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The strategy of competitiveness support in geo-tourist destinations

Competitiveness of destination is determined by indicators that determine their ability to compete with other destinations. It places extraordinary demands on the compilation of such a measurement model for the competitiveness of tourist destinations, which could result in one specific number of pre-defined categorization of competitiveness that could objectively state the real fact of the competitiveness of destinations. On the basis of realized analysis, it came to the identification of the defined indicators and subsequent determination of the priorities of assessed indicators. In the next step, it was possible to realize a simulation of the model of competitiveness.

Keywords: competitiveness, destination, tourism

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Introduction

Competition on the market in almost every area is very large and if the companies, facility or destination wants to "survive" and remain on the market must know their competition and must try to be competitive and unique [1].

Competitiveness is now widely accepted as the most important factor determining the long-term success of organisations, industries, regions and countries [7].

The current trend in the field of tourism is the application of modern information technology to support the collection and processing of spatially localized information such as GNSS and GIS [9], [10]. The tourism sector can be described as competitive only when tourist destinations are attractive, and high-class products (services) are competitive regarding quality, as compared to products and services of other tourist destinations, aimed at the same market segments [4]. Competitiveness of the region is characterized by indicators that determine the region's ability to compete with other regions and by results that bring competitiveness.

The competitiveness of tourist destinations cannot be separated from the creation of high value-added products and their integration into the tourism market while at the same time maintaining a relatively larger market share with respect to competitors [5].
Two comparable regions were selected for the determination of a comparison. The first one was a region in Slovakia - the High Tatras and the second was the Italian region Valle d'Aosta. Both regions were under revision on the basis of pre-defined indicators of tourism.

Working processes exploited by solution problem of competitiveness of tourism regions

An efficient exploitation of competitive potential is to be considered the crucial factor on the list of tourism destination competitiveness factors. The evaluation of competitiveness is a complex process, which embraces various elements, some of which are difficult or impossible to measure. Even the first stage of the evaluation process – the identification of competitiveness factors – might be quite problematic since there happen to be various conceptual variances regarding the definition of competitiveness [6].

In the current managerial practice it uses a range of methods and techniques. Many of them belong to the classic management theory and practice, others are the result of the search for new and more suitable methods and procedures. Appraisal of the competitiveness of the tourism regions and their further development was preceded by the use of the following methods but in this paper they are not presented because of their extensive content.

It is the following methods [2]:

- Methods of analysis and synthesis,
- The method of comparison,
- Method of deduction,
- SWOT analysis
- PEST analysis

Tourist satisfaction can be used to measure competitive strengths and weaknesses by determining tourist perceptions of competitive choices [8], and this is reason the swot analysis was used too.

Based on the results of the synthesis of noted above analysis, the strategy of support the competitiveness founded on creating a model referring to the strongest and weakest aspects of the development of tourism in geo-touristic destinations.

Using information from the above noted analysis was to identify the optimal strategy of support of competitiveness. On the basis of the subjective valuation of clearly defined indicators of tourism development were created alternatives (A1-A14) that has been assigned pre-determined scales of importance. To each alternative was attributed highest weights of importance of assessed factor and the other factors were considered by lower weights of importance. Their interactions pointed to the importance of a assessed factor in promoting the competitiveness of selected geotouristic destination.

By solving this problem about the support of raising competitiveness geo-touristic destinations was used methods of descriptive statistics by determining the development tendencies of selected tourism indicators, whereas during the analysed data wasn´t interfered, i.e.it was expressed the empirical distribution of observed values in statistical files using one, two, or more variables.

For the presentation of the above noted empirical distribution, tabular and graphical representation of numeric character were used.

In model of destination competitiveness were used main mathematic - statistical quantifiers with which was the most and least significant indicator of tourism directly determinant competitiveness geo-touristic region was identified.

Outputs of tourism indicators

By combining the realized quantitative analyses, it can be stated that:

- the geo-touristic destination is a specific product of tourism,

- external and internal aspects determine the uniqueness of a tourism product,

- specifics of geo-touristic destination determine the competitiveness of the offering final product of tourism,

- internal aspects determine the specificity offered tourism destination,

- development tendencies of explicitly defined indicators of tourism predetermine their predicted trends.

On the basis of above-noted facts was proceeded to the identification of defined indicators (Table 1) of tourism development in selected geo-touristic destinations was proceeded to.

Table 1: Identified indicators of the competitiveness of destinations

Indicators	Name of indicators
A1	the average cost of the tourism
A2	the average marketing costs of tourism
A3	number of nights
A4	financial support by the state
A5	population
A6	the size of protected area
A7	number of beds
A8	area destination
A9	number of hotel rooms
A10	total number of accommodation facilities
A11	the average tourism expenditure per person per day
A12	tourist density
A13	tourist intensity
A14	average expenditure on tourism

The individual indicators were identified on the basis of development tendencies of tourism indicators in both destinations. The proposal of the system management for the support of competitiveness of the specific tourist destination was based on the following methodological procedure:

- to the assessed factor (A1-A14) it was attributed the highest of importance of cardinal scale<1.5>, i.e., 5 = maximum importance, 1 = minimum importance in the context of subjective assessment,

- other indicators are less important, i.e., didn't rate a 5, (do this for all uses of weight)

  -in reciprocal interaction links of appraisal the primary indicator was assigned weights of importance at the interval 1 - 4, i.e., the highest rating was determined by the assessed factors of which weight of importance was primary, i.e. = 5,

- other indicators of the assessment were quantified with explicitly defined conditions, which was based on the fact that the point assessment of the weights from the scale of pointing can´t reach the same weight from the scale of weighted pointing <1.5>.

- the need of quantification of the specific indicator of geo-touristic destination competitiveness was based on a modified formula:

$$(A1*v1+A2*v2+......An*vn)/\Sigma vn,$$

A1 - Assessment indicator of trends in tourism,
vn - weight, which was subjectively attributed,
Σvn - the amount imputable values of weights of importance.

In the sense of above noted, clearly defined methodological steps, it can be stated that the highest priority showed in system management in analysed regions of competitiveness geotouristic destination indicator "**average expenses on tourism development**" and the lowest priority indicator "**tourist intensity** (ratio indicator)" (Figure 1), in logarithmic expression.

A performed quantitative analysis, based on a subjective valorisation of considered relevant indicators of tourism development in geotouristic destinations the High Tatras and the Valle d´Aosta, pointed out the priorities of the assessed indicators of tourism development while was created descending sequence of assessed indicators for both analysed destinations (Table 1).
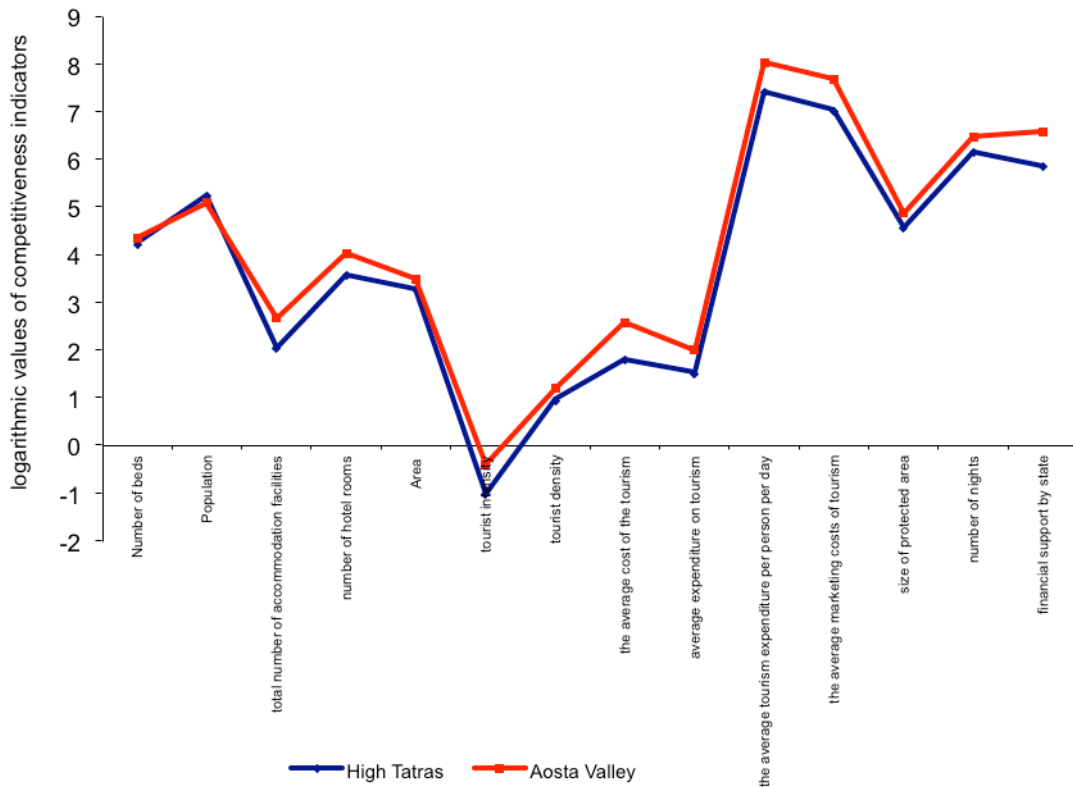
Figure 1: Development of indicators of tourism in the logarithmic version

Consequently was quantified individual strategies (V1 - V4) of valuation of competitiveness (Table 2). Of the following graphical representation of the assessed indicators clearly demonstrated that by the subjective evaluation of indicators of tourism development, the strategy with the highest importance is strategy of support V3, which prioritizes the indicator "average cost of tourism per person". Least important was the strategy V4, which dwelled on indicator" average expenses on tourism per person"(Figure 2).

Table 2: Quantification strategies for assessing the competitiveness of the High Tatras

|	Indicator of competitiveness	Value	Scale	V1	V2	V3	V4
A1	Number of beds	17 167	4,23	3,7	3,79	4,43	3,28
A2	Population	176 819	5,25	3,89	3,85	3,74	3,97
A3	Number of accommodation facilities	109	2,04	3,67	3,62	3,92	3,49
A4	Number of hotel rooms	3 769	3,58	3,62	3,92	3,87	3,49
A5	Area [km^2]	1 878	3,27	3,6	3,77	3,75	3,78
A6	Turist intensity	0,097	-1,01	3,28	3,53	3,19	3,76
A7	Turist density	9,141	0,96	3,77	3,37	3,61	3,55
A8	Average expense for tourism [mil. €]	63,5	1,8	3,58	3,36	3,47	3,18
A9	Average expense for tourism/person [€/deň]	33	1,52	3,26	3,7	3,73	3,7
A10	Average cost for development tourism [€]	25 800 000	7,41	3,88	3,71	4,32	4,14
A11	Average cost for marketing of tourism [€]	10 620 000	7,03	4,15	3,79	4,11	3,85
A12	Size of protected area [ha]	37 551,53	4,57	3,73	3,49	4,09	4,02
A13	Number of nights	1 409 116	6,15	3,66	3,96	4,08	3,97
A14	Financial support by state [€]	720 000	5,86	3,72	4,09	3,69	4,09
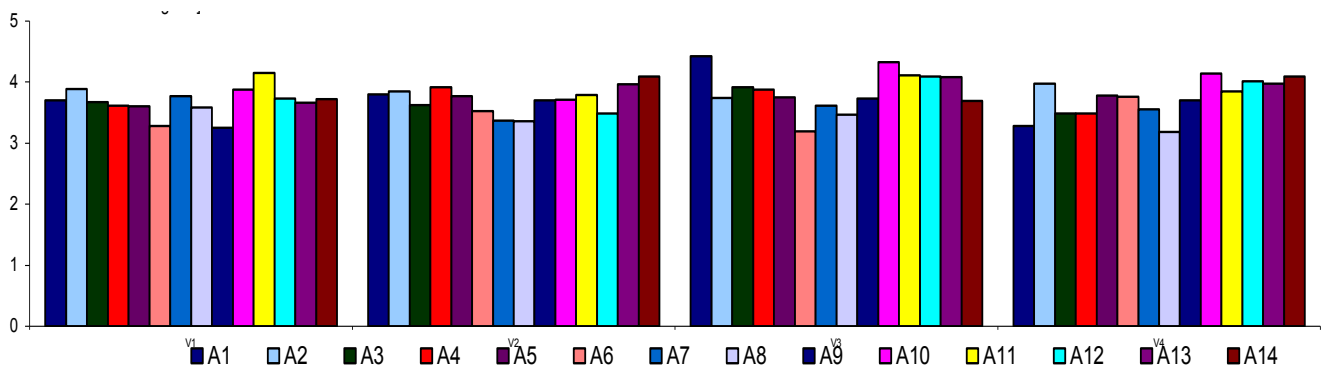
Figure 2: Quantification of alternatives subjective assessment of tourism indicators in the High Tatras

Analogue appraisal the same indicators of tourism development (A1 - A14) in relation to the competitiveness in the conditions of the Italian geotouristic destination Valle d'Aosta (Tab 3) led to the conclusion that the greatest emphasis in the subjective assessment of the competitiveness of this destinations showed the strategy V3 where as the most important indicator of competitiveness was defined "The number of beds in tourist facilities", the lowest importance in assessing competitiveness showed strategy V4, with the highest weight of indicator "Average expenses for tourism "(Figure 3).

Table 3: Quantification of strategies for assessing the competitiveness Valle d'Aosta

	Indicator of competitiveness	Value	Scale	V1	V2	V3	V4
A1	Number of beds	22 924	4,36	4,12	4,21	4,83	3,73
A2	Population	126 806	5,1	4,31	4,23	4,19	4,35
A3	Number of accommodation facilities	485	2,69	4,18	4,04	4,36	3,92
A4	Number of hotel rooms	10 847	4,04	4,05	4,38	4,35	3,87
A5	Area [km^2]	3 263	3,51	4,06	4,14	4,2	4,23
A6	Turist intensity	0,411	-0,39	3,66	3,95	3,71	4,27
A7	Turist density	16,151	1,21	4,19	3,81	4,01	4,01
A8	Average expenses for tourism [mil. €]	395	2,6	4,06	3,81	3,95	3,58
A9	Average expenses for tourism/person [€/day]	103	2,01	3,75	4,08	4,2	4,16
A10	Average costs for development of tourism [€]	112 000 000	8,05	4,31	4,19	4,75	4,62
A11	Average expenses for marketing of tourism [€]	50 559 000	7,7	4,57	4,25	4,59	4,33
A12	Size of protected area [ha]	77 302,64	4,89	4,16	3,93	4,55	4,43
A13	Number of nights	3 107 827	6,49	4,09	4,4	4,5	4,44
A14	Financial support by state [€]	3 996 000	6,6	4,15	4,59	4,12	4,6
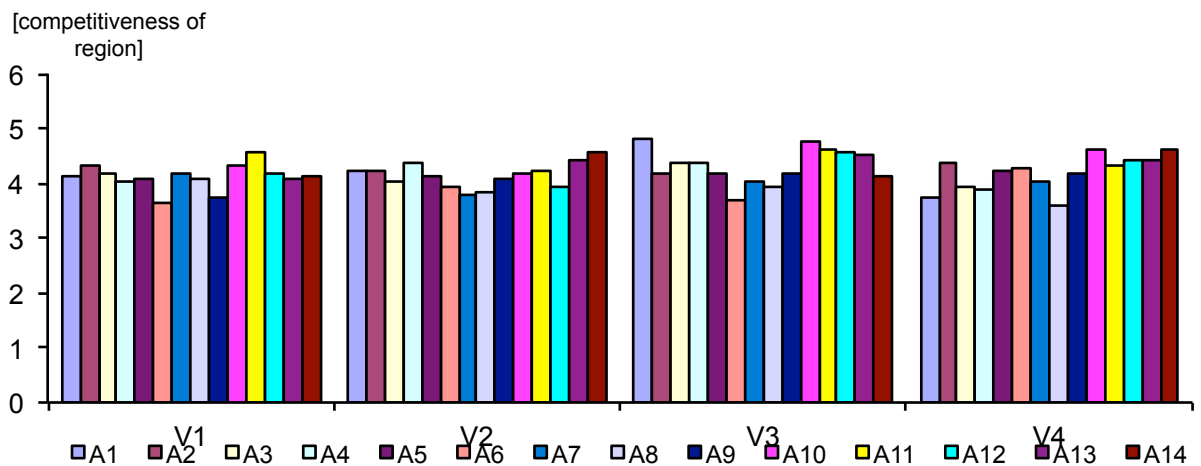
Figure 3: Quantification of alternatives subjective assessment of tourism indicators in Valle d´Aosta

Results

The results confirmed the specifics of geo-touristic destination that resulted from the results of realized analyzes, which clearly point to significant differences in the approach to the support of tourism development in Slovakia and Italy.

Matrix of valuation of competitiveness in tourism regions

Detailed performed quantitative analysis of development trends of tourism indicators in two compared geo-touristic destinations and model solutions of supporting their competition pointed to the following partial conclusions:

Both geo-touristic destinations dispose of a particular potential for tourism development, which is influenced by their geo-touristic specifics, i.e. geological composition determining objects that support the further development of tourism in their territory, whereby increasing their general attractiveness and the level of tourism potential in the medium and long - term horizon too.

Based on the definition of geotourism, as an integral part of tourism in position of recognition of geological objects including recognition technical, cultural and historical sights fused to mining activity such as mine excavation, mining museums, etc., and processes with emphasis on their aesthetic and historic value, it is necessary define in the both destinations all geologic knowing locations (caves, hydrogeological, stratigraphic, paleontological and tectonic locations) as well as castles or mine excavation with the aim of to increase their competitiveness. It also includes Corinne land cover (CLC) [11].

By support of competitiveness of assessed tourist destinations it should be invested mainly in the areas of development of the tourist-information agencies and promotion of geologically significant sites. Their presence is very interesting for support of competitiveness analysed destinations.

By support of competitiveness of geo-touristic attractive destinations would be convenient in this context to take into account all the positive aspects of determining their competitive advantage, as well as negative aspects determining their degradation, which could lead to a decrease of their competitiveness.

Globalization of these facts and the results of quantitative analyses pointed to the matrix of positive (Table 4) and negative (Table 5) aspects of increasing competitiveness of tourism regions that predict a specific level of competitiveness of the concerned tourism destination.

Table 4: Matrix of positive aspects of support the competitiveness of tourist destinations

Indicator	natural resources	homogeneity area	geoturistic objects	cultur-historical sights	turist intensity	turist density	Number of accomodation	Average expense for tourism	visit rate	amount	value
natural resources	X	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0	0,5	0	3	8,33%
homonegity area	0,5	X	1	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0	5	13,89%
geoturistic objects	0,5	0	X	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	1	4,5	12,50%
cultur-historical sights	0,5	0	0,5	X	0,5	0,5	0	0,5	1	3,5	9,72%
tourist intensity	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	X	0,5	1	1	0,5	5	13,89%
tourist density	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	X	0,5	0,5	0,5	4,5	12,50%
number of accomodation	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0	0,5	X	0,5	0,5	4	11,11%
average expense for tourism	0,5	0	0	0,5	0	0,5	0,5	X	0,5	2,5	6,94%
visit rate	1	1	0	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	X	4	11,11%

Table 5: Matrix of negative aspects of support the competitiveness of tourist destinations

indicator	inadequacy of prices for services provided	in-conceptual development of tourism	inadequate infrastructure	default of qualified professionals	"black" accommodation	language barrier	decline of demand for mountain tourism	deficit finance for development	amount	value
inadequacy of prices for services provided	X	0,5	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	3	10,71%
in-conceptual development of tourism	0,5	X	0,5	0,5	0,5	0	0	1	3	10,71%
inadequate infrastructure	1	0,5	X	1	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	5	17,86%
default of qualified professionals	0,5	0,5	0	X	0,5	0	0,5	0,5	2,5	8,93%
"black" accommodation	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	X	0	0,5	0,5	3	10,71%
language barrier	0,5	1	0,5	1	1	X	1	0,5	5,5	19,64%
decline of demand for mountain	0,5	1	0	0,5	0,5	0	X	0	2,5	8,93%
deficit finance for development	0,5	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	X	3,5	12,50%

Based on the above matrixes of the comparison of the positive and negative aspects of the region and it was created by their relative ratio (Table 6). The High Tatras region for this ratio was 1.3, indicating a satisfying competitiveness of the region as its positive aspects dominate over the negative.

Table 6: Ratio of positive and negative aspects of the competitiveness of the tourism region

Indicator	positive	negative	value	ratio
inadequacy of prices for services provided		3		
in-conceptual development of tourism		3		
inadequate infrastructure		5		
default of qualified professionals		2,5	43,75%	
"black" accommodation		3		
language barrier		5,5		
decline of demand for mountain tourism		2,5		
deficit of financial resources for development		3,5		
natural resources	3			1,3
homogeneity area	5			
geoturistic objects	4,5			
cultur-historical sights	3,5			
tourist intensity	5		56,25%	
tourist density	4,5			
number of accommodation	4			
average expenses for tourism	2,5			
visit rate	4			

It was subsequently made identification of categories of competitiveness, based on the above calculated ratio for the region tourism. Categorization competitiveness (Table 7) of the region consists of six categories and assignment to categories is based on the calculated ratio of negative and positive aspects.

Table 7: Categorization of competitiveness of tourism region

Category of competitiveness of tourism region		Ratio
I. Category	excellent	over 2,0
II. Category	very good	1,99 – 1,70
III. Category	good	1,69 – 1,40
IV. Category	satisfying	1,39 – 1,10
V. Category	sufficient	1,09 – 1,00
VI. Category	insufficient	0,99 and less

Conclusion

The High Tatras, like other tourism regions in Slovakia, does not use the level of its potential in tourism and is beginning to lose its competitiveness in the regional and the subregional level, which is reflected in the decline in overall visit rate of this region. In 2011 visit rate was decreased compared to 2007 - 69,288 visitors, what also affects the number of nights, which decreased in 2001 compared to 2007 by 276,069 numbers of nights. This situation is also reflected in the use of all accommodation capacities interact to the decrease of the financial balance of subjects operating in the field of tourism.

Based on the results of the analyses of the region High Tatras strategy of increasing of competitiveness should be oriented to following partial aims:

- maximum possible increase of economic benefits of tourism to the regional economy of the High Tatras,
- continual growth of participation in passive and active tourism.
- strengthening the position of the High Tatras region and clearly identifying this region as a holiday destination offering a competitive product,
- use the "brand" of various regional and international events organized in Slovakia or abroad to raise awareness about the High Tatras not only in Slovakia but also abroad.

Destination of the High Tatras should, in the medium horizon by their activities, enhance the performance of the driveway and domestic tourism, including the increase of the number of foreign visitors, extending their stay and increasing foreign exchange earnings by maintaining a sustainable tourism, thereby also contributing to the growth of employment and increase the overall competitiveness of region.

In strengthening the competitiveness of the destination of the High Tatras, this region should be focused in the sector of entries and domestic tourism on the following quantitative aims with medium horizon performance:

- Average annual increase of visitors is staying min. 3.5% per year.
- Average annual increase in overnight stays min. 3% per year.

The priority of support of the competitiveness of the High Tatras region should be in domestic tourism attractiveness of the whole area as a target holiday destination in the local population and increase the share of spending on domestic tourism.

The strategic aim of support of the competitiveness of the High Tatras region by strengthening its own position and clearly identification as a holiday destination offering a competitive product should be aimed not only to create a strong position in the primary but also secondary markets. This strategy of support of the strengthening of competitiveness requires that the activities of the High Tatras region pointing to the systematic improvement of attractiveness and significantly contribute to the shaping of the region, respectively its subregions.

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