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Sustainable Destination Management Planning: The Case of Slovenia

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Abstract. Research in the field of sustainable tourism has been on the rise in recent years. Tourism as one of the largest and fastest growing industrial sectors caused serious environmental damage in the past in the form of mass tourism. However, for effective sustainable development, the concept of sustainable tourism needs to be carefully researched, examined, and defined, as the inaccuracy of the concept prevents effective implementation in practice. By reviewing and analysing domestic and foreign relevant literature, we offered a new perspective for understanding the challenges and open issues related to sustainable destination management, which is crucial for development of sustainable tourism. At the same time, we presented some gaps in the field of sustainable tourism planning in Slovenia that can prevent development of Slovenia as a sustainable destination.

Keywords: sustainable development, destination management, tourism planning in Slovenia, sustainable management, tourism policy

1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the most complex activities in today's modern society, both in developed countries and in transition countries. It is an important exporting product and source of employment (Dauti, 2014), which enables faster economic growth (Costache, 2012). The claims of Bošković, Vujičić and Ristić (2019), which show that tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in recent decades at the global level is supported by UNWTO data (UNWTO, 2018a in Bošković, Vujičić and Ristić 2019) that shows tourism generates 10% of GDP, that every tenth employed person is employed in tourism and that tourism generates USD 1,400 billion a year, representing 7% of world exports of goods and services, a total of 30% of sector.
We are also witnessing excellent tourism statistics in the EU, where tourism represents one of the largest economic sectors with 9% of employees and 9% participation in consumption (Santander, 2019). According to data collected by Albuquerque, Martins and Costa (2009), the tourism sector in Europe generates 440 million international revenues directly and indirectly, representing about 10% of total European GDP. It means that the sector's contribution to GDP is larger than the influence of the European mining sector, chemical sector, higher education, and automotive manufacturing and represents one of the leading employers in the region (Santander, 2019).
It is therefore not surprising that authors such as Adrian (2017), Cvikel and Alić (2009), Zurub, Ionescu and Constantin (2015) highlight the importance of the tourism industry and expect further development

for next decades because of increased leisure and social development. However, it should be noted that the tourism industry, as one of the fastest growing industries (Uğur and Akbıyık, 2020) and one of the world's largest employers (Chang, McAleer and Ramos, 2020), encountered a new pandemic in 2020, the Covid- 19, which has caused serious damage to tourism industry and tourism-related sectors (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has caused that traditional tourist countries to face a loss of up to 90% of their tourist flows (Folinas and Metaxas, 2020). However, according to the World Economic Forum, tourism will recover within nine months after the end of the pandemic (Folinas and Metaxas, 2020).

Therefore, despite the current pandemic and the "cessation" of tourist flows, it is necessary to be aware of the consequences of rapid tourism development, which are already evident in many parts of the world, where uncontrolled tourism development has threatened biodiversity, ecosystems, natural resources, and non-renewable cultural heritage areas (Nižić, Ivanović and Drpić, 2010). To prevent the negative effects caused by tourism, the concept of sustainable development is highlighted (Cucculelli and Goffi, 2016) which is now placed at the center of national, regional, and local policies to reap the economic benefits of tourism in a way that will ensure cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biodiversity, and life support systems (Tudorache, et al., 2017). After all, only successful and efficient destination management, carefully planned, can achieve organizational synergy, enable the development of innovative tourism products, facilitate sustainable tourism development. Because only poorly planned tourism or tourism developed to excess can destroy those special features, which are thus centrally linked to sustainable development (O'Rourke and Koščak, 2020).

According to Connell, Page, and Bentley (2009), a balanced and well-planned approach to tourism development is needed to effectively implement sustainable policies in practice, as the inaccuracy of the concept of sustainability makes it difficult to apply in practice (Law et al. 2016). This is valid also for Slovenia. Slovenia wants to develop tourism that will follow sustainable principles, but despite the diverse and rich offer, there are many shortcomings, weaknesses and various obstacles in the planning and development of sustainable tourist products (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017). Same difficulties appear in some other small countries that have inefficient destination management, where tourism is not recognized as a driving industry, and are not aware of the importance of tourism (Nizić and Drpić, 2013).

To solve current issues and launch successful sustainable development, it is first necessary to precisely define and study the concept of sustainability (Terzić and Simeunović Bajić, 2018). Furthermore, it is necessary to close the gaps in the field of sustainable tourism planning, which appear especially in small countries such as Slovenia (Koščak, Colarič-Jakše and Veljković, 2014). Therefore, in the current study we present a review of existing literature on the sustainable development of tourist destinations with focus on Slovenia. In this way, we want to show and highlight gaps in the literature, contribute to creating a composite picture of the state of Slovenian tourism and offer recommendations for developing effective sustainable destination management in small countries.

The introduction is followed by World and European tourism. Slovenian tourism, Tourism planning, Methodology, Results, Thematic analysis, Discussion and Conclusion.

2 World and European tourism

In the literature on tourism research, the economic benefits of tourism in regions or countries are a recurring theme (Jayawardena, et al., 2008), because the number of people traveling increases and travel has become a more important means of connecting people around the world (Nižić, Ivanović and Drpić , 2010). There are also many contributions that analyze the contribution of tourism to the country's GDP (Valek and WU, 2013), as the tourism industry is an important element of economic growth, both in developed and developing countries, which allows GDP growth and contributes to increasing exports. foreign investment, and creates jobs (Patrichi, 2011). For this reason, we can say that tourism as an economic activity is an emerging economic and social phenomenon of the late 20th century and is one of the world's largest economic activities (Planinc, Bojnec and Planinc, 2013), which has developed into

one of the most important industrial sectors in the world (Fortuny, et al., 2008). Because tourism is growing faster than world gross domestic product, according to Iliopoul-Georgudaki, et al. (2016) and Del Mar Alonso- Almeidova and Celemin- Pedrochove (2016) it became the main source of income for many countries.

For this reason, authors such as Fortuny, et al. (2008), Goffi, Cucculelli and Masiero (2019) and Bošković, Vujičić and Ristićeva (2019) point out that tourism, along with the fuel and chemicals industry, ranks among the top three industries, which can be seen from the UNWTO data (2019). These data show that in 2018, international tourism revenues increased by 5% and reached USD 1.4 trillion, while tourism revenues generated by tourism increased to USD 1.7 trillion. Also, in Europe, tourism represents one of the largest economic sectors with 9% of employees and 9% share of consumption (Santander, 2019).

However, the increased global demand for tourism has led to mass tourism in many destinations, where uncontrolled growth leads to the depletion of natural, social, and cultural resources (Jayawardena, et al., 2008). After all, advertising and consumerism still predominate in the world, where tourism and the tourist experience are the main components (Costache, 2012). Despite the negative impacts of tourism on resources, tourism is still a growing industry (Coban and Yildiz, 2019), which remains a central platform in the development strategies of many countries (Gal, 2018). Due to the current situation related to the Covid-19 pandemic, these development strategies are under additional pressure as the tourism industry faces declining international tourism flows and tourism export earnings (Folinas and Metaxas, 2020).

3 Slovenian tourism

Slovenia is a European country located at the crossroads of the Alpine, Mediterranean, Pannonian, and Dinaric worlds (GOV, 2020), with a long history of tourism development, as the first tourist resorts in the Slovenian ethnic territory appeared in the 19th century (Gosar and Cigale, 2015). Today, tourism is one of the most promising sectors in the Slovenian economy (Konečnik, 2006), which according to the Slovenian Tourist Board (2019) in 2018, when it was a record year for Slovenian tourism, generated 15.6 million overnight stays, which is 10% more than in 2017, and almost six million arrivals, an 8% increase over the previous year. With the statistics shown above, the country has already achieved the growth goals set in the Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism 2017-2021, both in terms of arrivals and overnight stays. The only goals that have not yet been achieved are to increase inflows from travel exports to EUR 4 billion and the extension of the average length of stay to 3.4 days (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019).

Despite its long history and enviable tourism indicators in recent years, tourism in Slovenia is facing many challenges, including the rate of growth of tourism (Gosar and Cigale, 2015). Nevertheless, Slovenia has set clear goals, such as:

- »Co-creation of tourism as a modern, civilizational need of human life«.
- »Promoting and co-creating the development of tourism as part of the quality of life with basic ecological, cultural, sports, entertainment and other motives and experiences«.
- »Dynamic development of tourism, which is an exceptional opportunity for economic, social, cultural and civilizational progress of places, provinces and country«.
- »Care for the protection and preservation of the environment and rational spatial planning - the basis of quality sustainable and ecological tourism development«.
- »General and professional awareness and education of the population, especially young people, to strengthen tourism thinking and the realization that tourism is a development opportunity and a way of life«.
- »Contribution to the efforts of Slovenia to make optimal use of its comparative advantages in tourism«.
- »Promotion of scientific research activities in and for tourism; excellence, innovation and creativity in tourism; development of those economic, service, social and other activities that

significantly affect the tourist offer; development of tourism in local communities - municipalities; quality, entrepreneurship and management in tourism, affiliation in tourism and the tourist association«. (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2020)
It is therefore not surprising that, like many researchers and policy makers worldwide (Costa, Panyik and Buhalis, 2014; Notarstefano, 2008, OECD, 2020 and UNWTO, 2019), who advocate a well-planned approach to tourism development also the Ministry of economic development and technology (2020) point out that only with clearly set guidelines, goals, and compliance it will provide local, authentic, unique, experiential, boutique, sustainably green experience of premium quality.

4 Tourism planning

Tourism is an interaction between stakeholders, as it affects the environment in which it takes place. So, tourism cannot be separated from the place or destination (Coban and Yildiz, 2019), which in recent years have become aware of countries, cities, and regions (Petek, Lapajne and Milinković, 2011). Destination areas, as a tourist area (Butowski, 2019), can be equated with continents, countries, cities, regions, or even smaller geographical units (Petek, Lapajne and Milinković, 2011). However, it should be borne in mind that the destination represents a set of different organizations and individuals (Krce Miočič, Razovič and Klarin, 2016) that provide a holistic experience that is subjectively interpreted according to the tourist's travel route, cultural background, purpose of visit and experience (Tan, Liu and Hu, 2013). In this way, we get a complex tourist product offered by a tourist region that does not necessarily follow administrative boundaries (O'Rourke and Koščak, 2020). In short, destination is a set of products, services, and activities together with experiences tourists perceive in a specific geographical area (Belošević et al., 2018; Pencarelli, 2012).
As we have already noted, on the one hand, tourism contributes positively to the development of cities and regions, and on the other hand, it can cause negative impacts (Eckert and Pechlaner, 2019), especially for natural environment. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is promoted as a framework for improving the environmental, socio-cultural, and economic development of tourist destinations, as the continuous growth of tourism leads to environmental damage causing distrust in the community (Kebete and Wondirad, 2019). For the development of a tourist destination in a sustainable way, it is necessary to establish:

- collaborative planning, which depends on several internal factors, including appropriate representation of interests, shared vision, achievement of goals, good working relationships, and open communication between members (O'Rourke and Koščak, 2020).
- partnerships or networks between the private sector (hotels, resorts, travel agencies, tour operators, etc.), the public sector, governmental organizations, and informal groups of citizens, as all stakeholder strategies need to be implemented to achieve sustainable development in a tourist destination (Del Mar Alonso-Almeida and Celemín-Pedrocheva, 2016, Jurinčič, 2009).

At the same time, in addition to what we said above, it is important for the effective sustainable development of a tourist destination that there is a clear link between sustainable destination development and visitor management (Kebete and Wondirad, 2019). The commitment to environmental protection makes economic sense and that the government favors programs, policies, and strategies to promote the development of sustainable tourism (Del Mar Alonso-Almeida and Celemín-Pedroche, 2016).
As the planning of sustainable tourism development is an effort to shape the future (O'Rourke and Koščak, 2020), there is already a tendency for change. As today in most destinations the central development problem is intensive tourism development. The consequences of which are in adverse impacts on the environment, such as high concentration of population and tourists, lack of drinking water, environmental degradation, loss of cultural identity, hit brought about by rapid development with excessive tourist infrastructure compared to the current capacity of the area (Jurinčič, 2009).
As population growth, economic development and climate change will exert increased overall pressure on major natural resources (Tudorache et al., 2017). The main challenge for the tourism sector will be

to take sustainability and recognize that long-term competitiveness depends on sustainability (EUR Lex, 2007). Consequently, sustainable resource management already occupies a central place on the agenda of central and local government bodies (Tudorache et al., 2017). Which is already reflected in several policy-related initiatives launched by various bodies and authorities to create strategic policies of initiatives and actions that benefit the sustainable development of tourism (CPMR, 2008), because only in this way will it be possible to ensure stable progress in the tourism industry (Costache, 2012). Therefore, in countries such as Slovenia, where there is an obvious lack of long-term tourism development policy and efefctive management system at operational level, and tourism is not recognized as a driving force of economic growth, there are many shortcomings, weaknesses, and obstacles in development of new and sustainable tourist products (Koščak, Colarič Jakše and Veljković, 2014).

5 Methodology

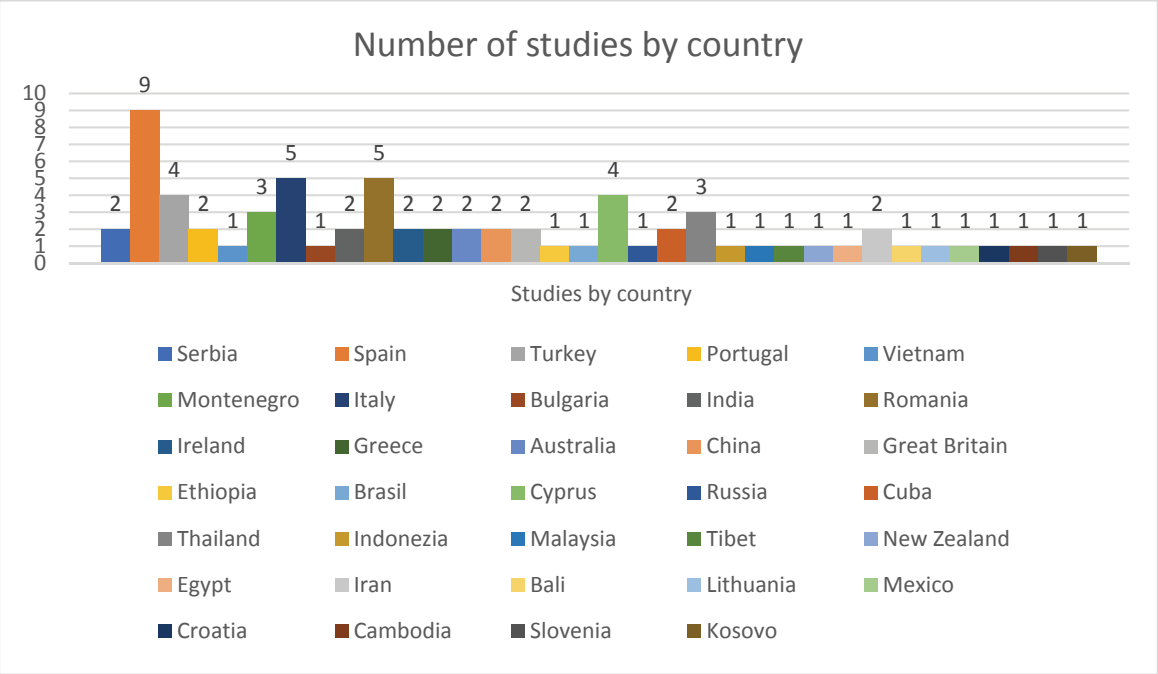
In this study a systematic review of the literature was used as a research method. Such approach allows a systematic, transparent means for collecting, synthesizing, and evaluating the findings of studies on a particular topic (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey, 2011). The main purpose of the study is to create a composite image of tourist destinations with existing models of sustainable development and to form a composite image of the state of Slovenian tourism to make recommendations for the effective development of sustainable tourism in Slovenia and other small countries. For this reason, we have collected current articles in the field of sustainability and tourist destinations.
We began our literature review with an initial search in three databases, Elsevier, Scopus, and the Web of Science, using two key words: »sustainable destination management« and »sustainable tourist destination«. The sample included articles published in scientific journals from 2005, when the most frequently used definition of sustainable tourism was issued by the World Tourism Organization, to 2020. Monographs, chapters in scientific monographs and conference papers were excluded from the search, as well as anything that did not fall into the category of a scientific article. Based on keywords, 1,663 research papers were found in Scopus, 21,258 research papers in Elsevier, and 1281 in the Web of Science. In total, a total of 24,202 research papers were found in the three bibliographic databases.
In the first phase or in the first round of assessing the adequacy of the obtained original sample, when a total of 24,202 research papers were found, we focused on the title and keywords, where we had to identify terms such as »model«, »sustainability« and »destination« according to the inclusion criteria. In accordance with the inclusion criteria, only those papers written in English were accepted. In addition to all the above criteria, we established two additional criteria that required the authors to address sustainability at destination in the article and to address the macro level.
After reviewing the original sample, the original collection of articles, we performed the process of identifying and reviewing the articles to include the relevant articles in the next phase of the analysis. The initial collection of articles, after reviewing the original sample, contained 216 papers, of which 84 were identified in Elsevier, 64 in Scopus, and 68 in Web of Science. Bibliographic records (name (s) of the author were collected for each article). (s), year of publication, title, reference to DOI (journal name, scope and number, pages).
Based on the initial collection of articles, we focused on abstracts in the second round of conformity assessment. summaries of articles to exclude articles whose content did not meet the basic criteria described above. After reviewing the abstracts, we additionally eliminated 120 articles that did not meet the basic criteria, which means that we retained a total of 96 papers for detailed analysis. Out of a total of 96 contributions, 44 were in Elsevier, 27 in Scopus, and 25 in the Web of Science.

6 Results

A systematic search of literature by keywords generated 24,202 hits, of which 216 articles were identified as relevant to the topic Sustainable Destination Management Planning: The case of Slovenia

by initial title and keywords. Subsequently, after further filtering by relevance, we created a final sample of 96 articles, which were examined in detail.
From a quantitative point of view, a search of the literature revealed that in 20 papers, there were no country-specific (destination) studies. In ten studies, an example of several national studies was found, of which three national studies for the Mediterranean (3x) and the Alps (3x) were in the first place with three studies each, and several national studies were in second place with two studies. for Europe and with one study each, the third national study for the Alps-Dinarides (1x) and for the Himalayas-Kashmir (1x) was in third place. The other 66 studies dealt with a specific country (destination), most of which were studies, 46 conducted on the example of European countries (destinations).

Graph 1 Number of studies by country



As can be seen from Graph 1, the most frequently studied country was Spain, for which nine articles were written, followed by Italy and Romania with five articles each and Turkey with four articles. Among all studies, only 7 studies, representing 13.7%, were conducted in the case of small countries, such as Slovenia, which are centrally managed and where tourism is not yet fully recognized as a driver of economic growth.

7 Thematic analysis

As the implementation of sustainable development and sustainable tourism in destinations poses many challenges (Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik, 2012). We are not surprised that the collected contributions, which examined the country (i.e., destination), show that in more than 80% of all cases, the authors dealt with countries or large geographical areas (Cucculelli and Goffi, 2016). In these destinations, either tourism is the predominant activity in the region (Barutia, Echebarria, 2015, González-Morales, et al., 2016, Bratucu et. Al., 2017), or tourism is deeply rooted in the economic structure that represents an important source of income, creates employment, and serves as the backbone of the region (García-Madurga, et al., 2019), either it is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world (Fortuny, et al., 2008), or it is one of the largest European tourist destinations (Rodríguez, Parra-López and Yanes-Estévez, 2008). All these destinations have in common that in the studied

destinations tourism is recognized as one of the most important and fastest growing economic sectors or as one of the leading forces of economic growth (Connell, Page and Bentley, 2009; Farinha et al., 2019; Kişi, 2019). These destinations also have established effective tourism management and orderly destination management (Conaghan, Hanrahan, and Mcloughlin, 2015; Cannas, 2019; Dredge, and Jamal, 2013).

The trend shown above confirms our assumptions that sustainable tourism planning is carried out in large destinations representing a country or region, where tourism is recognized as one of the drivers of economic growth, where effective destination management is established and where effective tourism management is established. This means that it is necessary to close the gaps in the field of sustainable tourism planning, which appear especially in small countries such as Slovenia.

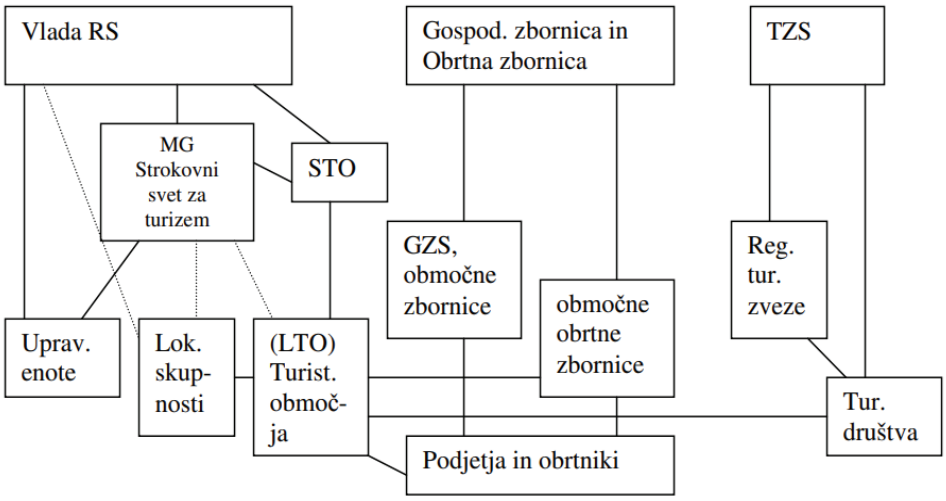
Despite the long history of tourism and its unequivocal importance for Slovenia, tourism has received a special planning focus only since 1991, when Slovenia declared independence (Costa et al., 2014). The fruit of strategic development documents is the current organization of Slovenian tourism, which does not yet ensure a satisfactory integration of activities and the realization of the interests of the public sector, tourism industry and civil society organizations (Uran et al., 2006).

Slovenian tourism centrally organized and connected in a vertical direction. The highest level is the state level, where the public interest in a broader sense is represented by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, and directly by the Ministry of the Economy and the Tourism Directorate, whose scope of work includes activities aimed at developing measures to accelerate sustainable development and tourism promotion. The next important organization is the Slovenian Tourist Board, which is responsible for the implementation of the umbrella promotion and marketing of Slovenian tourism at home and abroad. At the national level, the Tourist Association of Slovenia also operates, a voluntary non-profit organization uniting 506 tourist associations and 26 regional and municipal tourist associations, whose main task is to connect tourist-friendly people in associations to ensure or establish a tourist-friendly environment. And the National Tourist Association, which brings together individuals, tourist companies, tourist organizations and other activities related to tourism, the Association for Hospitality and Tourism at the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia and the Section for Hospitality and Tourism at the Chamber of Crafts of Slovenia, representing and uniting the interests of smaller businesses, and several stakeholders and communities (Uran et al., 2006). The biggest problem of tourism at the national level is that even though tourism management and the development of effective tourism policies are very important, Slovenia, unlike most successful tourist countries, still does not have a separate Ministry of Tourism to ensure the adoption of effective, long-term and transparent policy decisions.

The next level is the regional level, where only regional tourist associations can be found. At the regional level, the only association that operates is the Julian Alps Community, which connects four tourist centers in the Julian Alps, namely Bled, Bohinj, Kranjska Gora and Bovec, or more precisely the Upper Soča (Uran et al., 2006). At this level, the integration of tourism entities is poorly developed because Slovenia still does not have political regions, so the whole of Slovenia is one administrative area (Costa et al., 2014).

The last level vertically is the local level, where over 500 tourist associations and 26 regional and municipal tourist associations are registered, which at the local level take care of informing tourists in the place, arranging and protecting the environment and organizing events and raising awareness. In addition to the mentioned associations and unions, there are also local tourist organizations whose primary task is to promote the development of tourism at the local level and joint marketing of the existing tourist offer and cooperation in creating a new tourist offer in a tourist destination (Uran et al., 2006).

Figure 1: Organizational scheme of Slovenian tourism



Adapted from Uran et al. (2006)

In the above-mentioned organization of Slovenian tourism, which proved to be ineffective in practice, it is necessary to modernize the tourism management system to reflect the needs of national product development and be able to increase Slovenian tourism competitiveness with greater emphasis on innovation and stakeholder networking (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017). The tourism management system needs to be modernized in such a way that political regions are formed in Slovenia so that Slovenia will no longer be a single administrative area, as a systematic review of the literature has shown that countries such as Spain, Italy, Romania, Turkey and Cyprus , where most studies took place, tourism is organized at three levels: at the national, regional and local levels, where all these levels also function in practice (AALEP, 2015a, AALEP, 2015b, AALEP, 2015c, European Committee of the Regions, 2021a, European Committee of the Regions, 2021b).

Table 1: Organization of tourism in Spain, Italy, Romania, Turkey, and Cyprus

Country	National level	Regional level	Local level
Spain	The Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism (State Secretariat for Tourism)	17 autonomous Regions + 2 autonomous cities	Local Entities
Italy	Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	20 regions	Provinces and municipalities
Romania	National Authority for Tourism	Territorial level - 13 representatives	Local level administrative bodies
Turkey	The Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Provincial government- 81 provinces	Municipal government
Cyprus	Cyprus Tourism Organisation	Province Level- 10 Regional Offices and 6 inspector's offices	Local authorities

Adapted from AALEP (2015a), AALEP (2015b), AALEP (2015c), European Committee of the Regions (2021a), European Committee of the Regions (2021b), European Committee of the Regions (2021c), Deputy Ministry of Tourism (2021), Espana (2021).

In addition to the issues presented above, many authors and policy planners (Koščak, Colarič Jakše and Veljković, 2014 and the Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017) note that other shortcomings, weaknesses and various obstacles in the planning and development of tourism products appear in Slovenian tourism, which are the result of a deficiency:

- productive tourism development policies
  - »In the last 25 years, tourism has not been sufficiently recognized as a driving force of economic growth in the country. Due to the lack of opportunities to create a business environment and active policies in the field of tourism, which would enable a stronger impact of the potential offered by tourism, Slovenia was not as recognizable as it could be - neither as an interesting global tourist destination nor as an investment market in tourism« (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017, 27).
- untapped good side of the potential of existing tourism activities
  - »The development of tourism so far has been mainly based on a slightly upgraded structure of tourism, but due to the low-risk privatization model, the Slovenian tourist offer has not yet been transformed into a globally competitive and diverse tourism industry« (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017, 27).
- the need for significant investment in the new tourist offers
  - »Slovenia lacks investments in important degenerate areas (reconstructed offers and repositioning) as well as sustainable investments in new, high-quality accommodation (hotels and resorts), sights (visitor centers, interpretation centers, museums, congress centers, theme and amusement parks) and tourist infrastructure (thematic routes for an authentic experience of exemplary nature, cycling routes, sports infrastructure, ski resorts, etc.)« (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017, 27).
- inefficiencies of the tourism management system.
  - »To strive for the rationalization of tourism development, marketing, promotion and commercialization, Slovenia needs to build a new efficient management system in the field of tourism, which will harmonize and achieve synergistic effects of diverse horizontal and vertical activities in building a quality globally competitive tourism chain« (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017, 27).

8 Discussion

In a systematic review of the literature, we focused on research that addresses sustainability at destination and addresses the macro level. We first formed a composite picture of tourist destinations with existing models of sustainable development, and then we formed a composite picture of the state of organization of Slovenian tourism to make recommendations for the development of effective development of sustainable tourism in Slovenia and other small countries.

The collected bibliographic units show that a systematic approach to destination planning, compatible with the environment, so that the industry can maintain its competitiveness in the market, is mostly used by tourist destinations, which see sustainable development as a key concept for maintaining long-term competitiveness (Farmaki, et al., 2015). These destinations realized that unlike the traditional spontaneous increase of unplanned tourist destinations (Brokaj, 2014). The consequences of which were detrimental to nature and socio-cultural environments (Tudorache, et al., 2017) and turned economic development into a loss both competitiveness and opportunity (Rodriguez Diaz and Espino Rodriguez, 2016). Sustainable tourism is a responsible form of tourism for generating employment and income and mitigating deeper impacts on the environment and local culture (Chandran and Kanthan, 2015).

Due to the importance of addressing destinations as a basic unit of tourism planning in the field of sustainable development of tourist destinations, we have witnessed a large number of research and models focusing on issues related to destination development, strategic destination planning, dynamic destination management, the topic of cooperation in the formulation of tourism policy, cooperation and planning of tourism in the community, joint targeted marketing, destination market organization and the

topic of destination management (Haugland, et al., 2011). However, existing research in this area is based on large countries / destinations that have effective destination management and are aware of the importance of tourism (Vanhove, 2005), thus highlighting the issue of destination specificity (Rebollo, Vera and Ivars Baidal, 2003), which can also be confirmed for Slovenia (Ministry of Economic Development and technology, 2017). In Slovenia and similar countries, the concepts of sustainability are poorly implemented and poorly operationalized. This was evidenced by Mihalič (Kaefer, 2019) who said in one of the interviews that in her opinion, »the main challenge we have at the global level is also the most important for Slovenia: the gap between a wonderful idea of sustainable development and worryingly unsustainable and irresponsible tourism practices«. As sustainability in tourism was adopted at an abstract strategic level (Paunović and Jovanović, 2017), because of top-down directives, i.e., from the state and federal level, simply do not work well. especially in Slovenia. The Directorate for Tourism, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of the Economy, has a dual task: representing national authorities and covering regional tasks and tackling regional interests, which means that local authorities are afraid to take responsibility for sustainable tourism, as they have problems due to lack of knowledge and skills to implement sustainable development in practice (Costa et al., 2014). It turned out that a systematic review of the literature showed that the problems such as those of Slovenia and shown above are not faced by countries such as Spain, Italy, Romania, Turkey, and Cyprus, which were most often studied in the studies.

Due to the inability to transfer existing models, which is reflected in the specifics of Slovenia and other smaller countries, such as Malta, Iceland, Serbia, Ireland, Lithuania and Latvia (OECD, 2021, European Committee of the Regions, 2021d, Ministry of trade, tourism and telecommunications, 2016 OECD, 2021b, AALEP, 2015d, AALEP, 2015e), these countries do not have developed a comprehensive destination management yet and are managed as one region. It would be necessary to develop an effective model of sustainable development for tourist destinations and shape the development of tourist destinations in the future. The competitiveness of Slovenian tourist destinations should be upgraded by creating synergies between the government sector, tourism organizations and other stakeholders, which will enable the development of a friendly, competitive, and professional work environment that will be sustainable.

Nevertheless, we believe that in the future it would be good to upgrade the above-mentioned systematic literature review by extending it to other databases, which would improve the validity of the research and enable a clearer composite image of tourist destinations with existing models of sustainable development.

9 Conclusion

This systematic review of the literature has shown important gaps in sustainable tourism planning between countries (i.e. destinations), such as Spain, Italy, Romania, Turkey and Cyprus that are aware of the importance of tourism and have an effective destination management and small countries such as Slovenia, where tourism it is not recognized as a driving force of economic development, where the state does not have a long-term tourism development policy and an inefficient management system is present at operational level tourism. As research on the development of sustainable tourism and destinations has been on the rise in recent years and tourism is an interaction between stakeholders and the natural environment, in which it takes place (Coban and Yildiz, 2019), tourism typologies or goals such as sustainable tourism are meaningless (Launchers, 2019). If tourism actors do not establish an integrated construct (Garcia Madurga et al., 2019) and develop a strategic plan that considers different stakeholders and the impact of activities on natural enviroenment and historical artefacts (Valeri, 2015). On the one hand, the presented theoretical bases enabled us to understand the complexity of sustainability and the complexity of the tourist destination management system and the need for a comprehensive (i.e., holistic) approach to the regulation of this area. On the other hand, by studying and comparing existing models of sustainable tourism development and Slovenian destination management,

we have enabled a better understanding of sustainable tourism and sustainable destination management as well as of the factors that can enable or impede the development of sustainable tourism destinations. We believe that soon the priority of countries (i.e., destinations) will be the establishment of sustainable tourism, which requires good organization, effective planning, and awareness of the importance of tourism by all involved actors. Therefore, we believe that our findings, which show that the field of sustainable tourism planning in relatively small and centrally managed countries is relatively poorly addressed, are a cause for concern. Therefore, we suggest that for such destinations it would be necessary to design an internally coherent and practically applicable model of sustainable development of tourist destinations, which would include key factors for establishing sustainable development of tourist destinations and elements of modern destination management. Establishing a model in such countries would enable long-term, transparent, and effective policy decisions, enable cooperation with other government ministries, decentralize political decision-making by establishing a regional level and provide a better position for policymaking and implementation, giving the private sector enable more efficient operation. After all, as we have seen, countries, like Spain, Italy, Romania, Turkey, and Cyprus, that have all these elements in place have an advantage, because in many places they have already actively engaged in the systematic planning of sustainable tourism, over countries, such as Slovenia, Malta, Iceland, Serbia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania that do not have these elements in place. However, the current state of tourism caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, when tourism flows are in a very limited form and tourism is facing large losses, poses a major challenge for researchers and tourism planners worldwide, both in small, centralized countries and even in large destinations. Therefore, we believe that the current situation will need to be further researched, understood, and redefined in terms of tourism development strategies, as only in this way will it be possible to lay new foundations for effective management and effective development of sustainable tourism in the future.

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