, T.B.Jamal (2000) works has indicated that effective researches can't be defined in the limits of the particular science. The research of tourism has to be reasoned on interdisciplinary aspect, when research is made basing on methods and philosophies of various sciences.

The attention to the tourism as the economic development engine in the world and to the important object of scientific research is determining new problems and their decisions lacking. Increasing number of tourism destinations in the world determine the importance of cognition of competitiveness increase possibilities. Though the importance of competitiveness increase in the tourism industry is emphasized in scientific literature, there is a lack of methodologically based models, containing the main factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness. The insufficient research of national tourism industry competitiveness cognition possibilities is becoming the obstacle of national tourism industry development.

Seeking to understand the essence of national tourism industry competitiveness conception, general competitiveness conception and its theoretical interpretation is discussed in the ***chapter 1.2.*** While economists have placed emphasis on price and the country-specific economic characteristics of competitiveness, the management and strategy people have focused on the firm-specific characteristics, while the focus of sociologists and political theorists has been on various social, political and cultural characteristics underlying the notion of competitiveness.

Despite all the discussions on competitiveness, no clear definition has yet been developed. It has proved to be a very broad and complex concept, defying attempts to encapsulate it in universally applicable terms. It is a complex concept because a whole range of factors account for it. Competitiveness is both a *relative* concept (i.e. compared to what?) and is *multi-dimensional* (i.e. what are the salient attributes or qualities of competitiveness?)

The principal feature of competition is conflict of interests between entities generally, expressed by their desire to be more successful than the others. Thereby, competitiveness is an ability to co-exist with the other institutions in the conditions of conflict of interests. Several levels can characterize competitiveness:

- ability to survive - the lowest level of competitiveness, refers to the ability to adapt passively to the competitive environment without significantly changing or developing itself

- ability to develop - the medium level of competitiveness, refers to the ability to respond actively to the changes in competitive environment and thereby improve its own qualities and make its activities more efficient
- superiority- the highest level of competitiveness, refers to the ability to influence competitive environment through more efficient operation, quicker development or better qualities than competitors.

The definitions offered in the scientific literature provide both a micro and a macro connotation for the term. From a macro perspective, competitiveness is a national concern and its ultimate goal is to improve the real income of its citizens. It is a very broad construct encompassing all social, cultural, and economic variables affecting the performance of a nation in international markets. On the other hand, from a micro perspective, it is seen as a firm level phenomenon; firm-specific behaviors determine competitiveness. In order to be competitive, any organization must provide products and services for which customers or clients are willing to pay a fair return or price. In the long run, in a free enterprise system, competitiveness is measured by the ability of the organization to stay in business and to protect the organization's investments, to earn a return on those investments, and to ensure jobs for the future.

Mostly competitiveness conception can be analyzed in three main contexts: firm, industry and nation. The analysis of authors (D.G.McFetridge, 1995; H.C.Moon, N.Perry, 1995) has indicated that limits of competitiveness conception can be broader: competitiveness can be analyzed in the context of blocs, countries, regions of countries, industries, firms and organizations, their subdivisions, combination of firms and organizations, groups of employees and single employee, products and services. Recently bloc competitiveness has developed into global competitiveness that is involving all countries and blocs of the world.

The analysis of competitiveness conception let to affirm that the formation of this occurrence depends on a particular context. Basing on analysis of authors (G.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie, 1994; P.Murphy, M.Pritchard, B.Smith, 2000; F.Go, R.Govers, 1999; L.Dwyer, P.Forsyth, P.Rao, 1999; A.d'Harteserre, 2000; S.Hassan, 2000; D.Buhalis, 2000; etc.), which have investigated features of destination competitiveness, it has been indicated that it is purposive to analyze macro level definitions that are more related to destination competitiveness.

The analysis of the national competitiveness conception, made in the ***chapter 1.3.***, let to affirm that competitiveness theory is one of the most confused and difficult summarized fields of research. The analysis of approaches regarding the conception of country competitiveness is indicated that the most important goal of competitive country is the welfare, which is determined by social and economic factors. The level of accomplishing this goal is the best measure of competitiveness relative to other countries.

Proponents of the competitiveness of the country (P.Krugman, 1990,

1994; W.M.Corden, 1994; T.Straubhaar, 1994) affirm that competitiveness of the country is not analogous to the competitiveness of companies. The lack of consensus in defining competitiveness explains why some economists criticize the concept of competitiveness of a country. Thus certain indefiniteness and ambiguity of the concept of competitiveness in international comparisons of the countries cannot be the reason to reject the term at all. One positive tendency is that the application of competitiveness aspect enables to examine and interpret many macro-economical processes and relations between countries from a new angle. For success it is not enough to improve socio-economic conditions of the country or to increase investments and innovation, it is more important to implement all above-mentioned better, faster and more efficiently than other countries.

Thus the national competitiveness is very complex phenomenon, so it is easier to understand it with the help of models. A major reason for attempting to develop a model of competitiveness that focuses specifically on the tourism sector is that there appears to be a fundamental difference between the nature of the tourism product and the more traditional goods and services for which the fundamental models were developed. There are relatively few comprehensive approaches which enable us to translate the concept into real world terms that provide direction and guidance for its improvement or that provide the basis for a framework of tourism competitiveness. The fundamental competitiveness models and their application possibilities and importance are studied in the ***chapter 1.4.*** Two of the most widely acknowledged models of competitiveness are those developed by M.Porter (1990) and the World Economic Forum (1993). While these frameworks are both broad, macroeconomic models of competitiveness that do not directly focus on, or accord much attention to tourism, they provide a useful starting point for the development of a more sector-specific approach.

A very broad conceptual framework developed to explain the competitiveness of nations has presented by M.Porter (1990). In Porter's theory, a nation's overall competitiveness stems from the micro level, that is, individual firms. M.Porter (1990) states that the only meaningful concept of competitiveness at the national level is productivity. A rising standard of living depends on the capacity of a nation's firms to achieve high levels of productivity and to increase productivity over time. A nation's firms must relentlessly improve productivity in existing industries by raising product quality, adding desirable features, improving product technology or boosting production efficiency. He goes on to state that the wealth of a nation is a reflection of the productivity of its industries and clearly distinguishes between the activities of individual firms in seeking success in global industries and the determinants of national advantage in promoting such success. M.Porter's model, popularly known as the "dynamic diamond," consists of four major factors, that are factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries and firm strategy, structure and rivalry, which he suggest promote or impede the competitive advantage of the firms operating in a nation. The model

has been developed by D.S. Cho (1994) to the "nine factors" competitiveness model, which is not appear to have any obvious advantages over the M.Porter framework upon which it is based.

Analysis of proponents of M.Porter national diamond competitiveness model (J.Dunning, 1992, 1993; A.M.Rugman, J.R.D'Cruz 1993; P.Krugman, 1994; N.J.O'Shaughnesy, 1996; W.R.Cartwright, 1993) has indicated that M.Porter did not appropriately consider the dynamic aspects of the forces that are shaping the world; especially, the forces pertaining to globalization and the phenomenon of foreign direct investment were not properly taken into account in Porter's model. It has also been argued that the dynamic influences of technology and international business, labor costs, and exchange rates on international competitiveness have not been not duly taken into account in Porter's model.

Composite measures of competitiveness resulting in so-called "competitiveness scoreboards" have been developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the International Institute of Management Development (IMD). The WEF approach makes an important distinction between the competitive and comparative advantage of nations. The competitiveness scoreboards produced in the World Competitiveness Report, while comprehensive, are of limited value because they rely to a large extent on opinion surveys and non-quantifiable factors. Furthermore, in the context of interest here, many of the indicators of competitiveness used by the WEF would seem to be irrelevant to any notion of destination competitiveness.

In spite of fact that fundamental national competitiveness models are general, their influence in creation the national tourism industry competitiveness model is very considerable in methodological sense. The analysis of general national competitiveness models let to determine the principles that important for formatting the model of national tourism competitiveness (Table 1).

Table 1. The principles of national competitiveness theoretical models applicable in the tourism industry

Model	***The principles of national competitiveness models applicable in the tourism industry***
M.Porter (1990) "national diamond" competitiveness model	Methodologically based exposition of national competitiveness determinants The integrated and dynamic system of complementing determinants
A.M.Rugman, J.R.D'Cruz (1993) "the double diamond" international competitiveness model	The evaluation of the influence of international and global forces on the nation The impact of technologies, international business, national history and culture on national competitiveness

Continued from table 1

Model	*The principles of national competitiveness models applicable in the tourism industry*
D.S.Cho (1994) "nine factors" competitiveness model	The evaluation of competitiveness in similarly developed countries
World Economic Forum (1993) competitiveness model	The importance of economic and ecologic systems balance for the national competitiveness- the ability to secure the ecologically sustainable economic development

Before going to the more detailed problem interpretation, the principal conceptions of national tourism competitiveness, that are tourism and tourism industry, are studied (***chapter 1.5***). The analysis of tourism conception interpretation proclaims the variety and complexity of the tourism. Thus it is need to emphasize that this important activity in the contemporary economy is commonly treated as the active form of recreation and cognition, related with travels and as the industry, which is influencing the national economy.

Theoretical researches have indicated that the evaluation of the tourism and the tourism industry is quite confused, so the cluster essence of the tourism industry, that is determining the cooperation of all three economic subjects- tourism services customers, private and public sectors in the national level, is adequate to the modern economy features and stipulates the sustainable international competitiveness.

The characteristics of tourism product let to affirm that the context of competitiveness is changing in the complex activity of tourism, although integrating the fundamental principles of the competitiveness theory. Peculiarities of modeling national tourism competitiveness are discussed in ***chapter 1.6.***

Some researchers claim that a destination is competitive to the extent that its market share of tourism (measured in visitor numbers or expenditure) is high and/or growing (A.d'Harteserre 2000; S.Hassan 2000). This indicator accords with the commonly hold view that competitiveness is essentially linked to visitor numbers or visitor expenditure. According to other researchers destination competitiveness is associated with the economic prosperity of residents of a country (G.I.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie, 1999; D.Buhalis 2000). Development designed to attract international visitors may have a range of purposes. Ultimately, however, it seems reasonable to focus attention on economic prosperity. That is, nations (or destinations) compete in the international tourism market primarily to foster the economic prosperity of residents.

Other objectives may hold: of course- the opportunity to showcase the country as a place to live, trade with, invest in, do business with, play sport against, etc. Tourism may promote international understanding, peace, and goodwill. But, in long term, the economic well-being of residents is of central

concern to the notion of destination competitiveness.

A large number of variables appear to be linked to the notion of destination competitiveness. These include objectively measured variables such as visitor numbers, market share, tourist expenditure, employment, value added by the tourism industry, as well as subjectively measured variables such as 'richness of culture and heritage","quality of the tourism experience", etc.

Destination competitiveness would appear to be linked to the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations on those aspects of the tourism experience considered to be important by tourists. L.Dwyer, P.Forsyth, P.Rao (2000) state that tourism competitiveness is a general concept that encompasses price differentials coupled with exchange rate movements, productivity levels of various components of the tourist industry and qualitative factors affecting the attractiveness or otherwise of a destinations.

The analysis of national tourism industry competitiveness theoretical researches has indicated that this conception is not fairly studied; there is a lack of the clear definition of national tourism industry competitiveness. Main researches in this field have been presented recently (B.Prideaux, 2000; Ch.Kim, 2000; S.Hassan, 2000; G.I.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie, 2000*).* These authors are explaining the main conceptions of tourism competitiveness in the context of structures and systems. The critical analysis of destination competitiveness structures is presented in table 2.

Table 2. The evaluation of destination competitiveness structures and their elements

Authors	***Advantages***	***Shortages***
B.Prideaux, 2000	Useful way of categorizing factors influencing tourism flows.	The lack of schematic structure and consequent location of factors influencing national tourism competitiveness.
Ch.Kim, 2000	Presentation of indicators for evaluating destination competitiveness.	No justification is given for labeling the sources of destination competitiveness as primary, secondary, and tertiary. The linear format of structure.
S.Hassan, 2000	Focus on orientation to demand and environmental orientation.	The structure is mostly oriented to "environmentally friendly" tourism development.
G.I.Crouch, J.R.Ritchie, 2000	The most detailed interpretation of tourism competitiveness. The emphasis on sustainable competitiveness importance.	Only tourism supply factors are underlined. The linear structure. There is the lack of links among some determinants in the structure. The impact of environment factors to tourism competitiveness is not evaluated.

The analysis of scientific researches of competitiveness problems in the tourism industry has indicated that the competitiveness context in the complex tourism activity is lacking methodological aspects. There is no methodologically based national tourism competitiveness model, containing the main factors, increasing national tourism competitiveness. Basing on discussed national competitiveness and tourism industry competitiveness modeling research, the national tourism industry competitiveness model is suggested in **the second part** of the dissertation.

The methodological backgrounds of national tourism industry competitiveness model formation are proposed (**2.1. chapter**). The main elements of the model (**2.2 chapter**), that are environment factors (*2.2.1. section*), factors conditioning national tourism industry activity (*2.2.2. section*), factors conditioning national tourism industry demand (*2.2.3. section*), factors conditioning prerequisites of the tourism cluster formation (*2.2.4. section*) and strategy and rivalry factors increasing tourism firms competitiveness (*2.2.5 section*), are discussed. The structure of national tourism competitiveness model is presented in **2.3. chapter**.

The methodological backgrounds of the model of national tourism industry competitiveness formation are related with methodologically based fundamental national competitiveness theories that can be applied in analyzing tourism industry competitiveness (***2.1.chapter***).

Basing on accomplished scientific literature, the definition of national tourism industry competitiveness has proposed. National tourism industry competitiveness is the ability of the tourism market environment, tourism resources and national tourism infrastructure to create the added value, save current resources and increase national welfare.

Competitiveness is analyzed in the context of two or more particular activity subjects' relations. National tourism industry development is based on the comparative advantage. That is the ability to present tourism resources attractively, specialize in such tourism products, which would differ from products of another similar destinations and also exhaust possibilities of other economic sectors.

Basing on theoretical interpretations, it is proposed to use "national diamond" theory as the methodological background in preparing the model of national tourism industry competitiveness. This theory, proposed by M.Porter (1990), is based on the integrated and dynamic system of competitiveness determinants. Also basing on M.Porter (1990) model criticism (J.Dunning, 1992, 1993; A.M.Rugman, J.R.D'Cruz, 1993, P.Krugman, 1994; N.J.O'Shaughnesy, 1996*),* it is proposed to consider global forces impact for national tourism industry competitiveness.

There is little attention for the impact of macro environment to national competitiveness is attached in the M.Porter (1990) model. Meanwhile national tourism industry competitiveness is closely related with the national politics, economic and social environment, technologies development and ecological environment quality. It is proposed to evaluate political, economical, social,

technological and ecological environment factors, increasing competitiveness of national tourism industry.

The complex of characteristics determines the competitiveness of national tourism industry. That is why it is suggested to integrate all elements, constituting the national tourism competitiveness, into the model of national tourism industry competitiveness (Figure 1).

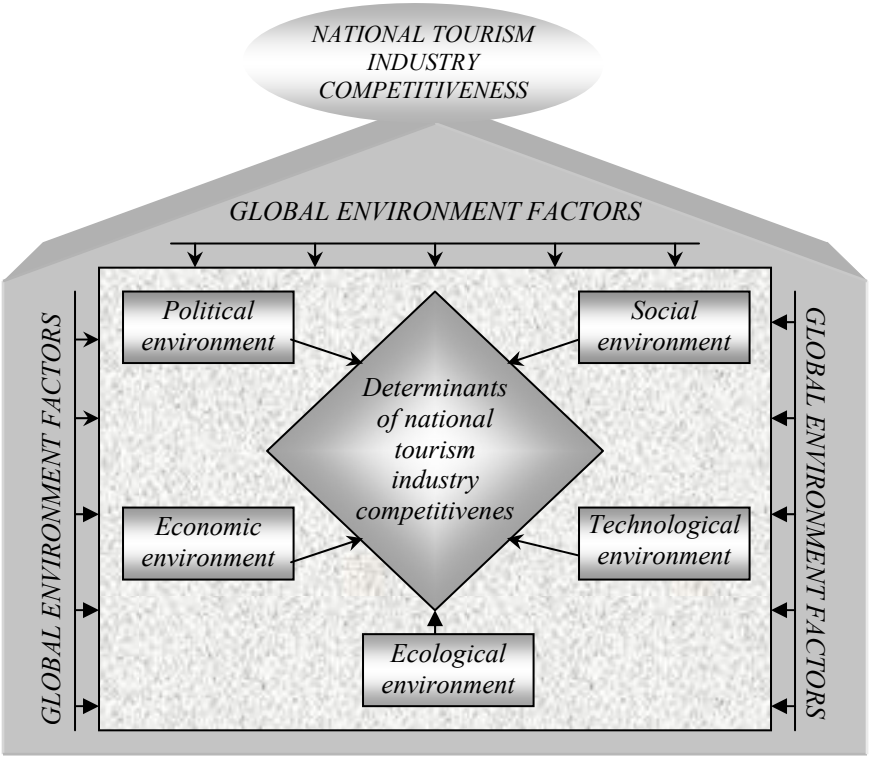


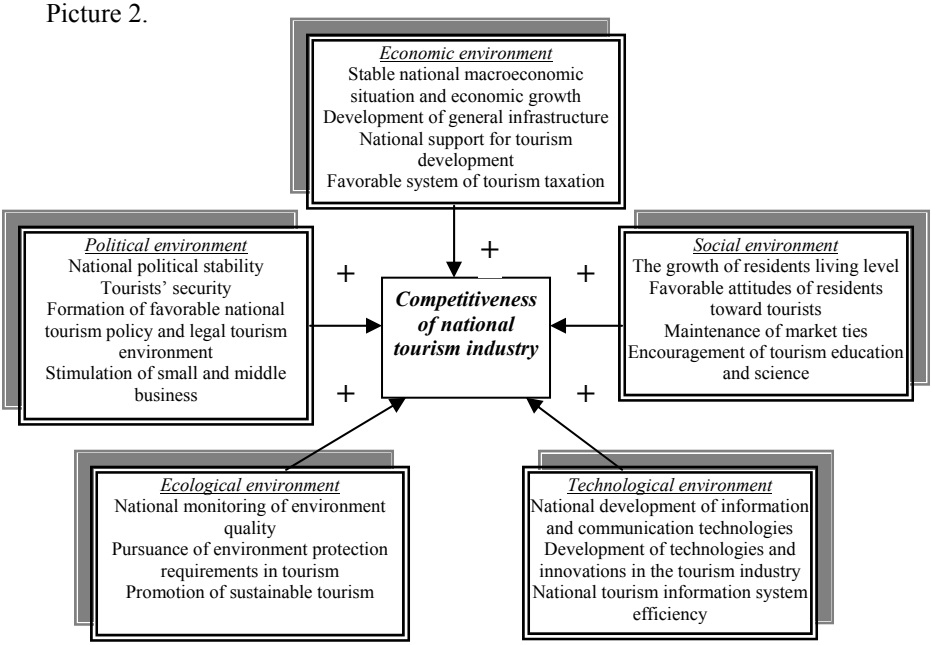
Figure 1. Model of national tourism industry competitiveness

National tourism industry is influenced by national environment or macroenvironment and global environment factors. Basing on P.Kotler, J.Bowen, J.Makens (1996), J.Tribe, (1999) L.Dwyer, S.Kemp (2002) W.Freyer (1995) scientific researches analysis, it is important to evaluate both environments' factors that determine national tourism competitiveness *(section 2.2.1)*.

The globalization process in tourism is proceeding in two directions: tourism supply and tourism demand. Globalization in the tourism supply is expressing by firms' planning and cooperation integration in the world market on purpose to withstand other global competitors. Also the permanent growth of the supply, conditioned by global tourism services suppliers, is appreciable. Then the homogeneity of the demand, growing incomes and welfare, their sophistication and experience are stipulating the globalization. Forces of

globalization are uncontrollable and changing, so the most important task, seeking to sustain and increase the national tourism industry competitiveness, is constantly analyze and adapt to all changes in the best way. That is why only the main factors of macro environment increasing national tourism industry competitiveness will be excluded in the model of national tourism industry competitiveness.

Basing on W.Freyer (1995) STEEP framework, containing five groups of the macro environment factors influencing the competitiveness of national tourism industry: political environment factors, economic environment factors, social environment factors, technological environment factors and ecological environment factors. The main macro environment factors, influencing and increasing the competitiveness of national tourism industry, is presented in Picture 2.



Picture 2. The main macro environment factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness

The tourism system is open and heavily structured system, which is influenced by constantly shifting environment factors, therefore national tourism strategists must observe and evaluate the surrounding environment, foresee possible changes and seek the positive above mentioned macro environment factors expression.

After the evaluation of the macro environment factors, determinants of national tourism industry competitiveness are analyzed. The primary elements of destination appeal are related with tourism resources in the current tourist region (*2.2.2. section*). Factor conditions (both inherited and created factors of production) are a particularly important source of competition to tourist

destinations. Physical, historical, cultural and recreational resources often represent primary travel motivations. Tourism resources are likely to be used more effectively when the different modes of deployment share a common view regarding a destination's strategy for tourism development.

The element of created tourism resources- tourism infrastructure is other very important factor, which is influencing the destination competitiveness. C.Mo, D.Handy and M.Havitz (1993) have argued that destination service infrastructure is, after destination environment, the most important factor in an international tourist's experience of the destination product. It comprises the direct suppliers, i.e. accommodation facilities, transportation facilities, travel operators and agencies and tourism information services and indirect suppliers, i.e. feeding facilities, retail trade facilities, entertainment facilities and financial and insurance facilities. Destinations function more effectively when these services are abundant.

Tourism resources are the most important motive to visit the country, so preservation is very urgent question nowadays. Resources stewardship or orientation to sustainable tourism development is other important step to national tourism industry competitiveness. This involves effective maintenance of those resources and a careful nurturing of those that are particularly vulnerable to damage that be may be caused by tourism.

Though it is emphasized in the scientific literature, that destination attractiveness is more important for tourists than the distance from origin to destination, however this factor is strongly influencing the choice of tourist. The accessibility of the destination is governed by a variety of influences including the frequency, ease and quality of auto, air, bus, train, sea access; aviation regulations, entry permits and visa requirements, route concessions, airport capacities; competition among carriers etc. Visas may be expensive in terms of monetary outlay and/or inconvenient to procure, thus deterring visitation. B.Prideaux (2000) notes that tourist choice between alternative destinations is influenced by inefficiencies in the transport system such as uncompetitive practices, safety concerns, comfort levels and journey time.

Other important factor is the service dimension of the tourism experience. Efforts must be made to ensure quality of service and there is now recognition of the need to take a total quality of service approach to visitor satisfaction. F.Go, R.Govers (2000) researches are confirming that provision of reliable and responsive visitor services enhances a destination's competitive advantage. Initiatives to enhance the quality of the experience provided by a tourism destination include: establishment of standards for tourism facilities and performance of personnel; programs to objectively and subjectively monitor the quality of experiences provided; monitoring of resident attitudes towards visitors and towards development of the tourism sector.

The country, which disposes rich natural resources, but has the limited capital resources, can't develop the tourism industry to the proper level. Tourism market can't be developed adequately without the economic development of other national industries. The sufficient capital resources,

favorable lending conditions and useful employment of investments in the tourism industry is increasing the competitiveness of tourism business in the international market. Also these resources let to develop the tourism infrastructure, promote education and innovations and integrate information technologies.

While creating competitive advantages in international tourism market, specialized (i.e. specialized and higher qualification labor) and exceptional factors (i.e. innovations and technologies) are relevant. The human resources in the tourism industry are vital, because this industry is closely related with them. The qualitative level of human resources is determining the comparative advantage in the international tourism.

Recently the employment of information technologies in tourism is decreasing the need of human resources in tourism business. Thus the analysis has indicated that the success of tourism destinations and tourism enterprises is determining by strategic combination of management and marketing innovative decisions, intellect, vision and advanced information technologies.

While the bulk of the discussion of competitiveness of firms and nations as appearing in the general literature, focuses on supply related items; demand factors assume special importance in determining destination competitiveness (*2.2.3. section*). The analysis of scientific researches has indicated that demand conditions, particularly domestic demand and its internationalization to foreign markets, establish the proving grounds for the tourism industry. A high domestic demand confers static efficiencies and encourages improvement and innovation. Also it has to be evaluated that the modern customer is becoming more independent, critical and demanding for tourism products and services quality.

The destination may be competitive for one group of visitors but not for another group, depending on their motivations for travel. Considering customers needs, tourism destinations and enterprises as well must orientate to concrete target markets requirements. Tourism market differentiation is the selection of customer groups, which requirements will be satisfied by certain tourism products. Tourism market segmentation depends on target market specifics and destination possibilities. Basing on the advantages and shortages, country, participating in international tourism trade, has to evaluate its possibilities and choose the tourism specialization. J.Alavi, M.Y.Yasin (2000) propose to research the competitive advantage and specialization in the tourism industry with the shift-share technique. Basing on the analysis of H.Jr.Herzog, R.Olsen (1997), J.Alavi, M.Yasin (2000), U.Yavas et al. (1992) researches, four possible combinations of specialization-competitive advantage can be excluded. In this context, a country may either "specialize" or "not specialize" and may either have a "competitive advantage" or "disadvantage" in terms of attracting tourists from region (I). Picture 3 presents these four possibilities.

		COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE	
		(+) *Advantage(A)*	(-) *Disadvantage (D)*
SPECIALIZATION	- Not Specialized (N)	I $(G_{ij}-G_{i\ area})>0$ $(T_{ij}^{0}-\check{T}_{ij})<0$ A,N -	II $(G_{ij}-G_{i\ area})<0$ $(T_{ij}^{0}-\check{T}_{ij})<0$ D,N +
	+ Specialized (S)	III $(G_{ij}-G_{i\ area})>0$ $(T_{ij}^{0}-\check{T}_{ij})>0$ A,S +	IV $(G_{ij}-G_{i\ area})<0$ $(T_{ij}^{0}-\check{T}_{ij})>0$ D,S -

Picture 3. Possible allocation effects (according to J.Alavi, M.Y.Yasin, 2000)

The sign under the codes in each quadrant indicate the sign of the allocation effect, which depends on the nature of interaction between competitive advantage and specialization. The utility of the technique used here is not time frame dependent. While the results of the analysis may be time dependent, the applicability of the technique is not, since the technique measures relative competitiveness at a given time.

The analysis of authors (P.C.Fakeye, J.L.Crompton, 1991; M.Uysal, J.Chen, D.Williams, 2000; M.G.Gallarza, I.G.Saura, 2002) has indicated that for demand to be effective, tourists must be aware of a destination and its specific offerings. There must also be a fit between the types of experiences generated by these products and consumer expectations. Thus, the competitiveness framework comprises three main elements of tourism demand-awareness, perception and preferences. Awareness can be generated by various means including destination marketing activities. The image projected can influence perceptions and hence affect visitation. Actual visitation will depend on the match between tourist preferences and perceived destination product offerings.

Seeking the balance of the tourism supply and demand, the timely evaluation and application of the tourism product consumption is urgent. The analysis of scientific researches (A.Poon, 1993) has indicated that changes in the tourism market related mostly with the new consumers, new technologies, limits of tourism development and global aspects.

The impact of the demand conditions to national tourism industry competitiveness depends on other determinants of destination competitiveness too. Large domestic market and its rapid development don't stipulate investments, if there is no competition in the domestic tourism market. Also tourism enterprises can't satisfy customers' requirements, if the appropriate system of related and supporting industries is not developed (*2.2.4. section*).

The ability of enterprises to cooperate with each other strengthens the

region and the sector through the use of positive synergies, while the competition for share and profits keeps the companies in a mode of continuously improving their performance to stay competitive. In tourism clusters the quality of the visitor's experience depends not only on the appeal of the primary attraction but also on the quality and efficiency of the complementary businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shopping outlets, transportation etc.

Basing on analysis of authors (M.Porter, 1998; A.Enright, 1990; P.Benneworth, D.Charles, 2001; J.Jackson, P.Murphy, 2002, D.Labanauskaitė, 2002, etc.) researches analysis, tourism cluster can be defined as the geographical and spatial concentration of closely related firms and organizations, participated in the tourism business, activity and their common purpose is to increase the competitiveness of destination.

Basing on analysis of authors (M.Porter, 1998; R.Woolthuis, 1999; G.Lafferty, A.Fossen, 2001, etc.) researches, main prerequisites of successful tourism cluster formation are excluded:

1. Geographical concentration of economic activity;
2. Integration among enterprises and industries, directly or indirectly related with tourism development;
3. The central organizational formation (or few of them), responsible for important functions (such as intermediation, lobbyism, information).
4. The quality of cooperation among tourism enterprises and organizations.
5. Tourism cluster dynamics and effective exchange of information among tourism cluster elements.
6. Favorable governmental policy regarding to tourism cluster.

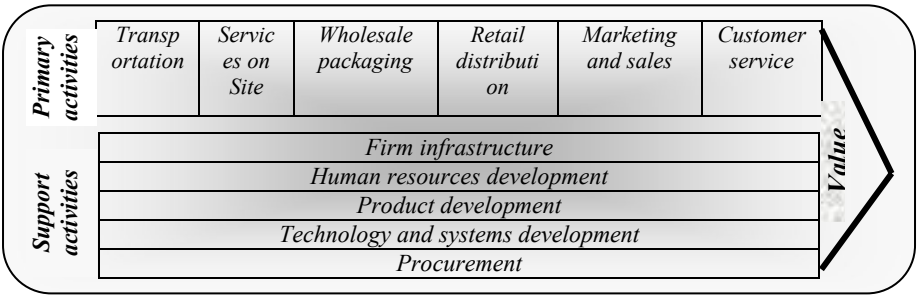
The analysis of tourism cluster policy features has indicated that this policy is efficient if it based on principle “from bottom to top”. Political decisions are not effective without tourism cluster members’ requirements identification.

Cooperation among tourism enterprises is not effective without rivalry (*2.2.5. section*). The competitive environment is formatting by tourism enterprises, which are “producing” tourism product elements. Seeking to compete in this environment, tourism enterprises can apply three main strategic models (M.Porter, 1980; D.Gilbert, 1984, 1990; A.Poon, 1993). The analysis of these models has indicated that seeking to keep and increase competitiveness of tourism enterprises and tourism destinations, it is important to compete with quality and innovations. Also the analysis of authors (S.Edgell, L.David, R.Haenish, 1995; D.Gilbert, 1990; A.Poon, 1993; M.Porter, 1990; etc.) let to affirm that cooperate strategies of tourism enterprises and their management quality are other very important factors, increasing the international tourism competitiveness.

Other important aspect in tourism enterprises competition is qualitative limitations of entry to the tourism market. Basing on

A.U.Aleksandrova (2001), barriers, related with qualification requirements and quality control are vital in tourism business. Competition in the tourism industry is limited by minimal qualitative and qualification requirements and that led to limitation of enterprises, those are not corresponding to these requirements.

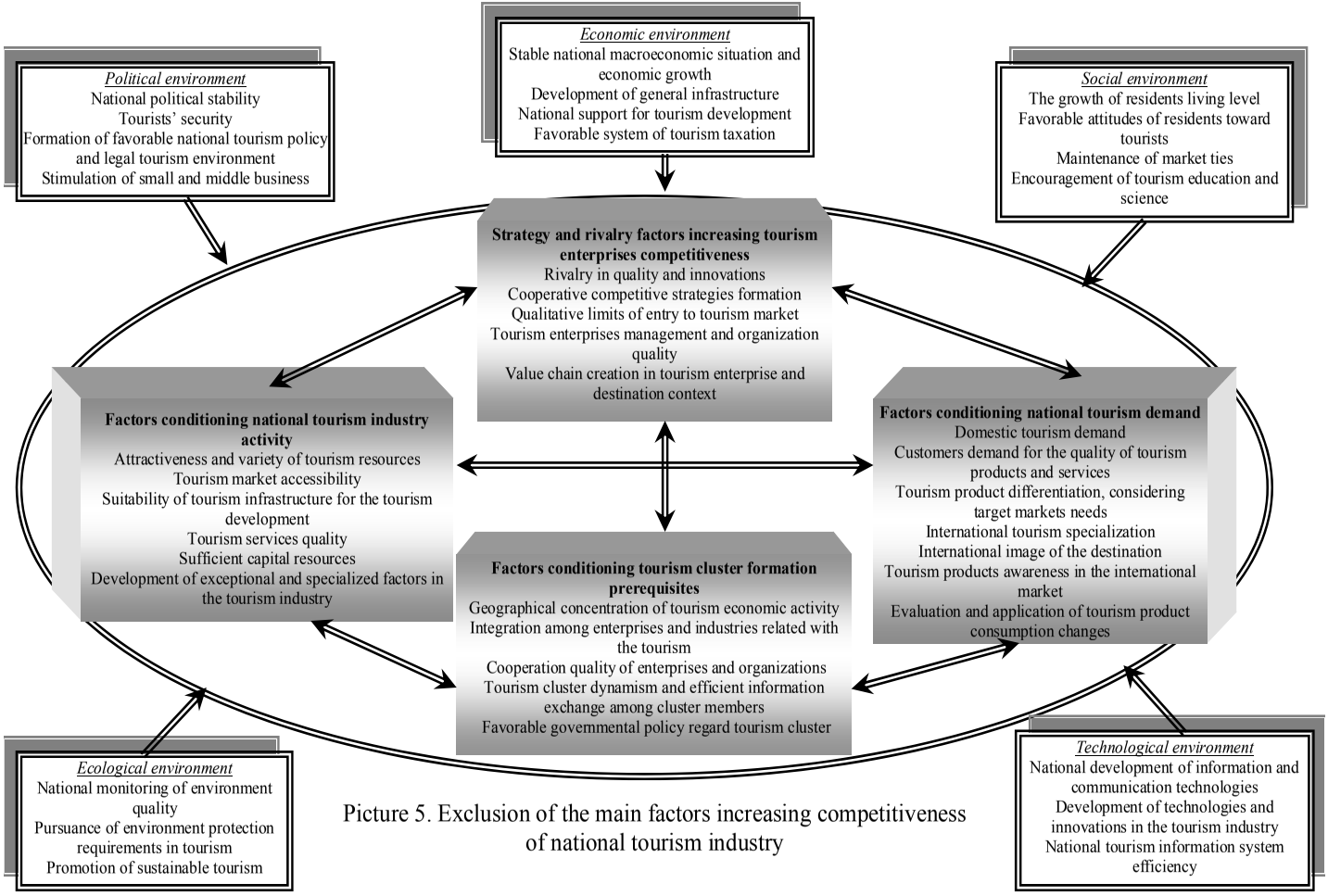
It is essential that the tourism enterprise seek to achieve the competitive advantage in every activity- that is the essence of value chain. Tourism cluster enterprises are striving to concentrate the activity, where they have the competence, other activity they "give" to specialized enterprises. That let to get the maximal benefit for every of them, connect their value chains and the competition transform to the cooperation. While interpreting the aspects of M.Porter (1985) value chain theory, the tourism and travel value chain can be proposed (Picture 4).



Picture 4. The tourism and travel value chain

The value for tourist in the context of destination is achieved through the selection of separate services suppliers. The destination value chain is presented in the principle of the fan (A.Flagestad, Ch.Hope, 2001). In the context of destination primary activities is related with complementary activities of business units. Supporting activities are tourism product management, environment management, common services (i.e., information, branding, marketing, etc.), infrastructure and relative advantage (natural resources).

The analysis of the main factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness let to integrate all of them in the model, which is integrated and dynamic system, where all components complement and strengthen each other (Picture 5). Five main groups of factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness are excluded in the model: macro environment factors, factors conditioning national tourism industry activity, factors conditioning national tourism industry demand, factors conditioning prerequisites of the tourism cluster formation as well as strategy and rivalry factors increasing tourism enterprises competitiveness.



Picture 5. Exclusion of the main factors increasing competitiveness of national tourism industry

The theoretical model of national tourism competitiveness is applied **in the third part of the dissertation.** Methodic of national tourism industry competitiveness model application is discussed (**3.1 chapter**). The empirical application of national tourism industry competitiveness model (**3.2. chapter**) is consist of evaluation of influence of macro environmental factors on Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness (*3.2.1. section*), evaluation of factors conditioning Lithuanian tourism industry activity (*3.2.2. section*), analysis of conditions of Lithuanian tourism demand (*3.2.3. section*), evaluation of prerequisites of Lithuanian tourism cluster formation (*3.2.4. section*) as well as the evaluation of Lithuanian tourism enterprises strategy and rivalry (*3.2.5. section*). Then results of experts' evaluation of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness are discussed (**3.3. chapter**) and directions of increasing Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness are proposed (**3.4. chapter**).

The methodical backgrounds of national tourism industry competitiveness application include the application of mathematical-statistical and qualitative methods (**3.1. chapter.**). The experts' evaluation method (ranking) is used for the identification of factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness in Lithuania. On the opinion of M.*Clark, M.Riley, E.Wilkie (1998),* this method is very frequent and useful in the enough hardly straight measurable tourism sector.

Seeking to verify if factors, constituting the created model of national tourism competitiveness, are the main factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness, the primary questionnaire has composed and the pilot research has been fulfilled with the method of individual interview (ten competent experts in the tourism field have surveyed). Basing on the model verification results, it is indicated that excluded factors can be treated as the main national tourism industry competitiveness increasing factors. Then the research, which purpose is to evaluate the expression of the main factors, increasing national tourism industry competitiveness, in Lithuania has been fulfilled.

Considering the requirements for experts, fifty experts, those activity is related with domestic and inbound tourism activity in Lithuania, have choose for the research. Their qualification and practical experience let to treat them as experts of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness evaluation. They were dividing to three main groups: experts, representing the national sector, experts, representing public sector and experts, representing the private sector.

The data of questionnaire results were analyzed, using the mathematical-statistical methods and Statistical Package for Social Sciences and Microsoft Excel. The representation of received results is evaluated calculating Kendal concordation and Cronbach alfa coefficients, asymmetry and variation coefficients.

In order to complement the experts' evaluation research results, the systematic and comparative analysis of secondary data, related with the factors that increase national tourism industry competitiveness, has been carried out. The World Tourism Organization, European Union, Lithuanian and its

countries-competitors statistical data as well as the World Travel and Tourism Council indexes have been evaluated.

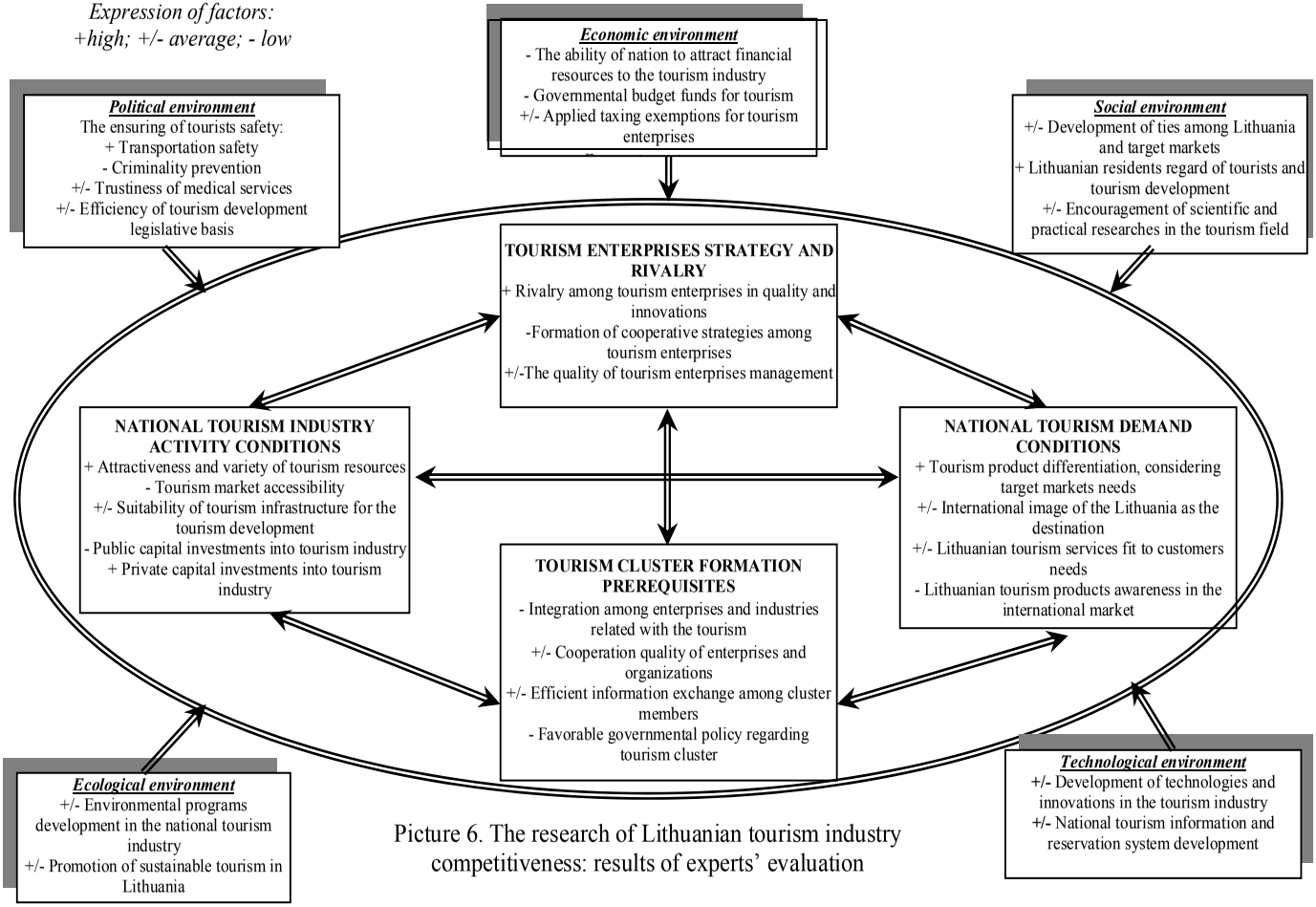
While applying the created model of national tourism industry competitiveness, the main components of the model are analyzed in Lithuanian context (**3.2. chapter**). The summary of the experts' evaluation results has indicated that the main feature of Lithuanian tourism competitiveness is ability to develop. Results of experts' evaluation are presented in Picture 6.

The analysis of expert survey has indicated that seeking to keep and increase the current Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness level, the sustainable development of the main factors, excluded in the created national tourism industry competitiveness model, is necessary.

The analysis of primary and secondary data, related with Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness, let to evaluate the current conditions of Lithuanian tourism industry competitive advantage formation (Table 3).

Table 3. Current conditions of Lithuanian tourism industry competitive advantage formation

Elements of the model	***Current conditions of Lithuanian tourism industry competitive advantage formation***	
	Positive	*Negative*
Economic environment factors	Stable macroeconomic situation and economic growth Upgrading development of the general infrastructure	Insufficient governmental support for tourism development The lack of taxing exemptions for tourism enterprises
Political environment factors	Stable foreign policy of Lithuania The increasing efficiency of tourism development legislative basis	The problem of tourists' safety ensuring The lack of support for small and middle business
Social environment factors	Enough favorable attitudes of residents regard tourists Maintenance of ties among Lithuania and inbound tourism markets	Slow growth of residents living level Insufficient encouragement of scientific and practical researches in the tourism field
Ecological environment factors	Upgrading development of environmental management programs in the tourism industry	The lack of attention to environmental quality monitoring in Lithuania Problem of sustainable tourism incentives lacking
Technological environment factors	Faster development of information and communications technologies in Lithuania	Average development of technologies and innovations in the tourism industry The lack of intensive development of national tourism information and reservation system



Picture 6. The research of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness: results of experts' evaluation

Continued from table 3

Elements of the model	***Current conditions of Lithuanian tourism industry competitive advantage formation***	
	Positive	*Negative*
Conditions of national tourism industry activity	Attractiveness and variety of tourism resources Upgrading quality of tourism services Increasing qualitative competitiveness of human resources in tourism Increasing private capital investments into tourism industry	Lack of attention for sustainable consumption The suitability of tourism infrastructure for tourism development is evaluated as average Insufficient developed accessibility of Lithuania
Conditions of national tourism demand	Increasing demand of the domestic tourism Tourism product differentiation, considering target markets needs The fit of Lithuanian tourism services to customers needs	The insufficient formation of Lithuania destination image Awareness of Lithuanian tourism products is insufficient in the international market
Prerequisites of national tourism cluster formation	Upgrading quality of enterprises and organizations, participating in tourism business, cooperation Upgrading exchange of information among tourism business members	The formal central organizational formation, which unites members of tourism cluster The lack of purposeful governmental policy regarding to tourism cluster
Tourism enterprises strategy and rivalry	The quantitative and qualitative competition among hotels (especially expensive) is committed Upgrading quality of tourism enterprises management Qualitative limits to Lithuanian tourism market, related with qualification requirements and quality control	The lack of competition among inbound tourism enterprises The lack of cooperative competitive strategies among tourism enterprises

The analysis of experts' research results has proved that seeking to keep and increase Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness, it is important constantly evaluate the current national tourism industry competitiveness situation and foresee possible directions competitiveness increase. The analysis of experts' survey results let to exclude these main possible directions increasing Lithuanian tourism competitiveness industry:

- The rise of Lithuanian tourism services quality.
- The sustainability of environment and Lithuanian tourism development.

- The increase of Lithuanian tourism marketing management efficiency.
- The purposeful Lithuanian tourism policy and support.
- The increase of tourists' safety and social sustainability.
- The education of Lithuanian private and public tourism sectors representatives.

The analysis of experts' survey results has indicated that seeking to keep and increase the current competitiveness level in Lithuanian tourism industry, the sustainable development of all factors, which are excluded in the created model, is necessary. Safety, quality, technologies, environmental protection requirements and government maintenance importance are emphasized during the research.

The results, which have been got during the research, are very important for Lithuanian tourism strategists, because they let to justify the further solutions of Lithuanian tourism development and competitiveness increase. That would increase the efficiency of governmental budget finance using and make conditions for the sustainable Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness in the international tourism market.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The research of comprehensive tourism competitiveness factors, which could be applied in the processes of tourism industry competitiveness increasing solutions, is not sufficient although. Though the need of competitiveness increase problems solutions in the tourism industry is frequently declared.
2. Researches have indicated that there is no one universally accepted competitiveness definition in economic literature, because it is a very broad and complex phenomenon.
3. The analysis of scientific literature has manifested that it is important to emphasize the ability of economic subjects to co-exist with other subjects in the conditions of interest conflicts.
4. The formation of the competitiveness conception depends on a particular context. Competitiveness conception can be created in the level of objects or subjects, such as blocs, countries, regions, industries, enterprises and organizations, their subdivisions, combination of enterprises and organizations, employee groups and individual employee, products and services.
5. National competitiveness is a complex occurrence, so it has to be analyzed on the basis of models. Having analyzed of national competitiveness conceptions and models as well as having evaluated the application of these models in the tourism industry, it has been found that:
   - all current theoretical national competitiveness models are more or less based on "national diamond" conception, that enables to analyze

interdependent factors assist in achieving, sustaining and increasing national industry competitiveness. These factors are grouped into four main groups: factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries as well as factors related with enterprises strategy and rivalry.

- scientific literature presents the solutions of competitiveness increase in traditional products and services by means of national competitiveness models. The accomplished evaluation of general national competitiveness models has indicated that these models can be applied in the analysis of national tourism industry competitiveness too. Thus while excluding the main factors that increase national tourism industry competitiveness, it is necessary to consider the peculiarities of this industry.

6. The analysis of national tourism industry competitiveness structures has shown that:
   - these structures are distinguished by clearly defined elements. They are linear, therefore only one-sided links among connected components are emphasized;
   - national tourism industry competitiveness structures, discussed in scientific literature are not detailed and informative enough They are lacking or have limited number of factors influencing the tourism demand.
   - national tourism competitiveness structures are not based on general competitiveness theories and empirical researches;
   - national tourism industry competitiveness conception is not fully defined in scientific literature.
7. Basing on the accomplished scientific literature analysis, national tourism industry competitiveness is defined as the ability of tourism market environment, tourism resources and national tourism infrastructure to create the added value, save current resources and increase national welfare.
8. Basing on the accomplished research of theoretical national competitiveness and national tourism industry modeling studies, the model of national tourism industry competitiveness is proposed in the dissertation. It contains the main factors that are increasing national tourism industry competitiveness. These factors are classified into these main groups:
   - The main *macro environmental factors* that influence the achieving, sustaining and increasing of national tourism industry competitiveness. It is advisable to distribute these factors into five main groups: political, economical, social, technological and ecological environment factors.
   - The main *factors conditioning national tourism industry activity* that create prerequisites for the destination competitiveness increasing,

are the attractiveness and variety of tourism resources, tourism market accessibility, the suitability of tourism infrastructure for the tourism development, tourism services quality, sufficient capital resources, the development of exceptional and specialized factors in the tourism industry.

- The main *factors conditioning national tourism demand* that determine national tourism industry competitiveness, are the domestic tourism demand, customers demand for the quality of tourism products and services, tourism product differentiation, considering target markets needs, international tourism specialization, international image of the destination, tourism products awareness in the international market, the evaluation and application of tourism product consumption changes.
- The main *factors conditioning tourism cluster formation prerequisites*: geographical concentration of the tourism economic activity, integration among enterprises and industries, related with the tourism, the cooperation quality of enterprises and organizations, tourism cluster dynamism and efficient information exchange among cluster members, the favorable governmental policy regarding the tourism cluster.
- The main *strategy and rivalry factors increasing tourism enterprises competitiveness*: the rivalry in quality and innovations, the cooperate competitive strategies formation, qualitative limits for entry to the tourism market, efficiency of tourism enterprises management and organization, value chain creation in tourism enterprise and destination contexts.

7. Basing on the created national tourism industry competitiveness model verification results, it is indicated that the defined factors can be treated as the main factors increasing national tourism industry competitiveness.
8. Analyzing the factors that contain the created model, the competitive advantage of conditions of Lithuanian tourism industry has been analyzed. This is achieved by applying mathematical-statistical and qualitative methods. The reliability of experts' evaluation results is confirmed by calculated Cronbach alfa coefficient (α=0.79), which proves the plausibility of the questionnaire, and the general Kendal concordance coefficient, which indicates the unity of experts' opinion (W=0.89).
9. The evaluation of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness has indicated that the main feature of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness is the ability to develop. The analysis of the information has led to the following generalizations:
    - The main macro environmental factors, creating preconditions for the national tourism industry competitiveness increase, are evaluated as average ones in Lithuania. Results of the research have indicated

that the government's support should be increased in the field of tourism development, creating favorable tourism taxing policy, ensuring tourists' safety, promoting small and middle business, supporting scientific and practical researches, urgent for tourism development, performing the environment quality monitoring and promoting sustainable tourism, developing technologies and innovations in the tourism industry as well as making national tourism information systems more intensive.

- Seeking better Lithuanian tourism industry activity conditions, it is necessary to promote sustainable consumption of tourism resources, develop public tourism infrastructure and improve the accessibility of Lithuania as the destination. Lithuanian tourism demand conditions indicate that Lithuania needs a more intensive destination image creation and increase of awareness of Lithuanian tourism products. The analysis of the main tourism cluster prerequisites in Lithuania has shown that there is no integration among enterprises and organizations, related with the tourism business and purposeful governmental policy regarding the tourism cluster. Competition among Lithuanian inbound tourism enterprises is not intensive, Lithuanian tourism enterprises do not attach enough attention to cooperative competitive strategies in national tourism (domestic and inbound) context.

10. The analysis of the expert survey has proved that seeking to keep and increase the current Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness level, the sustainable development of the main factors included into the created national tourism industry competitiveness model, is necessary. Basing on the results of the research, these ways of Lithuanian tourism industry competitiveness increase are proposed:

    - The rise of tourism services quality. The control mechanism of tourism services quality and the unified tourism services infrastructure, which ensures tourism development and not exceeding ecological capacity, have to be created in Lithuania.
    - The development of technologies and innovations. It is necessary to develop the unified Lithuanian national tourism information and reservation system and promote researches and innovations in the tourism field.
    - The sustainability of environment and tourism development. It is important to form the sustainable development policy in Lithuania tourism industry. This could be achieved through recreational resources using regulation and creation of negative social and ecological tourism development impact mechanism.
    - The increase of national tourism marketing management efficiency. This efficiency can be raised through the positive Lithuanian as the destination place image, decreasing the seasonality factor and

developing relationships with target Lithuanian tourism markets.

- The purposeful national tourism policy and support. The following activities are necessary: the creation of efficient tourism taxing system, development of promotion system of investments to the tourism cluster, the monitoring of governmental financing for tourism development use quality, the promotion of public and private sectors cooperation and the formation of favorable legal environment.
- The increase of tourists' safety and social sustainability. The development of safety programs assigned for tourists and residents and the maintenance of local community positive approach to tourists and tourism development could achieve this.
- The education of the representatives of private and public tourism sectors is linked with the execution of education programs for tourism business representatives and the development of abilities to use European Union support funds.

List of Publications and Proceedings

Publications corresponding to the list of Lithuanian Department of Science and Education

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ŠALIES TURIZMO PRAMONĖS KONKURENCINGUMAS

Reziumė

Problemos aktualumas. Vykstant ekonominei ir socialinei-kultūrinei globalizacijai bei internacionalizacijai, turizmas daugelyje pasaulio šalių tapo pirmaujančia ūkio šaka. Siekdamos didesnio konkurencingumo, turistus priimančios pasaulio šalys stengiasi sukurti palankias sąlygas turizmo verslui, skatina turizmui palankios paslaugų infrastruktūros plėtrą, puoselėja paslaugų teikimo bei svetingumo kultūrą, rūpinasi turistų saugumu ir tai daro jas patrauklias turistų kelionėms ir poilsiui.

Lietuvoje vykstantys ekonominiai integracijos procesai ir tarptautinių ryšių su pasaulio šalimis plėtojimas sąlygoja tarptautinio turizmo plėtrą. Lietuva turi daug palankių galimybių turizmo plėtrai, tai ir jos geografinė padėtis, ir graži gamta, ir švelnus klimatas, ir senovine architektūra dvelkiantys miestai, ir svetingi žmonės. Visa tai sudaro labai geras turizmo plėtojimo prielaidas. Tačiau Lietuvoje šios turizmo plėtros sąlygos išnaudojamos nepakankamai, o pagal turizmo išvystymą ir iš jo gaunamas pajamas Lietuva dar smarkiai atsilieka nuo pirmaujančių šioje srityje šalių.

Valstybė kuria turizmo verslo plėtros sąlygas. Turizmo verslas, jo tarptautinis konkurencingumas yra valstybės turizmo plėtros politikos konkreti išraiška. Lietuvos valstybės politika ir konkreti vykdomoji veikla leido pasiekti turizmo plėtros rezultatų (1998-2003 m. turizmo pajamų metinis augimas- 6 proc., o Europoje-2.5 proc.; turizmo indėlis Lietuvos BVP siekia 4 proc.). Tačiau kita vertus, turizmo plėtra Lietuvoje neretai rėmėsi bandymų ir klaidų metodais priimamų sprendimų pagrindu, neturint ilgalaikio strateginio dokumento (Turizmo plėtros iki 2015 m strategija patvirtinta 2002 m.).

Lietuvoje jau parengta keletas mokslinių studijų, skirtų turizmo problemoms. Tačiau išsamaus tyrimo, skirto turizmo plėtrai ir konkurencingumui didinti, kuris galėtų pagelbėti sprendžiant konkrečias šios srities problemas, Lietuvoje dar nėra. Dėl to valstybės valdymo institucijos ir tarnautojai ne visada pakankamai gali pagrįsti turizmo plėtros ir konkurencingumo didinimo sprendimus, o kartu su tuo kyla didelių nuostolių pavojus ir neefektyvus valstybės biudžeto lėšų panaudojimas.

Siekiant išvengti klaidų ir nesėkmių plėtojant turizmą šalyje, Lietuvai tarptautinio turizmo mainuose svarbu formuoti atitinkamą turizmo produkto pasiūlą, siekiant ekonominės, socialinės ir ekologinės veiklos suderinamumo, pasirinkti tinkamas turizmo specializacijos kryptis ir išskirti prioritetines veiklos sritis. Priimant šio pobūdžio sprendimus, svarbu nustatyti ir įvertinti veiksnius, lemiančius šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą.

Mokslinė problema. Tiriant konkurencingumo teoriją, aiškėja, kad konkurencingumo didinimo problemos labiau nagrinėtos tradicinių prekių ir paslaugų sektoriuose. Mokslinėje literatūroje nėra pakankamai išsamių turizmo konkurencingumo veiksnių tyrimų, kurie galėtų būti panaudoti, priimant šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo didinimo sprendimus. Pasaulio mokslinėje

literatūroje šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo problemos tirtos dar labai menkai, tuo tarpu Lietuvoje tokio mokslinių tyrimų objekto lyg šiol išvis nebūta.

Mokslinio tyrimo objektas. Šalies turizmo pramonė ir jos konkurencingumą lemiantys veiksniai.

Mokslinio tyrimo tikslas. Remiantis fundamentaliomis šalies konkurencingumo teorijomis ir šalies turizmo pramonei būdingomis konkurencingumo koncepcijomis, parengti šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelį, jame išskiriant pagrindinius šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą didinančius veiksnius.

Tyrimo uždaviniai:

1. Atlikus Lietuvos ir užsienio autorių darbų, susijusių su šalies konkurencingumo modeliavimo problemomis, analizę, įvertinti šalies konkurencingumo modelių taikymo galimybes turizmo pramonėje.
2. Atlikti pagrindinių turizmo ir turizmo pramonės koncepcijų bei šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modeliavimo ypatumų analizę.
3. Parengti šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelį, jame išskiriant pagrindinius šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą didinančius veiksnius.
4. Suformuoti šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelio taikymo metodinius pagrindus ir atlikti empirinį tyrimą Lietuvos turizmo pramonėje.
5. Nustatyti pagrindinių veiksnių, didinančių šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą, raišką Lietuvoje.
6. Numatyti tolesnes Lietuvos turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo didinimo kryptis.

Tyrimo metodai:

Tiriant teorinius šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo didinimo klausimus, disertacijoje naudojami bendrieji moksliniai tyrimo metodai: sisteminė, lyginamoji ir loginė mokslinės ekonominės literatūros analizė.

Atliekant Lietuvos turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo empirinį tyrimą ir siekiant nustatyti pagrindinių veiksnių, didinančių šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą, raišką Lietuvos sąlygomis, pasirinktas eksperimentinio vertinimo metodas. Gauti rezultatai įvertinami, apskaičiuojant Kendalo konkordacijos ir Cronbacho alfa koeficientus, asimetrijos ir variacijos koeficientus, naudojant SPSS (angl. Statistical Package for Social Sciences) ir Microsoft Excel programinės įrangos paketu.

Siekiant kompleksiško ir tikslesnio šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelio taikymo, tyrime remiamasi matematiniais-statistiniais ir kokybiniais metodais. Jų pasirinkimą sąlygoja pirminių ir antrinių duomenų gavimo galimybės.

Mokslinio darbo naujumas ir jo reikšmė:

- Remiantis atlikta mokslinės literatūros analize, pateiktas šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo apibrėžimas: turizmo rinkos aplinkos,

turizmo išteklių ir šalies turizmo infrastruktūros gebėjimas kurti pridėtinę vertę, tausoti išteklius ir didinti nacionalinę gerovę.

- Remiantis atlikta bendrųjų šalies konkurencingumo modelių analize, pateikti šių teorinių modelių pagrindiniai principai, taikytini formuojant šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelį, kurių esmė- metodologiškai pagrįstas šalies konkurencingumą lemiančių veiksnių išdėstymas. Atsižvelgiant į šiuos principus, pasiūlyti teorinio šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelio kūrimo metodologiniai pagrindai.
- Disertacijoje parengtas šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelis, kurio struktūra apima pagrindinius šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą didinančius veiksnius, suskirstytus į penkias pagrindines grupes- makroaplinkos veiksnius, šalies turizmo pramonės veiklos sąlygas lemiančius veiksnius, šalies turizmo paklausos sąlygas lemiančius veiksnius, šalies turizmo klasterio formavimosi prielaidas lemiančius veiksnius ir šalies turizmo įmonių konkurencingumą didinančius strategijos ir konkurencijos veiksnius.
- Remiantis sukurtame šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelyje išskirtais veiksniais, įvertintos Lietuvos turizmo pramonės konkurencinių pranašumų kūrimo pozityvios ir negatyvios sąlygos ir pateiktos tolesnės Lietuvos turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo didinimo kryptys, kuriose akcentuojama saugumo užtikrinimo, turizmo paslaugų kokybės didinimo, technologijų plėtros, aplinkos apsaugos reikalavimų laikymosi bei vyriausybės palaikymo plėtojant turizmą šalyje svarba. Šie tyrimo rezultatai gali būti panaudoti, svarstant tolesnę Lietuvos turizmo bei rengiant atskirų jos regionų turizmo strategiją.
- Tyrimo rezultatai pritaikyti praktikoje, juos panaudojant tarptautinio projekto Phare SPF “TINKA”, skirto turizmo plėtrai Lietuvos regionuose, rengime ir įgyvendinime, bei ekonomikos ir vadybos specialistų ruošime.
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Pirmoji dalis skirta konkurencingumo didinimo galimybių pažinimo svarbai turizmo pramonėje, konkurencingumo koncepcijos teorinių interpretacijų analizei, šalies konkurencingumo koncepcijos problematikai, šalies konkurencingumo teorinių modelių ir jų taikymo galimybių šalies turizmo pramonėje įvertinimui. Tiriamos pagrindinės turizmo ir turizmo pramonės koncepcijos ir šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo analizės struktūros.

Antroje dalyje atsižvelgiant į teorines šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo tyrimo prielaidas, pateikiamas šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo modelis ir aptariami pagrindiniai šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą didinantys veiksniai.

Trečioje dalyje nustatoma pagrindinių veiksnių, didinančių šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumą, raiška Lietuvoje, įvertinamos Lietuvos turizmo konkurencinių pranašumų kūrimo sąlygos bei pagrindžiamos tolesnės šalies turizmo pramonės konkurencingumo didinimo kryptys.

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UDK 338.48:339.137.2 (043)

SL344. 2004-07-07. 1 leidyb. apsk. 1. Užsakymas 276. Tiražas 70 egz.
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