TOURIST VALORIZATION BY APPLYING THE SCORING METHOD

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Abstract

The development of tourism in any area cannot be imagined without its planning, which must be preceded by valorization of tourism resource potential that is located in the area. Valorization is actually the second step that is done after taking inventory of tourism resources in the area. Tourist valorization is one of the most important and most complex issues in the theory and practice of tourism, which involves a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the value of tourism resources and at the same time is the most important stage in the planning of spatial development of tourism, which is exclusively important when it comes to areas that are not developed like a traditional tourism is. The subject in this paper is location i.e. a location that encompasses the region of Eastern Macedonia, for which valorization is made in order to get the real value of tourism resources and to recognize their importance as a tourist motives.

Keywords: resources, potential, evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

In the past this location was outside of the major tourist developments in the region and the state and due to many reasons such as socio-economic conditions, habits of visitors directed to the basic forms of tourism (summer and winter), the seasonal nature of tourism, poor tourism infrastructure etc. Because of this situation with tourism in the space, it was not perceived as an important economic activity that can have a significant impact on the overall development the region. But with the emergence of new trends in tourism, the tourist demands are changing tourist, and it comes to dispersion of tourist movement to new spaces that had never been active before. Developing countries currently have only a minority share of the international tourism market approximately

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30%, with this number continuing to grow (Graci 2013). For example the Macedonian region of Eastern Macedonia appears on the tourist map of the country as a new destination for alternative forms of tourism, and hence the necessity for tourist valorization of space that is factored into the annual plan by the Spatial Planning Agency at the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Macedonia, where it says: Tourist valorization is based on knowledge of the natural environment, created values and their attractive attributes that will provide the best tourism product effects. Effective tourism planning (i.e. a systemised approach that does not simply let market forces prevail) is a prerequisite for destination resources to be sustainably managed and to ensure that inclusive decision-making takes place (Farmaki 2015).

However in order to do the tourist valorization and emphasize and accept its importance for the space which is a subject of discussion in this paper, it is necessary to recognize what the term tourist valorization indicates and implies, so that according to (Jovicic 2002) tourism valorization implies qualitative and quantitative assessment of the value of tourist motives and presents the most significant stage in the planning of spatial development of tourism, because it is necessary to assess the value of tourist motivation in objective way. Hence the necessity of tourist valorization of the analyzed space.

1. METODOLOGY

The basic theoretical assumption in the paper is that for proper planning of the development of tourism in the region of Eastern Macedonia, as a poorly developed tourist area, it is necessary to make a valorization of tourism resources. The methodology used during the valorization is especially important to get as much as possible objectivity in evaluating the resources.

Given the lack of adequate methodology or original method, in the procedure of tourist valorization other methods are used from related fields, where upon geography and the application of its methods is proved as the most suitable in the process of evaluation. So, secondary data is collected or it is a secondary data that is available and is official data in the State Statistical Office, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Macedonia, the list of protected goods from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Map of religious buildings in the country, the Action plans for tourism development in the area of the municipalities located in the region and so on. While preparing the paper and the data processing several different scientific research methods were used for research in tourism: a method of analysis by which the collected data was analyzed, a comparative method for comparing data, statistical method for presenting statistical data, inventory of tourism resources that are subject to the valorization etc. While the assessment or the valorization of tourist resources the method or model of scouring is used in order to obtain objectivity in evaluation.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is necessary to determine the elements i.e. tourist resources, that are subject to the valorization, before starting the tourist valorization. Major visitor attractions stand out as the strongest pull-factors of a destination and are considered as key destination resources for development and marketing. They are often defined as flagship and/or iconic

objects/structures/projects, which draw a relatively large number of visitors to their premises and/or to their region (Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld 2016). So they depend on the need of valorization in this context is the assertion: tourist valorization is not the aim itself, but it is made to serve specific purposes (Spasojevic, Beric, and Stamenkovic 2013), which means that it should be used for better planning of tourism development in the area which is the subject of analysis in this paper. But to start with the valorization it is necessary to accomplish certain prerequisites, according to (Mojic 2012) there are two essential prerequisites before joining the tourist valorization.

The first is, of course, that there is some object, in this case, natural or anthropogenic, that can be valorized and owned tourist properties, primarily owned attractiveness. Another prerequisite for tourist valorization of the inventory of resources in the area that is valorized, which includes a detailed list of all relevant elements that make up the internal tourism potential. Thus the tourist valorization of regional criteria are applied by varying internal and external factors or indicators of evaluation. Indicators need to be capable of supplying information, while at the same time being methodologically and scientifically valid (Torres-Delgado and Saarinen 2014). Adhering to these criteria valorization is made of: transport infrastructure (external factor) and natural and anthropogenic resources (internal factors).

2.1. Assessment of transport infrastructure in the region

Understanding the interdependency between tourists' decisions on activities, areas Visited, and transport mode is vital in understanding the tourist behavior at destinations (Le-Klahn, Roosen, Gerike, and Hall 2015). Traffic connection of the region with the surrounding area takes place through several routes to east and west, and it is a very important segment of the transport infrastructure due to the fact that such traffic through links included flow of tourists in the region and further through the region is connected with the initiative tourist areas and the neighboring tourist regions. In assessing this segment of traffic infrastructure emphasis are given on the number of roads through which the region of Eastern Macedonia is connected to the surrounding area and by their number the condition of the traffic connections to the region is reflected.

The region of Eastern Macedonia and the surrounding area is connected via several routes including: M–1, M–2, M–5, M–6 and regional roads: R–107, R–526 and the road Strumica–Valandovo. According to these data the region is connected to the surrounding space through 7 roads and according the grading upper scale the traffic connection to the region of Eastern Macedonia with surrounding space is evaluated and receives 3 points.

The diversity of transport infrastructure is manifested through a number of different types of traffic that are present in the region, and it also represents an important segment of the transport infrastructure when it comes to tourism, because through most types of traffic it is allowed more freedom and choice in tourist movement. The diversity of transport infrastructure is weakness to the region, i.e. from all traffic types in the region the only roads and rail traffic are present. The most present is road transport, while rail transport is represented by a very small length with only one railway line Veles–Stip–Kocani that has only one track, so poorly developed but there is still space. Thus it can be concluded that in the region there are only two types of traffic and according to the scor scale diversity of transport infrastructure in the region is assessed 2 points.

The density of the local road network inside the region may be one of the key road segments when it comes to tourism movement, because it shows and allows connectivity between settlements in the region and more importantly the relationship with tourist sites and the opportunity to provide them with seamless access through tourist movement in that area. The density of the road network is represented by the length of roads in kilometers expressed in terms of area and 100 km^2 for the same territory of Republic of Macedonia is 48.7 $km/100$ km^2. The region which is assessed for road infrastructure covers an area of 6884.7 km^2 and in that space there are roads with a total length of 2501 km, which means that the density of the road network in the region is 36.5 $km/100$ km^2. This means that the region has a lower density than the average road network of the Republic of Macedonia and according to the previous scale it is assessed with 3 points.

The quality of transport infrastructure inside the region is represented by a summary of the state of the roads. The quality infrastructure enables better quality of tourist movement in the region and thus represents a significant segment of the transport infrastructure that is necessary to be adequately valorized. The total road network in the region is 2501 km, there are roads with different quality, such as: asphalt roads, cube highways, macadam roads and highways not standard quality. According to this the quality of transport infrastructure will depend on the participation of asphalt roads in the total road network in the region. The total length of the road network of is 2501 km out of which asphalt roads are 790 km, cube roads are only 4 km, macadam are 90 km, earth roads are the most 1077 km, and not standard roads are 540 km. In order to determine the quality of the infrastructure it is necessary to take the share of asphalt roads in the total road network, so according to this benchmark asphalt roads in the region participate length 790 km, i.e. in percentage share of asphalt roads in the region is 31.6%. According to the grading scale for assessing the quality of transport infrastructure it is evaluated with 3 points.

Table 1. Assessment of transport infrastructure in the region

Type of Grading scale	Grading (points)
Grading for assessment of regional traffic connection with the surrounding area	3
Grading for assessment of diversity of transport infrastructure in the region	2
Grading for assessment of the density of the road network in the region	3
Grading for assessment of the quality of the road network in the region	3
Grading for assessment of transport infrastructure in the region	3

Once created the grading assessment of individual segments, it is necessary to evaluate the traffic infrastructure understood as a set of previously rated segments (elements). For this purpose we use a scale which represented the total number of points obtained by each infrastructure segment separately. Certain segments of the transport infrastructure (*traffic connection with surrounding region of space, variety of transport infrastructure, the density of road network and the quality of roads*) have a total of 11 points, which means that transport infrastructure according to grading scale evaluation of it are evaluated by 3 points.

2.2. Assessment of natural resource potential of the region

To evaluate the natural resource potential of the region, it is necessary to evaluate the individual segments that make up the overall natural resource potential, such as:

characteristics of mountains, climate features or characteristics of the climate in the region, hydrographic features and hydrographic objects in space and eventually bio-geographic features of the region.

Mountains in the region are a group of old mountains, which unlike the young chain, are characterized by lower attractiveness of mountain peaks and mountain sides and lower altitude, but according to geographical and morphological characteristics the region is characterized by great diversity, mountains cut through the valleys, mountain sides, hogs, suitable for hiking and ski slopes, they are providing stunning panoramas and have a good landscape value.

Taking into consideration that one of the basic features of the mountains is their altitude, which is also one of the most important features of the mountains when it comes to their travel activity, attractiveness and evaluation, due to the scores assessment of the mountains, exactly this feature will be taken into account, so to that for that goal will be taken into account the number of mountains with an altitude above 1000 m, relative to the total number of mountains in the region of Eastern Macedonia.

In the analyzed region there are a total of twelve (12) mountains by height that are grouped into three main groups (low 500–1000 m.a.s.l., Medium 1000–2000 meters above sea level and high above 2000 m.a.s.l.). Of these only one in the group of high mountains (Osogovo 2252 m), three mountains are in the group of low mountains (Smredzh, Venec, and Bogoslovec), while the remaining eight mountains are in the group of medium high mountains. This means that the area has a total of 9 mountains with heights greater than 1000 m. So according to the represented grading scale this segment of the natural resource potential is assessed with 4 points.

Climatic features that characterize the region are particularly important natural touristic resource because all of them in a given situation initiate tourism movement, determine the form of tourism and can largely be conditioned or restricted by the development of tourism in the area. Considering that the analyzed region is characterized by a certain geographic heterogeneity and in the context of tourism development and tourism planning not only retains the form of tourism and only one season (*summer or winter*), but it is considered as an area where tourist movement should be present throughout the whole year and it should be expressed through various forms of tourism, and hence the view that the assessment of climatic characteristics of the region should take into account climate types in the region, their distribution and diversity. It means in order to be practiced and developed many forms of tourism in the region it is necessary to be present different types of climate.

On the territory of the Republic of Macedonia there are three types basic climate as follows: altered Mediterranean, moderate continental and mountain climate type. From these climate types in the territory of Eastern Macedonia region present all three climatic types, therefore on the grading scale climatic features of the region are assessed with 5 points.

Hydrographic objects are one of the main or primary resource potentials for certain forms of tourism such as: summer — swimming tourism, spa tourism, fishing tourism, nautical tourism and other forms of water-related tourism as a tourism resource. That is the reason why when it comes to tourist valorization of a particular place, especially its natural resource potential; the assessments of hydrographic objects in that area have a very important role. Out of all types of hydrographic objects found in the region, the most striking are the artificial lakes that despite all the other economic functions they

have, at the same time they are also very significant and important natural tourist resources. On the territory of the Republic of Macedonia there are a total of 111 man-made lakes, out of which 9 are situated in the analyzed area and according to this a good base for the grading assessment is the share of man-made lakes in the region in terms of total number of artificial lakes throughout the state. The region of Eastern Macedonia is not rich with hydrographic objects, i.e. the artificial lakes placed inside this area represents only 8.1% of the total number of man-made lakes in the state, and therefore the region hydrographic objects are evaluated by only 1 point.

The diversity and abundance of flora and fauna is presented through various types and forms of protection of the area and it is an important segment of the natural tourist resource potentials. On the territory of the Republic of Macedonia certain areas are under varying degrees of protection and they can be in the form of (national parks as the highest level of protection, and further follow protected areas, strict nature reserves, scientific research, nature reserves, areas with special natural features, distinctive landscaping, special nature reserves, areas with different plant and animal species and natural monuments). It is in the function of tourism if a region has more areas that have a certain degree of protection, due to the fact that the area is enriched with diverse flora and fauna, and thus is a more attractive to tourists. According to this, while the assessment of flora and fauna, i.e. while the assessment of bio-geographic characteristics of the region East Macedonia protected areas in the region and their percentage share in the total number of protected areas in the Republic of Macedonia is taken into consideration. On the whole territory of the state there are 72 areas that are protected, while in the area of the region of Eastern Macedonia there are 12 protected areas (spaces), out of which 11 at the degree of protection as a "monument nature", and one area with a degree of protection as "individual plant and animal species outside the nature reserve". According to these data, protected areas in the region are accounted for 16.66% of the total number of protected areas in the state, which means that according to the grading scale for assessment of bio-geographic features the region is assessed with 2 points.

Table 2. Assessment of natural resources potential in the region

Type of Grading scale	Grading (points)
Grading of assessment of the features of the mountains in the region	4
Grading of assessment of climate characteristics of the region	5
Grading of assessment of hydrographic characteristics in the region	1
Grading of assessment of biogeography characteristics of the region	2
Grading of assessment of natural resources potential in the region	3

In order to assess and thus to evaluate the natural tourism potential of the region of Eastern Macedonia, it is necessary to evaluate the sum of its individual segments previously evaluated. Therefore in the grading scale of assessment of natural resource tourism potential are taken into account of the total number of weights (points) from each segment separately. Certain segments of the natural resource potential (mountains, climate features, hydrographic features and bio-geographic variety) have a total of 12 points, which means that the natural resource potential of the region, according to the grading scale of assessment of it are evaluated with 3 points.

2.3. Assessment of anthropogenic resource potential of the region

Accommodation alone is not a factor in tourism development, yet it is one of the most important anthropogenic values that are created primarily for tourism. From the condition of accommodation depends the so-called stationary tourism which opens the possibility to extend the stay of tourists in the region which in turn positively affects the course of tourism development. As a basic parameter in assessing the condition of accommodation is taken the number of beds available and their share in the total number of beds available to the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Although accommodation of various types and categories are present in almost all major towns in the analyzed region, however they have a relatively small number of beds, or in all accommodation facilities in the region there is a total of 2951 beds, and throughout the state accommodation have a total of 45,120 beds, which means that beds in Eastern Macedonia region are accounted for 6.54% of the total number of beds in the state, according to state grading scale accommodation is assessed with 2 points.

Cultural and historical monuments in the region are quite numerous, found in almost every settlement, but all the cultural and historical monuments and memorial features that have the same historical, cultural and tourist importance. The extent of their meaning is determined by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, so the most important cultural and historical monuments are listed in the protected goods, the Office for Protection of Cultural Heritage. So in their assessment of the analyzed region is taken into account a number of cultural and historical monuments of the list of protected goods that are found in the region and their percentage share in the total number of such monuments in the Republic of Macedonia. On the territory of Eastern Macedonia there are a total of 139 cultural and historical monuments registered in the status of "protected goods", in relation to the total number of such cultural and historical monuments in the Republic of Macedonia which stands at 801 i.e. 17,35%. Under this share in the total number and the grading scale, cultural and historical monuments in the region are assessed with 4 points.

Archaeological objects as an important tourism resources are quite numerous in the area of the region, since they are numerous on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia, but as with the previous resources, all archaeological sites are characterized by the same meaning and importance. In assessing the archaeological tourism resource potential the number of sites and their percentage share in the total number of such archaeological sites in the republic of Macedonia will be evaluated. In the analyzed area, there are numerous archaeological sites out of which 26 are registered as "Protected goods" and are spatially arranged in 8 municipalities, i.e. in 12 settlements. The Republic of Macedonia has registered a total of 136 archaeological sites as "protected goods" so according to the previous data we conclude that 19.11% of them are located in the region of Eastern Macedonia, it means that archaeological sites according to the grading scale for assessment are assessed with 4 points.

Religious objects are characterized by some of the attractive attributes (religious, architectural, artistic, historical...), they are important tourist resources and such facilities are registered to the list of protected goods, so they are subject to this assessment, i.e. will their number and percentage of the total number of religious buildings — "protected goods" located on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia be analyzed. On the territory of Eastern Macedonia in 14 municipalities 37 religious buildings which have

the status of "protected goods" are registered in relation to the total number (256) of religious sites in the country registered with the same status which express in percents is 14.45%. According to the processed data, the share of religious buildings and according to the grading scale of evaluation, religious facilities in the region are assessed with 3 points.

Table 3. Assessment of anthropogenic resource potential in the region

Type of Grading scale	Grading (points)
Grading of assessment of accommodation in the region	2
Grading of assessment of cultural-historical monument in the region	4
Grading of assessment of archaeological locale monuments	4
Grading of assessment of religious objects in the region	3
Grading of assessment of anthropogenic resource potential in the region	4

Assessment of anthropogenic resource potentials came with a set of weights (points) of individual parts that are evaluated separately. Therefore in the grading scale of evaluation of anthropogenic tourist resource potential is taken into account the total number of weights derived from each segment separately. Certain segments of anthropogenic resource potential (accommodation, cultural and historical monuments, archaeological sites and religious buildings) have a total of 13 points, it means that anthropogenic resource potential of the region by the grading scale evaluation of it are evaluated with 4 points.

At the end of the assessment or the valorization of the elements that are part of this valorization we get the sum of all weights obtained (points) of each segment that was valorized:

$$X = A + B + C, \text{ or } X = 3 + 3 + 4, X = 10,$$

where:
X - evaluating cumulative (grade)
A - transport infrastructure
B - natural resources
C - anthropogenic resources

CONCLUSION

The analyzed area of the Eastern Macedonia is not characterized by higher tourist development so far, but following the new trends in tourism necessarily emerges a need for greater activation of the tourist area. Therefore we should use the data or the results obtained from the tourist valorization of space that was conducted in this paper. According to the results obtained of segments that are subject to assessment, it can be seen that those elements or those tourist resources are evaluated with fewer weights and it is concluded that intervention is necessary to improve the situation with them, if possible or planning and dimensioning of tourism development should be adapted according to them. For example, accommodation is assessed with only two weights, which indicates on their bad or poor condition and we should intervene to improve the number and quality of accommodation. Similar example is the assessment of hydrographic objects that are evaluated by only 1 weight, but it is unlikely that we can intervene there so this evaluation is necessary to be taken into account when tourism planning, i.e. forms of tourism that are directly related to water activities cannot be planned. The second contribution made by tourism valorization of the region is reflected

in its final stage which is a classification of tourism resources and the space in different hierarchically ordered categories or ranking of tourist motivations and space based on their overall value. According to the aim of valorization spaces with international, national, regional and local tourist importance can be separated and ranked, the analyzed region is rated with 10 weights out of 15, putting it in the category of spaces that are on the border between regional and national tourist importance.

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