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# Auto summary

The doctoral dissertation  
Under the title

THE QUALITY OF TRAVEL AGENT'S SERVICES AS A FACTOR IN THE  
PROMOTION OF KOSOVO AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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## **Summary**

# **THE QUALITY OF TRAVEL AGENT'S SERVICES AS A FACTOR IN THE PROMOTION OF KOSOVO AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

### Introduction

As an economic and social phenomenon the tourism obtains in its own meaning every day. This is above all conditioned by the massive involvement of people from all over the world into the tourist journeys that is particularly intensified in the last 35 – 40 years. Tourism represents one of the most massive phenomena in the modern society related to the necessities of temporarily changing the place of residence, primarily for leisure and relaxation. Tourism has become highly expressed especially when the number of people involved in tourist trips has increased massively and has obtained such dimensions that began to affect onto the formation of certain other phenomena and relationships that have contributed into making tourism a particularly important factor in the social and economic sense.

Tourists constantly have larger demands, and the aim of the tourism industry is fulfilling their expectations. Improving the quality leads to tourism development that fulfills the demands of tourists and the service providers, by preserving natural and cultural resources and by encouraging the economic development of Kosovo. The quality has to become the main direction of the strategy for the development of tourism in Kosovo. For every touristic product and service, it is necessary to establish quality standards and they should be imposed as a guarantee for the overall quality. Only this type of a strategic approach to the planning of tourism development is supposed to enable the improvement of quality at a national level. Therefore, Kosovo needs to perform a strategy for tourism development in the whole country, in order to promote the country around the world. It determinates how others will look to Kosovo, and it would be possible to create an image of the world for what it offers, not just for those who are interested in tourism, but also for all others who indicate some interest for the “youngest state in Europe”.

The content that is being processed in this doctoral dissertation is conceptualized in six thematic sections that allow the elaboration of the materials separately, i.e. separate parts of each thematic unit.

At the end of the paper, the conclusions which derive from the whole paper are presented, abstracting the most important knowledge in theory and practice in order to see the role of travel agencies in the development of Kosovo as a tourist destination.

## **Research Methodology**

In order to understand the goal that was established during the conceptualization of this subject of research, which represents current topic that is insufficiently elaborated in our area, we were mainly led by the deductive method, that is, we started from the general laws and principles and discovered the special ones.

During the development of the study, in form of all types of documents, official data was presented, for example as reports and announcements of the international tourist associations, the State statistic Office in Kosovo, travel agencies reports, i.e. we will analyze the most relevant data and information in order to confirm the actual images of the situation in the system listed for relationships. Based on these data we will construct appropriate conclusions.

During the development of this dissertation, an appropriate literature by well-known experts and tourism scientists has been used, as well as definitions which are commented, explained and supplemented.

The occurrences where there is no official information and which are important for preserving the situation and trends in this area of travel agencies and tourist destinations, will be analyzed quantitatively, meaning by the knowledge obtained we will derive those characteristics that mostly determinate the analyzed situation.

At the same time, this paper is based mainly on the usage of office research and the usage of empirical data and indicators that the expert literature is familiar with. Certain field research is conducted by using the Internet as a medium which contains a large number of secondary data. The primary data is obtained through a field survey, i.e. a questionnaire sent to all major travel agencies in Kosovo. The data obtained from the survey is statistically processed using the method of the smallest squares and the Pearson correlation coefficient. The data obtained from the survey has a primary importance for the purposes of this paper, since the main institutions that are concerned with the issues of travel agencies and tourism provided all the guidance on the issues and problems that travel agencies in Kosovo face and

how these problems can be overcome in order to successfully promote Kosovo as an attractive tourist destination.

### **Basic and auxiliary hypotheses**

The basic hypothesis (H) which is the starting point of this dissertation is the assertion that travel agencies have an impact on the promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination. In addition to these hypotheses certain auxiliary hypotheses were also established:

- The quality of the services of travel agencies is the key of retaining existing and attracting new tourists;
- Travel agencies are supposed to provide continuous improvement of their services;
- The quality of services is a multidimensional construction;
- There is a gap between the expected service and the perceived service of travel agencies in Kosovo;
- Travel agencies should understand the importance of the concept of "lifelong learning" through continuous education and training of their employees.

### **Expected results**

Taking into consideration the subject and the goal of the doctoral dissertation, as well as the previous research, the following results which are supposed to be provided by the research could be stated:

Using the methods and techniques of research the place and the role of travel agencies will be determined, relating to the object and purpose of their work as well as determining their functions;

The survey will enable to determine the factors influencing the tourist destination and what knowledge will contribute to the more effective promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination;

Indicators will also be identified to represent the state of tourism in Kosovo in order to provide further directions for its development. In addition, the role of travel agencies in promoting Kosovo as a tourist destination will be presented. Also by this research some information about the expectations and perceptions of the quality of the services of the travel agencies would be obtained, as well as what knowledge would contribute for more effective promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **TRAVEL AGENCIES**

### **1.1. Concept and definition of travel agencies**

In the modern world, tourism is one of the key factors for the development not only of individual tourist destinations and countries but also of the global economy. The activities that form tourism are among the leading branches of the world's economy. By the end of the previous century, around 700 million people participated in international tourism trends, while the revenues from international tourism amounted to over 460 billion US dollars. Here, also the effects that take place into the domestic tourism, are supposed to be added, and these effects in many countries have several times higher revenues than revenues received from foreign tourists. Hundreds of thousands of companies (hotel companies, travel agencies and tour operators, companies in the field of transport, trade and other activities) with different organizational forms and sizes find the basis for their existence onto the tourism market.

The dynamic development of tourism has been observed in the second half of the 20th century. Since the 50's, about 25 million tourists participated in international tourism, while revenues amounted to just over \$ 2 billion, and the economic activities connected with tourism spread throughout the world.

For our further analysis, it is significant that travel agencies played a crucial role in turning tourism into a mass phenomenon.

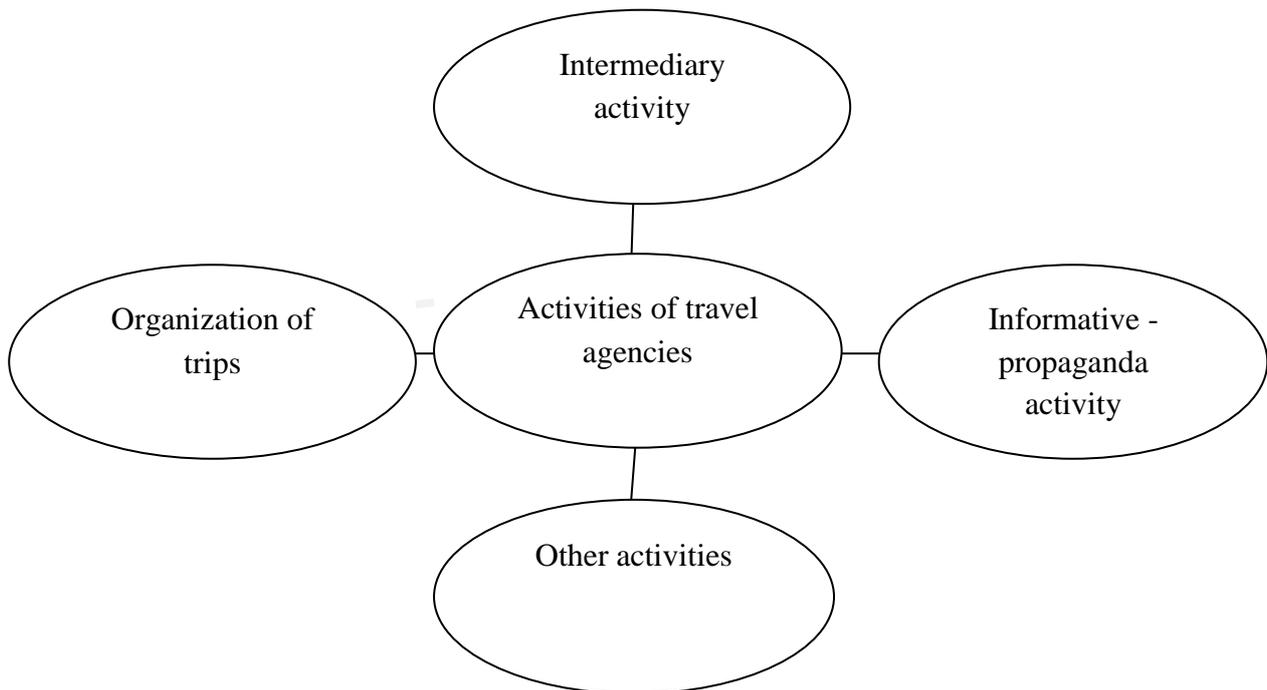
### **1.2. The place and role of agencies on the tourism market**

From the middle of the 20th century to the present the positive tendencies for development and the realized mass of domestic and international tourism represent a result of the increase of the living standard population and the changes in the overall social conditions, but also a significant contribution to this incensement should be related to the numerous economic operators who worked on the tourist market. Among them, the role of tourism development in the tourism sector is distinguished by the travel agencies, especially during the Second World War when they strongly influenced the development of the market in the organized journeys.

The contribution of travel agencies is a result of their role in the conduction of tourism and facilitating the travelling as a whole. During travelling, travelers and passengers need a range of services, from providing maps for individual types of transport through accommodation, food, travel documents, to additional services that can make the journey more attractive, such as visits to museums, natural attractions, theme parks and others. Additionally, it takes a lot of information both during the preparation of the journey, and during the residence at the destination. On the other hand, numerous business entities provide services in the tourism market, striving that pursuant to meeting the needs of tourists they would be able to achieve the desired economic impact in the same time. Precisely this connection of a large number of entities away from tourism demand and the numerous entities within the private and public sectors on the side of the tourist offer is the main task and role of travel agencies. On a tourist market, they are represented as specialized companies that advise, inform, mediate in the security of the individual services needed during the journey, and create a specific product (package of engagements) that can meet the demands of the tourist consumers.

### **1.3.Functions of travel agencies**

As the tourism developed, the relation between the tourist offer and the demand developed too. Traveling motives have also changed and have led to a significant change in the role of travel agencies. The travel agency has become an organization, which in time leaves the classical forms and methods of classical agency or intermediary work. This role of the agency provides them a privileged position on the market: they directly influence the formation and content of passenger offers, choose transportation means and influence the formation of prices, as well as the formation of the taste, motives and needs of the passenger industry. The main task of the travel agencies is to satisfy the tourist's needs and also the needs of other travelers. All these job positions can be systematized into four groups (Vukonic, Keca and Pukshar, 2015) as shown in the picture below.



Source: Todorovich E (2010) Agency Operations, Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje

### ***1.3.1. Intermediary function***

The intermediary function of the travel agency relates to its operation as an intermediary between passenger / tourist customers and sellers of passenger / tourist services. It places the services to direct providers on the market, providing passengers with different types of services in one place and saving them the free time needed for their acquisition.

In this way, travel agencies free the travelers / tourists from worries about the services they want to use, while at the same time it saves them some time. The intermediary function of travel agencies refers to all possible services that tourists might require, and the providers perform, so this intermediation covers a wide area in the classical sense. The intermediary services provided by the agency may be related to travel and accommodation.

#### *a) Travel mediation:*

- obtaining tickets for all types of traffic
- booking tickets
- rent transportation vehicles
- purchase transportation vehicles

*b) Accommodation mediation:*

- provision of accommodation services
- visiting various events
- luggage storage
- providing sports equipment and accessories

*c) Other (secondary) mediations:*

- insurance of the passenger and his luggage
- obtaining permission for hunting, fishing, etc.

### **1.3.2. Organizational function**

The organizational function of travel agencies refers to organizing different types of journeys in order to fulfill the needs of the users of travelling services. Performing this function, the travel agency appears as an enterprise that creates and sells fully organized trips as its complex service, at its own expense and at its own risk.

By performing the organizational function, the travel agency strengthens its place on the market and is one of the main factors for the development of tourism.

In theory and practice it is complicated to comprise, connect, timely and spatially to synchronize the passenger services, i.e. to realize them as they appear in their own direction. That is called organizational function. The travel agency, by performing this function, undertakes the risk and uses the results which appear.

Such an organized form of services can be found under one of the following names: lump sum travelling, arrangement, lump sum arrangement, travelling arrangement, package arrangements and so on.

### **1.3.3. Information-advisory and propaganda function**

The information and advisory function of the travel agency is the oldest function performed by the agency. Ever since its beginnings, the agency has been engaged in providing information and advices to passengers related to travelling or residence in some tourist resort.

By providing quality and accurate information, the travel agency contributes to easier inclusion of potential tourists in tourist movements, and the user of this information very often becomes a real client of the agency.

All information provided by the travel agency can be divided into three groups:

- a) Travel Information - for means of transport, timetable, time of departure and arrival, travel price, travel regulations and formalities during the journey, etc.
- b) Information about the stay - for tourist places, accommodation, food, cultural and historical landmarks in the place, as well as any other information regarding the place where the tourists will stay.
- c) Other information - about insurance, payment methods, formalities around necessary travel documents, border regulations, etc.

Apart from the information, the travel agency advises potential tourists on the choice of the tourist place, the type of transport, the accommodation, visits to cultural and historical landmarks, the actualities in the tourist place, the directions of movement, the necessary travel documents, etc.

#### **1.4. Contemporary trends in the development of travel agencies**

Taking into account the global trends occurring on the tourism market, whose impact is reflected in the existing tourist sites and the creation of new ones, this paragraph will include new trends that are taking place under the influence of new technologies that fully affect the transformation of work processes or in part to redefine the way travel agencies work. Namely, the dynamic and uncertainty of the environment inevitably changes the work of the travel agencies, imposing them adjustments and accepting of new challenges and opportunities from the business environment. The intensity of changes by the tourist offer, whose modern approach to operation is based on the criteria of responsibility and competitiveness, and the high demands of the tourist requests, initiated with specific interests and awareness of quality, is infiltrated through tourist intermediaries. Regardless of what kind of insight the outcome brings, in the end if travel agencies implement some changes in their work, then they present willingness to adapt.

Due to the increase of the living standard, the free time increases, and the individual possesses a freedom in a way that can be spent with financial means necessary for his “realization”, increasing the level of knowledge of natural and cultural wealth that influences on the behavior of tourist consumers. This triggers the migration movement of an increasing number of tourists with multiple tastes, desires, related to the organization of the trip, which shows a specific tendency related to the time framework. Therefore, one

of the assumptions is that in tourism, the entities of the tourist offer and the intermediaries with the quality content of their products (or products conceptualized on the basis of the integration of specific elements), to a certain degree, uniformity, but with a defined quality in terms of the criteria for development of sustainability of the destinations, the requirements of the growing tourist markets will continue to be met. In doing so, it is necessary to leave some space for maneuvering and to provide individual freedom to express and satisfy their own ideas, and by taking into consideration the tendency to increase the active participation of tourists in the creation of spatial and temporal dimensions during the tourist stay at a destination, regardless of the manner of organization, arrival of the destination and usage of the services (included in the package or individually).

Furthermore, the intensive spread of information and communication technologies in all activities related to travel, positively influences onto the development of the tourism market, but it also represents a danger to those business entities that are not adapted to the market and technological changes. The complexity and impact of information and communication technologies is presented into the statement that "modern technology has left deep traces in tourism in the area of sales channels, which eventually changes - translates the role of travel agencies, and the way they work" (Houls, Diamantis and El - Mourhabi, 2001). The new technology provides significant opportunities for (Poon, 1993):

- Travel agencies and tour operators to create flexible journeys, at affordable prices and a complete synchronization with consumer requirements;
- Hotel companies in order directly to access to the world's market which greatly reduced their dependence on the brokerage role of travel organizers
- Consumers for a direct purchase of a set of tourist services, which is compatible to the sophisticated demands of modern tourists for flexible journeys.

In particular, the rapid expansion of the Internet in the distribution of travel services has led to major changes in the tourism market.

## **1.5. Adaptation of travel agencies to the requirements of consumers**

Tourist demand is characterized by changes in the requests of modern tourists. Basically, the requirements for individualization and a lot more flexibility of the tourist trips are increasingly being manifested. This reflected the demand for the traditional summer vacation in the Mediterranean for a period of 1 to 2 weeks in the organization of travel agencies. Only in Germany, the demand for such traditional packages declined considerably in the period from 2001 to 2004. In the overall structure of the rest of German tourists in 2001 the share of traditional packages was 45%, while in 2004 the share of this type of arrangement fell to only 36% (Djurasevic 2008). European tourists are less likely to be focused on the traditional summer tourist arrangements in the Mediterranean, but instead they decide upon shorter trips to closer destinations where developed sports and wellness centers can be found.

The demand is characterized by the incensement of the level of sophistication including the demand for increased quality of travel services. Modern tourists are mostly experienced consumers in the field of tourism, ready to organize their own do-it-yourself journey using the tools offered online. With the usage of the Internet the dynamic expansion in the tourism market exists from the half of the last decade and this has led to significant changes in its distribution. The advantages of the new technology for booking, buying and paying for travel services, as well as the willingness of consumers to take advantage have enabled all "players" in the tourism market without intermediaries and relatively low prices to distribute their products globally. This is aided by airlines and hotels that form their own channels for on-line sales by forming offers at significantly lower prices and stimulating direct reservations through their websites. This is an additional factor that intensifies competition in the offer of arrangements because in fact the relatively low cost of travelling organized by travel agencies is a smaller factor by which the leading travel agencies can achieve positive effects and advantages in positioning the market for their products.

## **1.6. The trend of eliminating traditional travel agents as intermediaries in the tourism market**

Analysts predict a further expansion of sales of online travel services. This represents that there will be a further jeopardizing of the position as classical travel agencies in the role of mediator in the sale of tourist services, and that the spread of on-line sales will lead to

significant changes in the distribution channels in the tourist market. According to predictions by some analysts, electronic commerce will lead to the disappearance of Disintermediation (Weaver and Lawton, 2010).

According to the (Mamaghani 2009), the Internet, as a distribution channel and quality information sources, has made it easier for travel agencies in the global market to provide access to additional market segments, but on the other hand, encourages global association to enrich the touristic offer for advertising and reservations through the inter organizational reservation system. New distribution channel methods cannot be seen separately from other business segments. The view of (Mamaghani, 2009) is that online travel agencies have to align the overall experience of tourists and their expectations with the design of their websites, the online reservations and says that in the future travel agencies must promote their competitive efforts in relation to competing destinations which offer and will offer specific forms of content, value and benefits in a way that in the same time is technically simpler only by using the information at the level of friendly relations with tourists. In this way the technology does not only change one business segment, but affects all elements of the organization and the complete value chain of tourist intermediaries. In assessments of the future development of travel agencies there is no consensus between analysts. One section points out that the widespread diffusion of new technology solutions and the Internet is not just a threat but also a chance for businesses and contributes to increasing of the efficiency of passenger travel and to increasing the overall quality of service. Although, it can be said that the reduced need for direct contact with consumers in providing a large number of services, the need to establish interpersonal relationships does not disappear. On the contrary, given the enormous amount of information presented in the tourism market, the importance of the professional and advisory role of travel agencies in the selection of the most appropriate offer services to its customers, grows. The most of the analysts see the future role of travel agencies in redefining their market position - from a mediator in providing travel services to a travel advisor.

Traditional travel agencies must be positioned on the market as travel experts, especially when it comes to complex programs (for example, cruise trips) or travel to unfamiliar and "risky" destinations, and in fact they are simple transactions carried out using tools which are offered by the Internet. In this case, an additional value for the consumers appears (new service quality) based on consulting services of travel experts, who are also responsible if any problem arises for consumers who are willing to pay a certain fee.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **CONCEPT AND ELEMENTS OF TOURIST DESTINATION**

#### **2.1. Concept and definition of the tourist destination**

The term tourist destination comes from the Latin word *destinatio*, which means the place where you travel (Anic and Goldstein, 1999). It is considered that this concept was introduced in the 1970s through the mediation of air traffic. Its meaning today is more complex, and the content is often interpreted differently. The changes which happened on the tourist market in the 1980s, such as the increase in the number of tourists, the increase in the need of tourists, have led to the phenomena of different tourists' interests (Vukonic 1998) on the side of the demand, as well as the different needs of the receptive tourist areas and other holders of tourism, on the side of the supply.

The attempt to define the tourist destination can be seen in the usage of explicitly determining the geographical area where the tourism policy is based. Accordingly, a specific geographical region is taken as a tourist destination in which the visitor realizes a different form of tourist experience. Therefore, under the term tourist destination, it is possible to think of a geographical area in which there are more clusters than a tourist borders. The cluster includes the total tourist resources and attractions, infrastructure, service providers and other support sectors, administrative bodies, whose integrated activities provide consumers with the experience they expect from the destination they chose to visit (Bakic, 2009).

#### **2.2. Basic components of the tourist destination**

Previously, we have listed only some definitions of the tourist destination that exist in the literature. In this context, we would mention some other authors who define the tourist destination (Leiper, 1995, Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 1996, Magas, 1997, Bieger, 1998, Cooper Fletcher and Gilbert 1998, Vukonic, 1998; Zuvela, 1998; Pechlaner, 1999). What is common for all the authors is that in their opinion it is best to define the tourist destination as a touristic organized and markedly recognizable spatial unit, which as part of its tourist products offers its users a complete satisfaction of the tourist needs.

From the abovementioned we can conclude that the characterization of some spatial units at the tourist destination is not essential for its size or geopolitical borders, but for the ability to attract tourists and completely satisfy the needs of the complex tourists. The tourist

destination is one of the elements in tourism and that is the one that encourages the functioning of the entire system, attracting tourists and motivating their arrival and linking all of its parts.

Therefore defining the elements and their characteristics in a specific touristic destination are particularly important in terms of marketing activities and the benefits of individual instruments of the marketing mix, that is, ultimately, they relate to the overall management process for the development of the tourist destination, for which they are especially concerned. Most tourist destinations are linked in the following components (so-called six A.) (Cooper Fletcher and Gilbert 1998; Buhalis, 2000):

1. Attractions - signifies natural and social attractiveness, to provide initial motivation for the arrival of tourists to the destination.
2. Receptive content (Amenities - including accommodation and catering, trade, entertainment and other services.
3. Accessibility refers to the development and maintenance of efficient transport links with markets (international transport terminals and local transport).
4. Available packages. - includes prepaid travel packages by intermediaries and their representatives.
5. Activities - refers to all available activities in the destination and what the consumer will be doing, while his/her staying
6. Support services (Ancillary services - including marketing, development and coordination activities that have been implemented by some organizations for the purposes of consumers and industry.

By combining the abovementioned components a tourist destination with one or more entertainment products is formed.

### **2.3. Concepts and types of tourist destination**

Studying the tourist destination must include a current tendency in tourism that is often simplified and presented through the term "old" and "new" tourism, that is, "mass" and "alternative" tourism. Mass or old tourism is based on a standardized and firmly "packed" journey created on the basis of the "production line" principle. New tourism is flexible, sustainable and individually oriented, and new tourists are experienced, flexible, independent, and aware of the quality and difficulty of fulfilling their needs. Due to the mentioned basic changes within the tourism market, the tourist destinations are also changing very

dynamically. Within the "new" tourism, the needs of tourists are especially changing. These new needs also require new dimensions for the overall offer within the destination, based on diversity, quality standards, environmental protection, humanization and authenticity of tourist experiences within the destination.

The following table presents the typology of the tourist destination for foreign tourists, although we should have in mind the importance of the domestic tourists, i.e. their expectations and behaviors in the destination.

Table 2. Typology of tourist destination

1. Capitals	
Athens, <i>Greece</i>	Significant cities attract visitors for tourist, family, congress, cultural and administrative reasons. Tourists prefer to group themselves in special zones in which trade, archeological, cultural or other facilities are available for entertainment.
2A. Developed traditional centers	
Kusadasi, <i>Turkey</i>	A rural place, which has long been established and maintained as a focus for tourism development. Hotels, bars, restaurants and so on. tourism contents, which are built by plan or unplanned, surrounding the majority of the population. Today's tourist structures dominate in this area.
2B. Touring centers	
Salzburg, <i>Austria</i>	A city with a high concentration of secondary tourist facilities and a good traffic connection, as with emotive tourist countries and the environment in which natural and cultural activities are found.
3. Specifically built destinations	
Disneyland, Paris, <i>France</i>	The whole infrastructure and all the amenities are aimed at working in order to meet the needs of tourists. The buildings are modern and the architectural style is very controlled, it is usually not in line with the surrounding areas. The destination provides all kinds of services that tourists need during their stay.

Source: Popesku, J., "Management of tourist destination", Belgrade, 2011, p. 9

The second approach monitors the tourist destination within the following division:

**Classic destination:** Natural, cultural or historical attraction ensures long-term stay of tourists in the destination (Saint Tropez, San Sebastian, Dubrovnik, Rhodes);

**Destination with specific areas or living world:** These are destinations that are highly attractive based on natural resources and represent a habitat for rare species of flora and fauna (Galapagos Island, Serengeti Reservation);

**Business Travel Destination:** A destination that occurs when an industrial or commercial mall reconstructs its historic districts, shopping facilities, and entertainment centers which keep managers and their partners for a longer period of time (Manchester, Glasgow);

**Holiday destination:** It is halfway between emitting areas and destinations for making an annual holiday with a large selection of accommodation facilities at affordable prices and restaurants and cafes (Kale and Boulogne in France);

**Short-stay destination:** Typically attractors to the domestic market and, if appropriate, on the international market. In this group of destinations beside small towns in the provinces the capital cities can be found (Pisa, Bruges, Amsterdam);

**Day trip destinations:** Attract primarily visitors from the region (coastal centers, shopping centers). One of the ways to present the process for adjusting the tourist destination to the changes in tourism, especially on the tourism market, is the so-called. concepts of tourist accommodation.

#### **2.4. Destination as a system**

Tourist destination does not have strong borders. It can be any destination from departure to returning of the tourists to the place of residence, but it was still determined by certain conditions: geographical, cultural, traffic attractiveness. The tourist destination is characterized by publicity of the offer, which is based on the resources that serve to everyone as a destination of natural, historical, cultural and other attractive tourist resources. Different holders of the tourist offer have many common goals that can be better realized jointly, rather than in terms of individual, separate action. A tourist destination can be defined as a system that contains a number of elements that directly or indirectly affect the establishment of a destination. One of the basic functions of the destination as a system is its complexity,

because in the destination there are different resources and actors, basic and secondary, which can be found in many different relationships. This represents the importance of how to solve various issues and problems that may arise from these relationships, problems which can be solved through the process of managing the tourist destination.

There are three subsystems in the tourism within the tourist destinations:

- Organization for subsystem management - elements that affect the operation of the systems;
- Subsystem of elements that prepare or perform the basic assignments or roles in the system, i.e. contribute to the creation of tourist services;
- - Market subsystem elements that express the relationship between the offer and the demand

## **2.5. Characteristics of tourist destinations**

The most important features of the tourist destinations are the environment and the processes in it, the economic structure and the economic development, the social structure and organization, the political organization and the level of tourism development. The characteristics of the destination can be seen through the attractiveness of the destination, and the accessibility of the destination in conditions of the stay in there (Jovicic, 2002). In order to attract as many visitors as possible, the destination should primarily be attractive of the quality point of view of the tourist offer that is consisting of:

- The type and quality of restaurants, shopping and other attractions,
- Quality of the environment (air, water, city infrastructure, etc.)
- Quality of traffic (traffic connections, parking lots, etc.)
- The quality of security in all areas,
- The quality of recreational, cultural, health and other facilities,
- The quality of hospitality,
- The quality of information,
- Quality of the "value for money" link.

## **2.6. Managing tourism destination and model types**

Managing the tourism destination or destination management can be defined as an activity that connects and coordinates the activities of different businesses and other people in

the process of designing and implementation of the tourist product in order to achieve optimal quality, competitiveness and to achieve the optimal economic impact onto the tourist market. Destination management is one of the most important factors for developing the competitiveness of the destination itself, and this is based on an agreement between the main actors of tourism and destination, local authorities, tourism enterprises, organizations and other people who are interested for which and with whom to offer. The concept of destination management was originally developed in the industry of events and meetings, namely congress tourism, in the form of congressional bureaus (Convention and Visitors Bureaus, CVB).

## **2.7. Competitiveness of the tourist destination**

The basic element in the concept of strategic management of a particular tourist destination is the definition of the type and shape of tourist attractiveness. The next most important element is quality (something between what the client wants and the price he can pay). Quality is not just style and work, but also a basis for tourism development.

The focus of the tourist industry is the provision of services, first of all primarily the spatial connection at the site with the production and service activities. Since tourism goods are not transferable, the realization of the supply of tourism and the demand for a tourist destination and its potential motive is transferable.

The concept of managing a tourism destination relies on quality management. The quality in tourism means that all parts of the overall tourist offer and tourism products meet the quality criteria. Therefore, in modern conditions, it is necessary to improve the management of tourist areas in order to maintain and improve their quality and their development.

Successful development of tourist destinations, presupposes the existence of a tourist product, which can be placed in an appropriate tourist market. The tourist offer functions as an amalgam of tourism products and services and it is a very complex area. The monitoring requires the tourist demand to enable the creation of a special quality and attractive locations for the total touristic movement through additional, modification and enrichment of the offer. Subsequently, market segmentation affects the segmentation of the offer, which requires investments and constant programs and innovations in tourism.

## **2.8. Diamond of competitiveness**

The national context plays a key role in securing the essential elements necessary for success in the international market. The essence of the competitive advantage of some tourist destinations that they achieve on a global scale is the result of the stimulations conditions in the national environment. Porter identifies four groups of national-specific factors that influence the ability of tourist destinations to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage in international markets. The four main groups of factors are (Cerovic, 2012):

- Terms factors (inputs);
- Terms of demand;
- Related industries;
- Strategy, structure and rivalry between tourist companies and destinations.

In the context of the system these factors represent the "diamond of national competitiveness" - the market each country sets for its industry and also administrates, as well as the context in which companies grow and learn how to compete.

Competitiveness requires a tourist "destination" to have an adequate "competitive diamond", that is, a business environment that fosters innovation for continuous improvement of quality, high efficiency in the implementation of "competitive activities" and a high level of productivity in the usage of resources.

Regarding to the factor's conditions there are two types of resources or factors: basic factors that are related to tourism resources, and attractions, consisting of specialized knowledge and skills, new technology, and communication and market infrastructure. While the basic resources represent the natural advantages on the basis of which companies can progress, the upgrade resources are often more important to develop a competitive advantage in international markets.

## **2.9. Life cycle of the tourist destination**

The tourist destination passes through a cycle of evolution, similar to the life cycle of every other product that passes through the stage of placement, development, maturity and decay. The life cycle of tourist destinations includes the following stages: research, engagement, development, consolidation, stagnation, declination and rejuvenation.

The phase of destination researches has been discovered because it possesses motifs of high value whose basis represent an attractive and protected environment with natural and

cultural values. The number of visitors to the destination in addition to the poor supply, inadequate infrastructure and the lack of necessary facilities are significantly small.

Engagement raises initiatives to provide an adequate offer to visitors, to launch promotional activities. Emitting areas are formed, target segments are formed too and the demand and tourism turnover obtain seasonal characteristics.

## **2.10. Positioning the tourist destination**

The theory of positioning the tourist destination is based on three assumptions: *first*, the consumers live in societies that are oversaturated by communications where the information is obtained on a daily basis (or more often), *secondly*, our consciousness developed a defense mechanism in terms of informative jams and *thirdly*, the only way to overcome these jams is through simpler and focused messages. Based on these assumptions, the authors (Trout and Ries 1972) introduced the notion of "positioning", arguing that the position of products / services is determined by more technological and psychological values that are performed in a particular product / service. Moreover, something more than just creating a good product has to be done – the product must be carefully positioned in consumer's awareness.

The initial source of information in the positioning process is situational analysis. It is necessary to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the destination in relation to the demand for selecting target market. Then the chances and threats from the environment need to be determined. The SWOT analysis obtains all data and information from the situational analysis.

Phases of the positioning process can be represented through the so-called. 5D (Morrison 2013):

- ❖ Documenting - based on a survey of the attitudes of former and potential tourists to be able to determine the benefits of the traveler's interest related to the tourist destination.
- ❖ Deciding - consists of two parts: a) determining the image of the place of those who were or not in the destination (monitored images) and b) to decide the type of image tourists would like to have (the desired image).

- ❖ Differentiation - by positioning, transfers the basis for distinguishing the destination compared to competitors. In this regard, on the basis of analysing the competitors, it is necessary to make a decision on the competitive set, that is decision for the destinations considered as key competitors. This is followed by a separation of the factors of division and unique proposal destinations, especially in relation to the desired benefits from tourists, which can be used in order to make the destination different in comparison with its competitors.
- ❖ Designing a destination. You will need to decide on how to deliver the key elements of the positioning of potential tourists, taking into consideration the necessities of the overall destination mix, which supports the selected positional approach.
- ❖ Delivering - the destinations will have to implement and control the selected positioning approach.

Regardless of the phase of monitoring the communication process, the process ends with the formulation of positioning reports, highlighting the basis for differentiation and uniqueness of tourist destinations. Tourist destinations need general positioning provisions and several additional positioning statements whose aim is focused on two or more market segments that may include, for example business trips (individual business tourists) who want to travel for holidays (tourists) and groups, as well as different consumer groups depending on their income.

Tourism is more dependent on the environment than any other activity, because only a clean and unpolluted environment can be the basis for successful tourism. Tourism is the main beneficiary of protection because almost all tourism activities (whether it's walking, diving, fishing, etc.) are based on the use of the environment and therefore they affect on it. So that the concept of sustainability of tourism should be a balance between the environments, socio-cultural, economic component and pleasure of tourists and assist into finding the optimal form of tourism development, without degrading resources, space saturation, and environmental threats, and only then the future generations will have to be satisfied of a special experience on a tourist destination.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICES**

#### **3.1. Quality of services – literature review**

Quality is something that almost every person and every organization believe they have - and yet very few people can define exactly what it means. The problem of using superlatives in defining quality is that we tend to identify it with. According to that, it would be impossible to have a "quality" travel agency that sells average rate arrangements and sells them to average tourists. In addition, the majority of tourists will not be able to feel their quality. This, of course, is not true at all. Quality is not a function of how much it costs, but on the contrary, how well it meets the expectations of those who buy it (Al-Alak and Al-Tae, 2001).

Determining the meaning and essence of quality in the service sector is a far more complicated task than determining the quality of physical and material goods. The basic thing about providing quality in the service sector is that its definition and determination begins with the consumer, or from his understanding of quality. This is followed by the belief that quality is the ability of a product or service to meet or exceed consumer expectations.

The quality of the service can be defined as "the difference between the customer service expectations and the perceived service." If expectations are greater than the performances, then the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction arises (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990). Gronoos (1984) points out that perceiving the quality of services is dependent on the comparison of the expected service with the perceived service, and thus the outcome of the comparative evaluation. To that purpose, (Sweeney et al., 1992) establish that the low price negatively affects the quality and expectations of the services, but has a positive impact on the choice of the service.

#### **3.2. Definition and basic characteristics of tourist services**

The modern economy is going through a kind of stage known as "service revolution", especially by the end of the last century (although much faster growth and development of the service sector in relation to the primary and secondary sectors is recorded in the period from 1950 to the present). For the development of the service sector, a number of factors

have contributed, and above all, the growth of the living standard of the population and the increase in income, changes in people's way of life, family changes and gender relations, changes in the structure of the population, trends in the business market, globalization, increasing the level of urbanization and motorization at the same time with the rapid increase in the total possibilities of passenger transport traffic, innovations in the field of computer and information technologies communication, and a set of other factors.

The development of the service (tertiary) sector also determines the development of the primary and secondary sectors. By monitoring the share of the service sector in the gross domestic product and the volume of employments, it can be noticed that there is a direct correlation, that is, the development of the country increases the participation of the tertiary sector in relation to the primary and secondary sectors. Therefore, in the most developed countries in the world at the beginning of the 21st century, the share of the service sector in GDP and in the total number of employees was over 70% (Veljkovic, 2006).

The service can be defined in various ways, and generally this means any activity or benefit that one party offers to another, which is basically non-material and does not result in ownership over anything. Its production can, but does not have to be connected with physical material goods.

### **3.3. Concept and definition of the quality of tourist services**

As we noticed from the previous, the quality can be defined in different ways and the issue to determine the meaning and the essence of quality in the private sector is especially complex, and hence the meaning of the tourist sector. Namely, from quality space and time point of view, the tourist services are heterogeneous, therefore the provision of tourist services must be considered by providing synchronization of this process in terms of the quality of time and space. From the aspect of tourism development, it is necessary to strive towards providing quality of the tourist services as a whole, since it provides optimal satisfaction of the needs of the domestic and foreign tour on one hand, as well as achieving preferable work related results of the participants and satisfying the tourist demands on other hand. One of the problems in defining the quality of the tourist services is the fact that they represent general measure consisted of several elements, and some of them cannot be suitable for measuring and others can be subject of subjective evaluation. Despite that, there is a problem related to planning, building, standardization and quality maintenance among the

tourist companies, as a result to the contact between the service providers and the tourists. Also, the quality standers represent a perception of tourist services by the tourists.

### **3.4. Models for quality assessment of services**

The prominent representatives of the so-called The American School (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985) developed a widely accepted so-called GAP model of service quality, according to which the model and the quality of service is a function of the consumers' perception, that is, the ways in which the consumer saw and experienced the service and the expectations which he formed before purchasing.

### **3.5. Entities and elements of the quality of the services of travel agencies**

The first thing a passenger needs to pay attention when choosing a travel package is to find out who is the travel organizer. Only a travel agency with a license can be a travel organizer. If it is a subagent or agency that is the intermediary and sells other programs (tour operator program), the journey program must state who the organizer of the trip is, because only the organizer of the trip is responsible for its realization. The organizer of the journey is obliged to inform the passenger about the general conditions and the travel program. The passenger should be familiar with them, because they contain the elements of the agreement, i.e. rights and obligations of agencies and travelers. They must be in writing because the oral information provided at the point of sale does not bind the organizer if there is no program and general travel conditions.

The travelling program must include the following information: organizer of the passenger name, number and date of issue of the license, place and date of the beginning, and end of the journey, description of the destination and periods of stay with dates, if the stay is in parts, data for the type of transportation and characteristics of the transportation funds, type and location of the accommodation capacity, category according to the validity of the regulations of the country in which the object is located, the level of comfort, the type and manner of service, meals, total travel costs and services covered by this price, as well as the amounts of the taxes and other fees that apply to certain services and are not included in the travelling price (for example Visa costs, airport taxes, etc.), possible special obligations of

passengers as a condition for the realization of the journey (for example conditions for obtaining visas, deadlines for submitting documentation, compulsory vaccinations, etc.) and a minimum number of passengers if this is a condition for the realization of the trip, as well as a deadline for informing the passenger about the case of cancellation of the package arrangement.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITION OF TOURISM IN KOSOVO**

#### **4.1. Characteristics of Kosovo as a tourist destination**

Today by creating more and more job positions than any other sectors, the tourism is among the largest industries in the world. Countries in the early stages of tourism development, such as Kosovo, have the opportunity to gain many benefits from tourism, such as reducing poverty and increasing the economic development. In order to achieve sustainable tourism development, public institutions should provide support to legislation and an institutional framework that is favorable for private sector development and is sufficient for the quality for the tourists. This covers the appropriate infrastructure, the promotion of tourism potentials, good transport, visa facilitation and appropriate policies to increase the demand. Preferential taxation is an additional condition and it can help the investments without putting too much burden onto the private sector, since without it, it can cause an increase in prices that leads to non-competitiveness in comparison with other countries in the region. Furthermore, the education of tourism personnel and hospitality had a direct impact on the competitiveness of tourism products. Currently, universities in Kosovo do not offer comprehensive studies of tourism and hospitality. Although public institutions recognize the importance of the economic impact of tourism, this sector suffers from a lack of a coordination mechanism, which would develop dialogue among stakeholders in various ministries, departments, agencies, academic institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations and the donor community. The current decision-making process in Kosovo may result in conflicting political decisions, such as Kosovo's visa regime and promotion, taxes on passenger airlines, and generally a lack of strategic goals. Furthermore, the lack of an inclusive tourism strategy and its promotion and development is an additional obstacle to coordinating agencies.

According to the World Tourism Organization, Europe obtains 41% of the total revenue from international tourism, making Southeast Europe one of the fastest growing

regions. The tourism is ranked as the sixth highest source of international trade exchange for developing countries.

According to this, Kosovo can benefit from being part of the Balkan tour. The tourism industry in Kosovo is an embryo compared to other Southeast European countries. This is mainly as a result of the lack of investments during the last decades, inadequate tourism programs and offers from the private sector, the lack of educated travel agents, inadequate policies for investors, and lack of coordination between private stakeholders and government agencies. Although the number of tourists and the length of their stay has increased significantly over the last ten years in Kosovo, the number of international visits per year is far below the regional average. The largest numbers of tourists visit Kosovo during the summer. This is primarily due to the Diaspora, who return home every summer, and bring a huge impact on the local economy and especially in the tourist sector. Currently, Kosovo does not have a comprehensive tourism strategy, and the current Law on Tourism has not been fully implemented. The mandate for the development of tourism in Kosovo is divided on a local and central level. However, the government has the highest authority to act because it has a larger budget than local authorities and has the authority to draft laws and develop strategies. Among other things, the central government is establishing a legal and institutional facilitation of strategic investments, and coordinating dialogue among stakeholders.

Significant infrastructure improvements have contributed to the improvement of transport, and this has a positive impact on the flow of tourists in the Kosovo economy. For example, in 2011, the Pristina-Tirana highway was opened, while the second highway, Pristina-Skopje, should be opened in 2018 and it is expected to further intensify the flow of international tourists. The Pristina airport, the only commercial airport in Kosovo, was taken over by a Turkish-French consortium in 2010, and in 2013 a new terminal was constructed that doubled the capacity of the airport and modernized its infrastructure.

#### **4.2. Kosovo's traffic connections**

Modern tourism requires wide roads such as the European highways. Among other things, or as a result to the overall economic development of Kosovo, but due to improved communication in the tourism, the construction of highways has begun. These are the main connecting axes. The highways enable Kosovo to be a respectable competitor in the European tourism market.

Joining the construction of roads, bases of other facilities have been built, such as services, gas stations, traffic information facilities as an accompanying infrastructure. Without them, modern tourism cannot be realized. The base of traffic has also been strengthened. Also, the construction of the post offices, especially within tourist locations, increased the possibilities of telephone and Internet lines. The possibility to communicate with the whole world has been done.

### **4.3. Institutional framework**

Tourist administrative bodies that exist in the state hierarchy often show the level of development of the sector, as well as the care and priority of national governments for the development of tourism. In the case of tourism in Kosovo, administrative bodies were discredited from a full government department to their division within the Ministry of Trade and Industry, which is the lowest body of a ministry. Therefore, it is clear that Kosovo has a weak national framework for tourism development, which contributes to low institutional priority and budget allocation. The National Tourism Administrative Body (NTA) is also a part of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The low status of NTA contradicts government programs that rank tourism as an important sector for economic development in Kosovo for the private sector and the economy in general (Democracy for Development Institute, 2017). In other countries in the region, tourism is on the highest level in government hierarchies. For example, Croatia has the Ministry of Tourism, Albania, the Ministry of Tourism and Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Industry, Serbia has the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications. Macedonia is the only country along with Kosovo that does not have a Ministry of Tourism. However, unlike Kosovo, there is a government agency that exclusively works to promote tourism in Macedonia and which is located within the Ministry of Economy.

### **4.4. Analysis of visitors and the number of realized overnight stays**

Bearing in mind the abovementioned, in this section we will try to perform an analysis of the tourism in Kosovo. In doing so, our attention will be focused on analyzing the number of visitors and overnight stays in Kosovo. Also, in this point, we will also analyze the accommodation capacities which are available in Kosovo. We will also make a comparison between different regions in Kosovo in order to see the possibilities of tourism in there. We

will complete this section with a sublime analysis of the plans and projects that are intended for Kosovo.

Analyzing the period from 2008 to 2015 for the total number of visits in Table 5, we can say that in Kosovo we have an increase in the total number of visits from 44,294 thousands in 2008 to 139 438 thousand in 2015. If we analyze the total number of visits of the domestic tourists, we can notice that in 2008 the number of visits was 19 678 thousand, and the number was constantly increasing in the analyzed period, and in 2015, the number of visits of the domestic tourists amounted 60 200 thousands. Regarding the number of visits of foreign tourists to Kosovo, we can say that there is also a constant increase, so from the total number of visits of foreign tourists in 2008 which was 24 616, their number is increased to 79 238 thousand. Only the period from 2010 and 2011 is an exception, but in our opinion this is due to the European debt crisis when everywhere in the world the number of foreign tourists began to decline.

#### **4.5. Revenues in the field of tourism**

Tourism is one of the leading economic branches, and has a major contribution to the economy in almost all countries of the world. In order to determine the economic significance of tourism in a country, the balance of payments is most often used in the literature. It records all international transactions of the country, including those that come with tourism. It can be said that as a tourist balance, a portion of the balance of payments that provides insight into the incomes and expenditures that a country has from international tourism in a certain period of time can be identified. Taking into account all this, the tourist balance shows the total exchange of goods and services expressed in financial amounts between a certain country and other countries in the world. As we already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, it is not surprising that tourism has a major impact on the payment balance of many countries, and doing so it directly affects their external liquidity. As a rule, the situation in the balance of payments reflects the real economic situation of the country. The fact that international tourism can play an important role in increasing the country's total revenues, through revenues derived from the consumption of foreign tourists in the country is undeniable.

The impact of international tourism on the balance of payments depends on the productive capacities of the country, which is a function of its geographical, economic, technical, social and other characteristics from its level of development. However it is very difficult to calculate the effect that tourism has onto the payment balance of the country. The

reasons are most often contained in the lack of necessary information, since many countries do not collect the necessary statistical data (as is the case with Kosovo). The calculation of these effects is particularly aggravated in developing countries characterized by high import dependence, as they require the import of a large number of goods used by tourists, as well as equipment for tourism infrastructure.

#### **4.6. Tourist regions in Kosovo**

Kosovo is divided into five tourist regions: the central region of Pristina, the tourist region of the Albanian Alps (Cursed Mountains), the Shara tourist region, the Annamorava tourist region and the tourist region Mitrovica.

##### **The central region of Pristina**

The central tourist region of Pristina is the epicenter of all tourist sites in Kosovo (Pristina, Besiana, Drenas, Lipjan, Kastriot and Fushe Kosova). Although tourism in these areas has no emphasis directions on development, this region is important for the development of transit and business tourism, the richness of important monuments of cultural and historical heritage and the provision of the best level of tourist services in Kosovo. The priority types of tourism in the region of Pristina are: business tourism, congress tourism, cultural tourism, transit tourism and summer tourism. Another tourist destination for visiting this region is the village of Janjevo. It is a multiethnic village (with Albanian, Croatian, Turkish and other communities). There is one Catholic church and a Muslim mosque and it is the birthplace of folklorist and poet Shtefan Ghekovi (best known as a garner of the oral tradition of "Kanun" from the traditional Albanian law of Leke Dukagjini) and the first official post office in Kosovo.

##### **The tourist region of the Albanian Alps**

The tourist region of the Albanian Alps is the main region for the development of tourism (the municipalities of Pec, Decan, Burim, Klina, Gjakova and Rahovec). According to natural specifications and possibilities for relief, biogeographically diversity of extremely rich water resources, rich landscape and environmental characteristics, the Albanian Alps undoubtedly create the most unique mountain massive in the region. The Albanian Alps represent the cumulative values in terms of:

- Treasure, frequency, diversity and geomorphologic features of the objects (mountains, ravines, canyons, caves, etc.);

- Morphological conditions for the development of winter sports, alpinism and caving;
- Restoration and potential capacity of ski trails (65,396 m and the corresponding number of skiers per hour), with other areas and conditions for the development of winter sports tourism.

As destination locations with, in particular, impressive geomorphologic phenomena containing visible aesthetic attributes are: the Rugova ravine, the spring on Drina and Barda (the White Drim), the Mirusha waterfall, the Radavci cave, the Pec bath and the Rocky crests. The area of the Albanian Alps has a special touristic value, but it is also a factor for assessing the entire touristic nature of the Albanian Alps. All these priorities enable and stimulate the development of the following types of tourism: Mountain tourism, tourism for curative purposes, cultural tourism, sport and recreational tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, transit tourism, congress tourism, winter tourism, etc.

### **Tourist region Shara**

Shara's tourism region represents the mountain massive as the most prominent part of Kosovo, which includes the following municipalities: Prizren, Ferizaj, Shteperce, Dragash, Kachanik and Teranda. Shara's tourism region, along with the Albanian Alps, is the most widespread region in Kosovo where highly preserved natural areas and unique infrastructure can be found. In this zone the following canyons of Drini and Barda (White Drim), Prizren and Lumbarbar (Bistrica), Lepenc and their branches, cities such as Prizren and Urizaj can be found, as well as communication corridors with appropriate equipment and accompanying services. The Shara tourist region is not monocentric because, apart from Prizren as the most basic tourist city, there is Urizaj (with appropriate communication position), then Shara (Dragash), Teranda and Kachanik. Due to the appropriate position, all the aforementioned places represent the initial points that will enable us to use stationary tourist facilities and other planned trip destinations. The region of Shara (from Luboten on the north-east to the Brod on the southwest) is divided into three main zones: the Luboten zone and Brezovica, the middle zone along the Prizren road and the Brody zone. Priority types of tourism in the region of Shara are: mountain tourism, winter sports tourism, rural tourism, hunting and fishing, alpinism, etc.

### **The tourist region of Anamorava**

The tourist region of Anamorava covers the following municipalities: Gnjilane, Vitia, Dardana and Artana. Gnjilane is the capital of this tourist region. The most important places in the municipality of Gnjilane for tourism development are: Karadaku mountains, Zhezidi Mountains, thermal water resources in Pogradia, Doberkan, objects of cultural and historical heritage, etc. In Vitia there is also the rehabilitation center Klakoti Spa, part of Karadaku Mountains, but there are also monuments of cultural heritage in Letnice, Stubell, which are important for the development of cultural tourism, etc. In Dardana, the most important places for tourism development are: Kika, a convenient place to build a tourism center for grass, while Gmica and Lisocka are suitable places for recreational and sports tourism. These places have been declared as places of special importance. Meanwhile, Artana is among the oldest centers in Kosovo. In Artana, you can also find Artana Castle which is an object that in the future tourists can often go and visit it, etc. The priority types of tourism products in the region of Anamorava are: health tourism, transit tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism, hunting, fishing etc.

### **Tourist region Mitrovica**

In the Mitrovica tourist region there are qualitative potentials (municipalities: Mitrovica, Zubin Potok, Leposavik, Skenderaj and Vushtri), but they are not at the same level as the potentials of Shara and the Albanian Alps. Mitrovica is the capital of this touristic region. The municipality Mitrovica is rich with monuments that represent a cultural and historical heritage. Chale e Bagoresh is also a convenient place for the development of many types of tourism in the future. Skenderaj is a city that belongs to this tourist region which is rich in monuments of cultural and historical heritage. Rural and recreational tourism can also be developed. The city of Vushtrrie is among the oldest centers in Kosovo where there are potentials for the development of cultural, transit and recreational tourism. More suitable places for the development of this type of tourism are: Qyqavica, Shala e Bajgorës and some very old monuments of cultural and historical heritage, such as: The stone bridge, Amam, castle, etc. Priority types of tourism products in the Mitrovica region are: mountain tourism, rural tourism, tourism for curative purposes, cultural tourism, transit tourism, hunting, fishing etc.

Within this point, we tried to briefly present the tourist regions in Kosovo, i.e. how they are divided and by which specificities and characteristics they are distinguished. Through the analysis of regions in Kosovo, and perceiving the strengths and weaknesses of

the regions, the activities of all relevant institutions could be further streamlined, about which type of tourism is characteristic of a particular region, what are the accommodation capacities, infrastructure, etc., what will be detailed discussed in the next section of this chapter.

#### **4.7. Potentials and obstacles to the development of tourism in Kosovo**

Kosovo covers an area of 10,908 square kilometers and is located in south-eastern Europe. With its central position in the Balkans, it serves as a link in the relationship between Central and Southeastern Europe, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea. According to the last census, 1,773,872 inhabitants live there, of which 54% are men and 46% are women. The distribution of the population by age group reveals that 28% are under the age of 14, 65% is between 15 and 64, and 7% is more than 65 years old, which means that the population in Kosovo has an average age of about 27 years.

#### **4.8. Future directions of development of the tourism in Kosovo**

Despite the positive developments in recent years, the available tourism products and services are still limited. There is very little printed and electronic information about tourist sites, attractions, as well as available products and services. There are very few tourist offers with mountain products and rural tourism, or cross-border tourism. There is no information in the community and among tour operators for potential tourism products in rural and mountain areas that can be offered for sale.

Until now, the tourism sector was not treated as a priority sector and most of the activities were supported by donors and there was no proper institutional coordination of these activities. Given the natural and cultural wealth of Kosovo, the main pillars of Kosovo's tourism product are cultural tourism; mountain and Alpine tourism; rural tourism, environmentally friendly and alternative; active tourism; cross-border travelling; meetings and conferences.

The current development of the tourism sector is still far from its potential. In this context, the development of attractive and tourist-oriented offers can create opportunities for job creation, and in nature this sector requires a lot of workforce engagement (intensive work). On the other hand, given that the potential of tourism in Kosovo is mainly rural and

mountain tourism, the development of the tourism sector will increase employment and it will also increase the well-being of the rural population in Kosovo.

In order to promote the development of tourism products and to increase the economic value of tourism, the competent authorities in Kosovo should address this issue more closely. The focus should be on identifying local products and those with regional potential that would significantly contribute to the development of tourism in Kosovo, increase of tourist capacity, increase of number of visitors, especially foreigners, increase of tourism income, increase of economy (increase of employment, regional development, and development of SMEs). Among other things, this measure requires increased institutional coordination and improvement of the legal infrastructure.

Bearing in mind the abovementioned, the Government of Kosovo has developed a Program called the Kosovo Economic Reform Program (ERP) 2017 - 2019, which, among other things, has guidelines for strengthening and promoting tourism in Kosovo. Therefore, for the purposes of implementing the reforms, the activities to be undertaken during 2017 include improving the legal, institutional and policy framework for the tourism sector. In addition, they implement international standards for improving the quality of services in tourism and hospitality. Another activity will include a research of the products in the tourist regions of Pristina and Mitrovica, focusing on the identification of priority products for development and information about businesses for tourism products. The Ministry of Commerce will prepare a guide to unite the tourist signalization throughout the country and will continue to support the municipalities for the establishment of tourist information offices.

During the 2018 a study of the potentials and needs of the accommodation sector in different regions and countries as a promising basis for catering investors and companies is supposed to be conducted as well as for exploring products in the tourist region of Anamorava, focusing on identifying the priority for development and information for businesses of tourism products.

Activities for 2019 include potential evaluation and encouragement of group approach in different regions and areas (wine and viticulture, health / baths and rural tourism, hiking and active tourism, etc.), as well as analysis of the potentials and needs related to the capacities for conferences and meetings.

Impact on the budget: In order to carry out activities 10,000 Euros will be allocated from the Kosovo budget for each of 2017-2019. The expected donor support for 2017-2019 is 16,000 euros, 20,000 euros and 16,000 euros, respectively.

Expected impact on competitiveness: The identification and development of new tourism products will result in an increase in the number of tourism businesses and employees that sell these products, expanding Kosovo's tourist offer as a destination and improving the quality of delivery of tourist services. As a result, Kosovo is expected to become more attractive to visitors, resulting in increased revenue generation and a direct impact on GDP growth.

Expected impact on social issues: Increasing the capacity of tourism directly contributes to increasing the consumption of tourism services in these parts and participating in global and regional value chains, enabling economies to add more value to local tourism industries and, consequently, boosting employment and well-being. Tourism development will expand in rural and mountain areas in order to create employment and increase family businesses, enabling women easy employment, especially in culinary (offering local traditional foods) and handicrafts.

Potential risks: The lack of institutional human capacities in tourism can jeopardize the full implementation of the abovementioned guidelines. Taking into account that many activities are related to municipalities and other support institutions, if they do not express a willingness to fully implement the activities this may represent a great risk.

Kosovo has a real chance to prospectively develop tourism. This estimation is based on the natural and anthropogenic sources in Kosovo. Of course certain assumptions are needed, especially in law and management and organizational sense, which will create a favorable environment for further investments in tourism and for its future development. Such investments should include direct investments in tourism facilities, as well as investments in knowledge and continuing education for more employees, and then research and development projects in the business of connecting companies, organizing the marketing activities of companies, organization and destination, and in other domains that will enhance the orientation of domestic and international clients and their future requirements. Given the above assumptions, we can conclude that the creators' ability is also a basis for the development of tourism and the public sector, and then for development of other participants in the economy and society as a whole, and it can be predetermined to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and sustainable development of Kosovo as a tourist destination on the market, and in a more globalized world which narrows down by the increasing competitiveness and ability for innovation.

The main responsibility of the state and the government is to undertake additional strategic comprehensive measures for the sustainable development of tourism. The strategy

should be developed in a participatory manner, through public consultations with various factors involved in tourism. As can be noted above, there are enough actors who have already managed to develop and improve the tourist offer through private and local initiatives. These experiences should be translated into a synergistic plan and action at the national level.

We should focus on the further development of the tourism offer itself: modern tourists are interested in a combination of experiences, whether it's cultural or historical, or enjoying into the nature or the local food and music, etc. Current partial tourist offers should be linked to larger and more complete offers, which will motivate the tourists to increase the number of nights spent, as well as the costs related to unemployment, including the development of various forms of indirect tourism income. The collection and processing of tourism-related data should be strengthened and improved. Systems and mechanisms that will provide a sound basis for fact-based and public policy strategies are supposed to be developed. Such systems will also be essential in monitoring the implementation of such policies and, whenever necessary, for designing and undertaking corrective actions.

The development of tourism should be imposed on a higher level onto the government agenda. This in particular involves an increase in the allocation of budget funds for this purpose. The government should also try to motivate foreign donors and partners to prioritize the sustainable development of tourism on their agendas and to invest additional funds.

The training of managers and professionals in tourism should be strengthened. As in all industries, skilled management and staff are crucial for the development of tourism. Higher education institutions that have studies in the field of tourism should incorporate modern approaches in this sector into their curricula.

Promotion should be strengthened at national and international level. Local self-government units should be involved in the process and provide their contribution to the promotion of natural, cultural and historical sites and other tourism-related events in their local communities. This also includes support for the production and promotion of local souvenirs and products that reflect local customs.

Finally, the development of tourism should be properly intertwined in other strategic government plans and public policies. The overall development policies in various areas (development of the economy, infrastructure, culture, education, etc.) should support and promote the sustainable development of tourism. This will ensure the application of the required multidisciplinary approach and will lead to improved coordination between different departments and units, as well as other actors on a local and national level.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **KOSOVO BRANDING AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

#### **5.1. Application of marketing strategy to the tourism market in Kosovo**

One of the most important factors in Kosovo's economic development is the marketing concept, which is why the same applies to Kosovo tourism (Ukaj, 2010). Having in mind the above mentioned in this paper, the importance of completing legislation and ensuring qualitative management in tourist activities, marketing should be the starter and pivot of all activities in each individual tourist entity and tourism in general. Marketing expands activities in all areas of tourism, but also creates its specificity, depending on the specificities of the tourism product, which consists of services offered by different companies in order to meet the tourist needs.

This complexity originates from the marketing operations and the complexity of the tourism product, which consists of several elements. Given this complexity, it should be noted that at the same time individual activities are carried out in the tourist companies within the regional and national tourism associations, as well as regional and local authorities who work on the identification, presentation and evaluation of the basic elements of Kosovo's tourism product.

Having in mind the importance and uniqueness of the Kosovo tourism sector and its tourism product, the marketing concept that is supposed to be used should have a unique compilation, in order to adjust the specifications but also to adapt to the current domestic and international environment, in order to be capable to satisfy and fulfill the needs of many different segments of consumers – tourists.

Because it is necessary to synchronize and coordinate the activities at the level of enterprises and the state, and in order to implement a marketing strategy in the development of tourism, two levels are identified, levels where the activities would develop and those are macro and micro level.

#### **5.2. Tourist product in Kosovo from the aspect of marketing**

The tourism is a specific activity, which implies the existence of the tradition and the development in the past, and which serves as a basis for improving the offer and creating a

specificity of the tourist offers for one region, the country as a whole or the wider region such as the Western Balkans i.e. Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro.

The tradition of tourism in Kosovo originates from the 1980s, and due to the 20-year period of political turmoil in the country and beyond, it stagnated and could not follow the world events in the tourism industry. It turns out that the existence of Kosovo's tourism product cannot be ignored, but it is necessary to explore the resources, with the help of marketing to determine and categorize its instruments and to conduct a plan and strategy for the best performances of the offer available in the domestic and the international tourist market.

The marketing is not omnipotent in shaping and presenting the tourist product, but it has a great effect since in its analysis it uses the knowledge, the achievements of other disciplines such as economic, political, environmental, biological and other disciplines (Ukaj, 2008).

Marketing in tourism uses the advantage that the tourist activity possesses by the fact that it joints several economy branches and has a multiplicative effect on them, for example agriculture, industry, food and beverage, shops, entertainment industry (show business), traffic and so on. The touristic product Kosovo, monitored by the aspect of the tourist offer, is a group of different material goods and services that are offered in order to satisfy the tourist's needs where they choose Kosovo as a destination for fulfilling their tourist needs. In offering its tourist product, Kosovo, among other things offers cultural and historical tourism, continental tourism, winter tourism, health tourism, etc.

### **5.3. The price of the tourism product**

The price is one of the marketing mix instruments used alone or in combination with other marketing mix instruments and it can facilitate the achievement of business goals (Milisavljevic, 2003). Considering as a basis the fact that within its tourist offer Kosovo is influenced by the free market way of price formation, without the influence of the government institutions, it can be concluded that the price of tourist products determines the tourist market where the supply and demand meet. It would be good if, this conflict of supply and demand, does not include the specificity of the Kosovo market, such as:

- Monopoly position of some companies that offer tourist services (hotels in Pristina, the travel agency that organizes airport traffic);

- Lack of institutional organization in monitoring the quality of services, which are in a relative disproportion by the negative reflection, at the higher level of prices in terms of the quality of the services provided.
- Political factor, taking into consideration the stage where Kosovo is situated now, the situation status and the future of Kosovo in the Balkan region, and the opportunities for full participation in international institutions, such as regional tourism associations, and wider integration into the European Union, etc.

#### **5.4. Distribution of the tourist product**

Knowing the market trends and the specifics of tourism, where the tourist product cannot be delivered, directly at any time, to the consumers – the visitors, it is a matter of expressing the existence of a problem related to the place and the role of the distribution channels.

There are two approaches to submit the tourist product from the "producer" to the final consumer. Namely, approaches through direct channels, i.e. from the manufacturer to the consumer, and indirect channels, with the help of intermediaries. It is normal for Kosovo to use one of these two approaches, but it is also necessary to combine these two methods to achieve better results, but this is influenced by various factors such as, how much would cost the service providers if they use a mediator, the goals that should be achieved by the company, the ability to satisfy the demands of intermediaries in terms of price, quality of products and services, and so on.

#### **5.5. Promotion of the tourism product**

The manner of applying the promotion in the tourism is depending on the type, the quality, the price and the distribution of the products and the services. Promotion is a process of communication between companies and consumers, which aims to stimulate sales. Carriers of production and distribution and promotion services in Kosovo determine the way of communicating with customers, rely on two strategies for advertising their offers on the market:

- Strategy "Company to Consumers" and

- Strategy "Company to the company".

The marketing strategy "Company towards consumers" - from providers of tourism products and services is used to attract the attention of consumers towards their offer. Now it is based on the usage of various media, including the usage of various databases used to send messages over the Internet. This strategy has the advantage of providing an opportunity for greater control, type and content of messages that are supposed to be sent, as well as the ability to select groups or individuals to whom they want to send the promotional messages. The marketing strategy called "Company to the Company" - from companies that have to offer hotel services in Kosovo, have the opportunity to do so through agents who take responsibility for selling and advertising their offer. Hence, brokers are responsible for preparing and sending promotional messages to final consumers. The advantage of this strategy is that the agent carries the obligations and costs of marketing, but also the risk of success or failure. But on the contrary of using direct communication, by this strategy the ability to control the type and content of promotional messages sent to consumer customers is lost. The promotional instruments used by tourism and catering companies are numerous and diverse, all in an attempt to attract a larger percentage of the market and the consumers. Communication with the public is conceived as an extremely important way to win a place on the tourism market and this is reflected in the activity of the usage of instruments, such as media advertisements, public relations, promotion of sales outlets, printing catalogs and brochures, web page creation - website, sponsorship of various events, etc.

## **5.6. The positioning, creating and branding of Kosovo as a tourist destination**

The analyzed situation of Kosovo as a tourist destination in relation to foreign tourist demand and analysis of the competitive situation in Kosovo as a tourist destination in general and in terms of competition is one of the basic conclusions that Kosovo is not appropriately positioned as a tourist destination in the international market. The prevailing idea is that Kosovo as a tourist destination ranges from a mainly neutral to a mildly positive, as a result to the profound changes which are primarily related to the promotional activities, and in particular to the general public in countries that are the main generators of the demand in the international market.

It should not be forgotten that until 2008 Kosovo did not have a defined position on the international market, and therefore did not have a proper image as a tourist destination. In

addition, the image of Kosovo was created on the basis of receiving information, mainly from the media, while the share of information emerging from the operation of promotion as part of the marketing mix was extremely smaller. Regardless of the relationship between these groups of information, the work of the afore mentioned was significantly stronger, more striking and it lasted longer.

### **5.7. Competitiveness and sustainability of Kosovo as a tourist destination**

Trends in international tourism are seen, above all, by the extraordinary competition and the tendency of many countries to achieve common development goals, through the development of tourism they suggest that the attractiveness and competitive advantages for tourism development within the destinations must be properly assessed, especially in comparison with other countries. According to us, there are different tourist resources in Kosovo, and therefore the advantages of the geographical position as a competitive advantage must be used, and also there must be an understanding of the competition and its impact and a clear definition of what Kosovo really wants to represent on the international market. On the other hand, as a key challenge in this regard, compiling and implementing a national tourism strategy for Kosovo is considered.

Namely, there is currently no national tourism strategy in Kosovo. A strategy is being developed, since it is not just a tourist strategy, as it is part of the Strategy for the Development of the Private Sector (Government of the Republic of Kosovo 2016). The Kosovo government recognizes the potential for developing the winter, the mountain, the recreational sports and the cultural tourism. According to the government program, there is a plan for the development of infrastructure, which includes air and road connections between Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. Road connections with Albania and Macedonia should include Kosovo as part of a larger Balkan tourist map for visitors. The focus of the Government Program for 2015-2018 is (Program of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 2015):

- Improving and developing the infrastructure that enables the development of tourism;
- Preparation of tourist maps for each municipality;
- Re-evaluation of the Kosovo's tourist potential based on international standards;

- Investing in the improvement of local gastronomy and its usage as a tourist product;
- Promoting and supporting hospital (health) tourism;
- Promotion of mountain tourism in tourist destinations with high altitude, especially in the mountains Bjeshket e Nemuna and Shara;
- Cooperation with local communities in the preservation of natural monuments;
- Opening of tourist websites for the entire territory of Kosovo and tourist sites separately;
- Creating a joint tourist offer with the Republic of Albania for foreign visitors and investors and for the Albanian Diaspora.

Although the government considers tourism as a sector of great potential, very little has been done to implement the projects envisaged by the program itself.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **TRAVEL AGENCIES IN KOSOVO AND THEIR ROLE IN PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM**

#### **6.1. The role of travel agencies in promoting Kosovo as a tourist destination**

Tourism as an economic and social phenomenon daily increases its own meaning. This is above all conditioned by the massive involvement of people from all over the world on tourist trips, which has been particularly intensified in the last 35-40 years. It represents one of the most massive phenomena in the modern society, connected with the needs of temporary changing of place of residence, primarily as a result to leisure and relaxation. Tourism comes to the fore especially when the number of people involved in tourist trips has increased massively and has received such dimensions that began to affect onto the formation of certain other phenomena and relationships that have contributed to making tourism a particularly important factor in the social and economic sense.

Tourists have growing demands, and the goal of the tourist industry is meeting their expectations. The improvement of the quality leads to the development of tourism that fulfils the demands of the tourists and the service providers, by preserving natural and cultural

resources and encouraging the economic development of Kosovo. Quality must become the main direction of a strategy for the development of tourism in Kosovo. For each tourist product and service, quality standards should be set and should be imposed as a guarantee of overall quality. Only such a strategic approach to the planning of tourism development should enable the improvement of quality at the national level. Therefore, Kosovo should create a strategy for the tourism development in the country in order to promote itself as a country around the world. It determines how others will look to Kosovo and it will be able to create a picture to the world for what it offers, not just those who are interested in tourism, but also for all others who show interest in the "youngest state in Europe".

Nevertheless, the attractiveness of Kosovo as a tourist destination is now very low. The long-term isolation from European and world markets, the poor image, the lack of skilled and experienced staff and lack of innovations has reduced Kosovo's competitiveness in the tourism market. A tourist product practically does not exist. The overall tourist offer is in some way fragmented and isolated, so the travel agencies have to combine all of that and integrate it, actually to turn the disorganized into organized.

## **6.2. Empirical research on the role of travel agencies on the promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination and the impact of quality**

Within this section, we will familiarize ourselves with the research framework in this paper, the target sample, the method of data collection, the variability and the methods that will be applied for their analysis. Other issues to be discussed in this chapter include a data collection technique, a sample size, and a presentation of data. Within this chapter, various statistical methods that will be used to test the hypotheses will also be discussed.

### **6.2.1. Choosing a method of research**

According to (Cooper and Schindler 2008) research, it represents the regulation of all conditions that affect research ranging from data collection to donor analysis. In order to determine the influence between the selected variables in this dissertation we will use the quantitative approach. Using this method, the selected data can be calculated and statistically analyzed (Zikmund and Babin, 2007). Although (Han et al., 2008), note that using the quantitative methods could not provide the depth of the analysis due to a lack of qualitative data, they are still used in literature to test the given hypotheses.

In order to create an image of the impact by the quality services of travel agencies onto the promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination we prepared and conducted a questionnaire that was offered to 25 travel agencies in Kosovo. Of these, only 18 agencies accepted to offer the questionnaire to their clients. For the dissertation requirements, 200 questionnaires were prepared. 148 respondents responded to the questionnaire, which is a response of 74%. According to Jobberand and Fahy 2006, this method of analysis is the most efficient, the simplest and the easiest way to obtain a large number of data that can be accurately compared and which is necessary for a better understanding of the subject of research. In addition, Satrirenjit, Alistair, and Martin, 2012 say that the questionnaires provide clarifications by the respondents which can be collected immediately after the examination. The questionnaire was conducted in the period June-August 2017, that is, during the period when travel agencies were visited by the largest number of clients. In order to determine who are current customers we will use the definition by (Fickand, 1991), who under the current customer understands "someone who visited one or more travel agencies in the previous three months".

Descriptive statistical analysis was used for the questions from the first part. For the questions from the second part, from this research we will use the technique and we will present the obtained results in a tabular manner. From the answers from the second part we will receive information about the opinion of the respondents on the influence of travel agencies on the promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination. We will combine the responses from this part of the questionnaire with the responses from the third, fourth and fifth sections, and in that way we will provide guidelines and recommendations on where and to what the travel agencies should be directed in the future in order to have satisfied visitors, who in future, would also visit Kosovo and will contribute to its affirmation and promotion as a tourist destination. Furthermore, for the questions from the third, fourth and fifth sections, t-tests are used in order to evaluate the significance of the differences between the arithmetic meanings of expectations and the perceptions of a level of significance from  $p < 0,05$ . Further, we used the Principle Component Analysis that was carried out in order to reduce the 26 service attributes in a set of simplified dimensions. These attributes were used by (Lamand and Zhang, 1999; Shahin 2004).

A multiple regression analysis was also carried out to examine the impacts and the relative importance of the new dimensions, the attainment of the main components, relative to the dependent variable that is represented through the overall satisfaction of the buyer.

### **6.2.2. Relevance of the results**

In order to determine whether the applied test is valid, or to what extent we can rely on the results obtained through the analysis, it is necessary to make tests for examining their relevance. If the testing shows that negative results have been obtained, that is, if it is determined that the tests in the sample are not relevant, then we could not rely the results of the test at all. The literature knows more tests to evaluate the relevance of the results. For the purposes of this doctoral dissertation, we will use the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Hempel, 2003). This method is most commonly used to evaluate the relevance of the results, because we cannot assess the reliability of the tests that is, the questions whose tasks are evaluated with 0 or 1 (or true / false), as well as tests whose answers are assessed with the so-called Rating Scales (as it is in our case) (Siegle, 2003). Cronbach's coefficient gives the intrinsic coefficient of the assessment of the relevance that can be expected. If the inner relation is high, it means that security is high. However, if the coefficient is low, relevant conclusions cannot be drawn and they should be examined in some other way. Cronbach's coefficient is calculated as the arithmetic mean of all probable division of the test.

According to (Wisher and Olson, 2003) if  $> 0.70$ , then the test is relevant but too close to 1 can mean redundancy, or unnecessary repetition of it through different tests. For calculating the Kronbach coefficient we will use the SPSS 20 software.

## **CONCLUSION**

Tourists have growing demands, and the goal of every industry, and of course, the hospitality industry is to meet their needs and expectations. The quality improvement leads to the development of tourism which satisfies the tourists and the service providers, while in the same time it preserves the natural and cultural resources and also stimulates the economic development of Kosovo. The quality must be the main direction of the tourism development strategy in Kosovo. For each tourist product and service, it should prescribe the quality standards as a guarantee of total quality. Precisely this strategic approach in the planning of tourism development is supposed to enable the quality improvement on a national level. Travel agents in Kosovo should be familiar with their own products. They should get to know the country's tourist offer in order to create an offer which "cannot be denied". The traveler must be sure that he will be poor if he does not experience what "must be seen into

his life". After awakening the interest, over time it will be turned into dependence, a need for every lover in travel, adventure history, culture, art, science, music, play.

The main finding of the research is that travel agencies represent a significant fact for the promotion of Kosovo as a tourist destination and there is a significant gap between customer expectations and perceptions that correspond to the quality of service delivered by travel agencies, suggesting that service expectations were not met.

The results of the analysis of factors suggest the existence of five factors: responsibility, security, empathy, resources and corporate image, and tangibility. Furthermore, the analysis of the five quality factors has shown that resources and corporate image are the most important factors that affect the overall satisfaction of consumers followed by a factor of responsibility, security, sensitivity and empathy. This signifies that travel agencies in Kosovo must pay more attention to improving these two important areas in terms of adequate capacity in order to meet customer needs, sufficient resources, to offer good service, the employees need to have sufficient product knowledge and promotional strategies.

Although modern business approaches are still insufficiently integrated in the work of Kosovo's agencies, one can still see a tendency of a growing awareness of the domestic tourism sector about the importance of implementing marketing strategies and quality management. In doing so, the main obstacle lies in the fact that travel agencies in Kosovo do not understand quality investments as constants, and the application of modern marketing approach to users and their requirements as their starting point in their work are neglected to a certain extent.

Starting from the thesis that the most precise definition for the quality of the tourist services for a certain time and space is given only by the user of the service, it can be concluded that travel agencies have set the quality as the basic and inevitable benchmark of all-business processes, to the extent that they pay attention to their customers and their requirements and service satisfaction. From the above mentioned it is evident that the quality system imposes an obligation to necessarily accept market information obtained through market research to provide quality information that will be the basis for making future business decisions.

On the other hand, focusing on the operation of the sensitive tourism market and its rapidly evolving demands put the travel agencies into situation where they have to continuously explore the expectations of users, but also to measure the achieved level of satisfaction by the services provided by the travel agencies. Thus, marketing information for

customer needs and satisfying the needs of travel agencies will be the basic directions for future planning of their operations. Identifying and recognizing the requirements of potential service users represent basic inputs to agency business processes, while customer satisfaction information is interpreted as a process output result. However, the above mentioned result of the travel agency process is also the basis for designing the inputs for the next cycle of the process, and every time it is set up on a higher level. This achieves one of the key preconditions for efficient application and improvement of the quality service system.

Furthermore, the recommendations that arise from this dissertation are that in Kosovo it is necessary to establish an efficient system for supporting clusters of sales agencies in individual markets and also supporting some certain forms of tourism. Namely, today's concept of communication with the market mainly focuses on creating a general image of Kosovo as a tourist destination, and insufficiently values the possibility of differentiating the Kosovo tourist offer for different branches in the market and the so called products with special interest, like for example archaeological, geological and other forms of tourism. In addition, it is necessary to provide funding for the marketing activities of efficient clusters of travel agencies focused on selling activities, primarily on closer markets and also on specific market branches for which Kosovo has a basis.

It is also good to directly promote tourism products with special interests on the market and to encourage diversification of production measures. The current concept of market communication emphasizes the individual elements of tourism services (accommodation, food, transportation, etc.), while the presentation of complex tourism products (package arrangements, tour, outings, events, gatherings) is unattainable and ultimately productively undifferentiated. In that sense, it is necessary to promote complex tourism products directly, especially those intended for special interests on the market, which contain reasons for the accomplishing the target and managing a full experience during their residence.

In addition, it is necessary to encourage receptive travel agencies to produce and publish the most highly differentiated and specifically profiled residency programs.

Furthermore, it would be also better that tourist communities operate together with the local travel agencies in order to create new products that contain reasons for arriving at the destination. Since one of the basic assignments of the tourist communities on a regional and local level is to take care of the development of products, it is necessary to provide an operational support and possible financing of part of the expenditures for the development of new complex tourist products together with the local travel agencies. Depending on the

possibilities, it is advisable, to conduct other marketing activities that are aimed at supporting the sale of target markets along with local travel agencies.

It is also necessary to take into consideration the ways in which agencies operate in order to improve the regime of visiting protected areas so that it would be possible to reduce the pressure on particular periods and areas and to introduce sustainable tourism standards.

Although the situation in different areas under protection is solid, it is still obvious that in coordination with travel agencies it would be better to reduce the pressures that are now felt at certain times. In this sense, it is necessary for the competent authorities to start consulting and defining the measures that will influence onto the creation of a regime of visiting protected areas that will be properly evaluated and organized in relation to individual visits in order to reduce the pressure of the carrying capacity. In addition, together with industry representatives and competent national authorities, it is necessary to identify the necessary measures in order to prevent the emergence of a number of different systems and certificates for sustainable tourism, which can be confusing for both the industry and the consumers.

In the end, it can be concluded that Kosovo's travel agencies must constantly collect, analyze and incorporate market information in their system for entertainment and satisfaction of their users, which becomes the basic precondition for the survival in a difficult and competitive business environment. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the financial performance indicators are not the only benchmark for the success of the organization, but that particular attention must be paid to the relative indicators of customer satisfaction.