

Prospect of Cruising in Boka Kotorska

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Abstract

The main objectives of this research are to get answers, to the following: the achieved level of development of cruise tourism in the Bay of Kotor; characteristics of cruise tourism in Kotor, what are the possibilities of innovation in the cruise tourism in the port of Kotor, how to adjust the cruise tourism sustainable development of Kotor, as a tourist destination? Merely by being a part of the Mediterranean, which represents a developing market in cruising, Boka Kotorska has endless potential. Yet, its significance is still to be recognized only if careful strategy of further development is followed. Having in mind that Boka Kotorska is a valuable natural and cultural heritage site, it is necessary to make assessments in terms of sustainability of this kind of tourism as well as actions that should be taken. Its limited geographical area, more suitable for minor boats and not ships, is something that should be taken into account. Other things such as tourist offer enrichment in the Old Town, including not just the seaside but background of Boka Kotorska in the tourist offer, would certainly improve the quality of tourist product. This would undoubtedly generate more profit.

Key words: *cruising, sustainable growth, cultural heritage, offer.*

Introduction

Being one of the three branches of nautical tourism, cruising has become the world's leading corporate business. It has many features such as: positive demography, it satisfies the most demanding needs and it balances between demand and supply. International cruising has marked a distinguished growth over the past years. This gave rise to development of corporate cruises. The economic crisis of 2009. gave a serious shake to the constant growth of cruise tourism, but the statistical data of 2010. clearly show that international cruise industry recovered. The number of visitors in the first eight months of 2010. exceeded the figure in 2008. which is just before the crisis started (FCCA, 2011). Europe takes second position in cruise industry in the world, and it also has the fastest growth trend. The first place, however, belongs to North America. What are the main features of supply and demand of cruise tourism? The annual 7.2% growth rate in the number of cruise passengers from 1990s until

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the present day, clearly shows the growth for cruise tourism (FCCA, 2010). However, the growth takes various directions. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to define a cruise tourist since it has become a global phenomenon. People are constantly travelling to different parts of the world. Demand coexists with appropriate supply.

Cruise ships offer unique, imaginative and affordable facilities. It is meant for a large number of people, thus making a cruise ship aim in its own right. So, there are two directions that can be distinguished. The first one is focused on fun and other facilities on board a cruise ship. Nowadays it is a growing trend in the sailing world. The second one, however, is aimed at ship anchoring and sightseeing. Considering the immense cultural heritage of Montenegro's coastline, there is only one question that comes to mind: Is Montenegro, as a tourist destination, reasonably making use of the inflow of vast number of tourists?

Level of cruising on Montenegro's seaside - Port of Kotor

Montenegro is a resourceful country and represents an extremely high-quality tourist destination. Diversity of natural beauty on such a small area makes it even more attractive for tourists. However, many resources are either not being used or they are used up. Some of them, on the other hand, require close attention in terms of future development. This is happening mainly because the saturation of the area has become more evident. Nowadays, Montenegro is largely perceived as a charter destination of cruising. It has immense potential for development of cruising, which along with careful development strategy and government attention, can be brought to a high level. Old towns on the coast make endless resources. However, geomorphologic features of Boka Bay, its authentic villages in the background of the Bay still make the tourist offer incomplete. It was exactly ship, by means of which tourism was started in Boka Kotorska. In 1937, when a steamboat crossed the Atlantic Ocean, a probationary boat line Trieste - Kotor was started, and a year later it operated on regular basis. According to the first written documents (1926) there had been two British ships which were moored in Kotor along with 640 crew members and 742 tourists (Pasinovic, 2004).

Cruising can boost economy of the destination, but it can also have intrinsic effect on both culture and environment. It is very difficult to pinpoint its distinctive features in the overall range of influence and structure of financial effects. It is also difficult to state the exact figure of tourist spending as well as the turnover earned in both economic and non economic activities. Generally speaking, they can always be higher and are dependent on the diversity of tourist offer in the destination.

Cruise tourists that visit Montenegro spend on average 49 euro per person. As far as direct spending is regarded, they mainly buy the following products from local manufacturers:

- Locally manufactured souvenirs (52.7%)
- Food and beverage (13.4%)
- Garments, footwear (9.4%)
- Fun, casino
- Taxi service
- Various duty free items (Ministry of Tourism, 2011a).

So far, positive economic effects of cruise tourism have been: job opportunities, higher turnover, economic growth, trade development, business opportunities, etc.

SWOT analysis of resources of Boka Kotorska

Strengths:

- Geographic position /belonging to the Mediterranean - in the second place as a cruise destination in the world, vicinity of emissive markets and major European cities/
- Outstanding natural and cultural resources /natural values - seacoast, one of the most beautiful bays in the world, a beautiful mountainous hinterland, climate; cultural and historical heritage - the best preserved urban centre, located in Kotor 18% of protected monuments in Montenegro (Radovic, 2010).
- Vicinity of Tivat and Podgorica airport and good transport connections
- Safe navigation and individual safety / favourable conditions of navigation in the Gulf - optimum natural marina, the personal safety of passengers, safety of the ship in port /
- Tradition
- Good staff
- Service facilities
- Positive competitive perception of Montenegro by passengers
- Centuries old sailing tradition
- New destination in the market of cruising
- Hospitality of local people

Weaknesses:

- Port infrastructure and associated infrastructure / has no status departure port, inadequate port infrastructure to accept more ships, road infrastructure, parking/
- Port taxes and amends / the lower price compared to other cruise destinations/
- Incomplete and disorganized tourist offer /insufficient excursions and insufficient involvement of other parts of Montenegro, disorganized tourist accommodation, lack hotel capacity/
- Lack of awareness of the importance of cruise tourism in the majority of the population, resistance and lack of information on the effects of cruise tourism
- Inefficient promotion / lack of promotional materials, research/
- Influence on environment (noise, crowds, pollution)
- Seasonality

Opportunities:

- EU membership and the possibility of using pre-admission funds for infrastructure improvement
- Trends in tourism /need for new destinations in cruising, expected growth of cruising in the Mediterranean/
- Introduction of low-cost airlines / improving the economic availability of destinations/
- Increase in quality of tourist offer

Threats:

- Faster development of other tourist destinations (China, India)
- Better tourist offers in other parts of the Mediterranean- international competition in cruise ships acceptance(secondary ports are easily replaced)
- Clash with other resource users

- Environment unfriendly effects
- Limited space and interfering with other kinds of tourism

Features of cruising in Kotor

Choice of passenger's activities is controlled by the length of the ship's stay in the port. The quality of their activities is largely dependent on the tourist offer that the destination has. On average, passengers spend five hours off board. Their most frequent activities are: shopping (69.8%), visiting café bars and restaurants (48.8%), independent sightseeing (48.6%), visiting museums and exhibitions (46%) (Internal documentation of Port of Kotor, 2010). By making strong connections between the seaside and its background and by creating new facilities Montenegro would make a better tourist destination. In a short survey, carried out by Port of Kotor, passengers had the opportunity to state their opinion of Kotor as a destination and its tourist offers. The survey encompassed four elements:

- Service quality in Kotor - shipping agencies
- Correspondence quality (service, punctuality, efficiency) and problem solving between Port of Kotor and its beneficiaries
- Security level and safety in the port and the destination
- Port's overall service quality towards passengers, ship and crew
- The survey showed the following results:
- Service is very good, but port taxes too high
- Residents are very polite
- Bad port infrastructure
- Beautiful destination
- Polite port staff (Ministry of Tourism, 2011b)

Taking these into account, we can say that tourists are mainly satisfied with tourist offer, and that they recognize values of the destination

Product innovation in cruising in port of Kotor

Available tourist offer in Kotor is insufficient and the existing capacities should be reorganized. Trips are limited in length, and their organization is bad. What is more, infrastructure is in a bad condition as well. Here are some suggestions that could contribute to tourist product innovation in Port of Kotor :

- Increase tourist expenditure and extend the list of trips
- Enrich the offer in the town centre, with the aim of increasing expenditure
- Make promotional material available to cruise passengers
- Building a bypass that would solve the problem of frequent traffic jams

When it comes to prices, it is necessary to follow the rule 'value for money' and to compare them with other competitive destinations. Dubrovnik is a direct competition to Kotor, for its vicinity and for its similar offer. If a trip price in Kotor is higher by 20 euro than the trip price in Dubrovnik, it means that service quality, image of the product and price of competitors have to be taken into account. Cruise tourists are ready to pay slightly higher for a

better product, as well as for a product that is well- promoted. Promotion of cruise tourism in Montenegro is not done properly. Here is a list of target groups that promotion should be aimed at:

- Large cruise companies that create itineraries
- Shipping agencies that are a direct connection between the cruise company and the destination
- Possible tourists on cruise ships

Sustainable development of Boka Kotorska as a cruise destination

Sustainable growth and development need to balance among economic benefits, ecology and cultural features of the community. When we talk about sustainable growth of cruise tourism it is necessary to take several important things into account, and those are: the possibility of safe ship anchoring, sea pollution and number of coming visitors. In that case, both the destination and the port have to fulfil certain criteria.

Sustainability criterion states that each and every tourist destination has its own geographic limits and capacity. The maximum estimated number of passengers has following points:

- They only have a certain amount of space available, the rest of it has to be at disposal for local people, other guests and trip-goers.
- The maximum sustainable capacity of cruise tourists is defined in high season when the destination is swarming with tourists. The number is higher in the periods before and after the peak season and is dependent on the decrease in number of other tourists and visitors.
- Established maximum capacity has long-term sustainability
- Maximum number of incoming tourists exceeds the maximum sustainable capacity because the ships stay only for half a day

From the port's point of view, a sustainability criterion implies a correlation between the maximum sustainable capacity and the simultaneous number of passengers and ships in the port. Certain things must not be neglected such as: sea depth, width of water area, operative size of coast, manoeuvring (Study of the development of cruise tourism in Croatia, 2007).

If we want to give Boka Bay a competitive edge, we have to make constant efforts in terms of: offer innovation, creating authentic tourist product, education of local people, networking. Port of Kotor has a notable growth in this type of tourism. Although the geographical features make it more suitable for other branches of nautical tourism, it has to try and find its position and place in the growing cruising. But sustainable measures and precautions have to be obeyed.

Here are some measures that guarantee environmental sustainability:

- Make accurate evaluation of the environment
- Make careful analysis of natural resources, geomorphology, climate, hydrology and wildlife.
- Make sure when and where cruise ships tanks should be emptied
- Opt for smaller cruise ships rather than the giant ones. After all, Kotor has been listed in world's natural and cultural heritage site

Measures to improve economic sustainability:

- Market analysis and monitoring
- Passengers satisfaction reports
- Education of port staff as well as of all people who deal with this field
- Efficient market strategy

Social sustainability will be kept if the following is obeyed:

- Job opportunities
- Well informed local people
- Raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage

Conclusion

Having in mind Kotor as one of the most beautiful Bays in the world and the position of Montenegro in the Mediterranean, we cannot but conclude that we stand excellent potential for cruise tourism. This is a very delicate area with outstanding natural, anthropological heritage. What is more its geographical position is very delicate and demanding. Therefore, cruise industry in this area has to respect sustainability, and that is hard to put into practice. Cruise industry fully relies on the existing resources. By their evaluation, it is possible to achieve manifold effects. Montenegro, small as it is enables exploitation of other resources that are found further inland. On the other hand, actual problems that cruise tourism brings along must not be overlooked e.g. crowds cause traffic congestion, especially in high season, people's attitude towards quality of life etc. Furthermore, limit should be placed on the number of cruise ships allowed during the season.

Cruise industry will eventually generate many companies which will employ local people, this would incur higher incomes, and better standard of living. When weighing between the advantages and disadvantages of cruise industry it is necessary to devise a strategy that would enable sustainable quality of this kind of tourism. This should be devised with due respect to Boka Bay and its authentic natural features and cultural heritage.

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