The Industry of Tourism in Developing Countries: The Case of Albania

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ABSTRACT

This article briefly describes the development of the tourism sector in Albania, summarizing consumer behavior theory at a micro prospective, and providing a few general ideas on how the Albanian market can stimulate a change in European consumers’ behavior and attract a larger and constant stream of tourists. This article is elaborated from three perspectives of the environment: the economic, the socio-cultural, and the technological. Starting with the economic environment perspective, the authors explore ways to ensure the efficient development of the economy through resource management, with the purpose of creating space for future generations. Following the social-cultural environment perspective, they analyze the way social and cultural sustainability ensures and enhances people’s life skills, strengthens community identity and improves food safety practices through educational campaigns in the hospitality sector. Closing with the technological environment perspective, the authors explore ways to strengthen Albania’s online position and improve telecommunication channels between urban and rural areas.

KEYWORDS

Country, Development, Rural, Tourism, Urban

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INTRODUCTION

In Albania, the tourism industry started after the 1990s. It is the long communist regime that made this industry be regarded not as a main income sector; on the contrary, it was considered an ideological and propagandistic industry. During communism, tourists could visit Albania only if they were in a group of 20 and had a specific purpose, whereas individual tourists were not allowed. For the first time, tourists started to arrive from the western countries and the main tourism destinations in Albania were the tourist towns, such as Gjirokastra, Berat, Kruja and Shkodra. The Institute of Statistics in Albania in cooperation with the Bank of Albania published a detailed report for 2013-2017, which indicates that during this period the number of foreign tourists who started to visit Albania was approximately 21 million people, among whom most enter Albania from Europe at a rate of 92.4%, which noted an increase of 12.3%.

Various papers and articles provide different definitions about tourism. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1991) defines tourism as “a concept that can be interpreted differently depending on the context”. According to it, ‘tourism’ includes tourists, or what tourists do, or agents that provide services to them, and so on. In the same line with this definition, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (1995) defines tourism as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”.

This paper examines the last type of tourism, Outbound Tourism in Albania, and attempts to highlight the problems currently faced by Albania and what improvements can be made to establish sustainable tourism and increase the number of people who wish to spend time in Albania.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper includes as the target group only foreign tourists that had visited Albania for more than two days. This target group was chosen to understand what the foreign tourists know about Albania, Albania’s image all over the world and perspectives for the future in the field of tourism. Or the interviews of the questionnaire, the tourists had been randomly selected, with some exceptions though, as for example in the case of groups traveling as friends together, who were given only one questionnaire form, or in the case of couples, where again only one of them filled out the form. The purpose of this was to avoid gaining the same opinions and yielding the same results, to avoid repetition, a matter that was being discussed even by participants while completing the form.

A questionnaire with 20 questions was drafted and distributed randomly to hotel guests or tourists that were about to depart from the port of Saranda. The questionnaire is divided in three main sections; more concretely, the first part provides general information about the profile of the tourists, the second shows the actual situation with prices, services and accessibility to points of interest, and the third is about
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