

SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS OF DESTINATION AND RESIDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS TOURISM

Scientific paper

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper seeks to explain the multidimensional image of sustainability and competitiveness tying them together due to the fact that relationship between them is reciprocally supportive. A more interdisciplinary approach to the concept is needed focusing on interaction between sustainability and competitiveness. Applicability of the concept without proper understanding is not possible, although it must be integrated in tourism planning process. Developing final set of measures and indicators and ensuring high level of community participation would be necessary.

Design – The design of the paper is descriptive and it represents an overview of studies from the research field of sustainability, competitiveness, resident attitude and tourism planning.

Methodology – The analysis and synthesis, comparative and compilation as well as descriptive method were used.

Findings – The paper finds that there are high level of interaction and causality between sustainability and competitiveness. To translate conceptual ideas into practical tool and develop a final set of measures reasonable to the task, place and time is to be done in order to gain high level of participation between major stakeholders at the destination.

Originality – In initial stage of destination development it should be determine the appropriate level of community involvement to strengthen the sense of community which directly reinforces destination identity and its competitiveness. Establishing participatory development measures at the destination is needed in order to enhance the quality of tourist experience.

Keywords sustainable competitiveness, social sustainability, resident attitude, tourism planning

INTRODUCTION

In the last century the competitiveness was elevated to the pedestal of natural law of the modern capitalist economy. Economic growth and productivity were the most credited for better quality of life for the population. But economic growth and productivity is not anymore and not always guaranty for quality of life. It can even destroy competitiveness (in case of disparities in resources and income), especially in tourism destination.

Tourism destination product is an integrated tourism experience which is miles away from commercial nature of some other competitive product. Due to the specifics of tourism destination product, there should be holistic understanding of its competitiveness and sustainability.

There are different dimensions of competitiveness and sustainability and thanks to this heterogeneity it requires more attention for research. Competitiveness and sustainability of tourism destination should be treated holistically to improve the understanding and ability to manage it.

Social sustainability is just one dimension of destination sustainability and resident attitude are part of it. Resident attitude and their perception of tourism are highly correlated with tourist satisfaction and their whole tourist experience of the destination. Consequently, continuous systematic evaluating of resident attitude and behaviour is vital for maintaining the sustainability and long-term success of the tourism destination. Tourism competitiveness depends on sustainability in long term, so sustainable competitiveness of destinations should be considered most carefully.

1. SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS

In the last four decades there has been a substantial shift in the nature of competitiveness, particularly within the tourism sector. Cellini and Soci¹ firmly believe that competitiveness represents a complex concept including many perspectives which exceed the economics. The variable nature of competitiveness requires persistent reassessment of the competence of a destination to compete², whereas destination competitiveness is reflecting the level of manager's competence to exploit the "dowry of human value" which has been given³.

The topic of destination competitiveness has received increasing attention in literature because tourism is becoming one of the outstanding sectors in the world⁴. Also, competitiveness is not any longer a homogeneous category in our perceptions but increasingly reveals its multidimensional image. The specific characteristics of tourism require a complex and multidimensional approach to the competitiveness⁵. Consequently, understanding and managing the complexity of tourism competitiveness is gaining growing relevance for long term sustainable development. Due to the rising importance of sustainable development, there is a necessity for a more interdisciplinary approach to the concept⁶. Mazilu⁷ recommends that tourism competitiveness should be addressed in the new circumstances of economic life and globalisation. In fact, there is a number of researchers determined that relationships between competitiveness and sustainable development are becoming much more intense⁸. They believe that the

¹ Cellini, R., Soci, A. "Pop competitiveness", *PSL Quarterly Review*, Vol. 55, 2012, p. 220.

² Ritchie, J. R. B., Crouch, G. I. *The competitive destination [electronic resource]: a sustainable tourism perspective*. Cabi., 2003.

³ Mazilu, M. "Key elements of a Model for Sustainable Tourism" *NAUN International Journal of Energy and Environment*, 2(4), 2010, pp. 45-54.

⁴ Fernando, I. N., Long, W. "New Conceptual Model on Cluster Competitiveness: A New Paradigm for Tourism?" *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(9), 2012, p. 76.

⁵ Mazilu, M. "Key elements of a Model for Sustainable Tourism" *NAUN International Journal of Energy and Environment*, 2(4), 2010, pp. 45-54.

⁶ Cellini, R., Soci, A. "Pop competitiveness", *PSL Quarterly Review*, Vol. 55, 2012, p. 220.

⁷ Mazilu, M. "Key elements of a Model for Sustainable Tourism", *NAUN International Journal of Energy and Environment*, 2(4), 2010, pp. 45-54.

⁸ Balkytė, A., Tvaronavičienė, M. "The inclusion of sustainable development dimension into the competitiveness theory". *Business, management and education*, 18, 2010, pp. 1-9.

relationship between competitiveness and wellbeing is consolidating and is becoming reciprocally supportive.

Peleckis and Balkytė⁹ also emphasize a need for research initiatives to develop a new concept of competitiveness focusing on interaction between competitiveness and sustainable development. (Environmentally) sustainable competitiveness has been under the spotlight of discussion from notable UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, 1992. More than two decades ago there was awareness of imperative to seek the balance between environmental protection and economic development¹⁰. However, in the last decade the focus has moved from global to local level, regarding spatial scale, as well as, due to its complexity, to interactions in human and natural systems¹¹. Unfortunately, the concept is still tied firmly and often exclusively to the physical environment¹² which reinforces its lack of understanding and implementing.

The concept of sustainable development is omnipresent in different sectors of human activity (construction, entrepreneurship, forestry etc). Though, it is much easier to conceptualise than implement it in practise. The implementation of the concept failed in the past due to deficiency of support from people, business and even government. Possible way to exceed this is to building the awareness through education process¹³. Besides, Slaper and Hall¹⁴ highlighted the problem of sustainable competitiveness measurement.

Cellini and Soci¹⁵ seriously doubt univocal measurement of the competitiveness due to missing univocal definition of it. Poon¹⁶ claims that success (competitiveness) is not solely measured in terms of growth (visitor arrivals, hotel capacities etc.) but also on how well tourism destinations managed to achieve their strategic objectives and how flexible they have been in dramatically changing global environment. Sustainable competitiveness represents the competence of a destination to increase tourist consumption while providing unforgettable experience for tourists in an economically efficient manner that ensures the welfare of the local community by preserving natural capital for future generations¹⁷.

⁹ Peleckis, K., Balkytė, A. "Mapping the future sustainable competitiveness resources: Aspects of forests ownership", *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, Vol. 4, 2010, pp. 630-651.

¹⁰ Weiss, E. B. "Environmentally Sustainable Competitiveness: A Comment." *Yale LJ*, 102, 1992, p. 2123

¹¹ Kondyli, J. "Measurement and evaluation of sustainable development: A composite indicator for the islands of the North Aegean region, Greece". *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 30(6), 2010, pp. 347-356.

¹² Butler, R. W. Sustainable tourism: A state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(1), 1999, p. 15

¹³ Fahmi, I. "Sustainable business competitiveness: translating concept into practice." *Jurnal Manajemen dan Agribisnis*, 9(2), 2012.

¹⁴ Slaper, T. F., Hall, T. J. "The triple bottom line: what is it and how does it work?" *The Indiana Business Review*, 86(1), 2011, pp. 4-8.

¹⁵ Cellini, R., Soci, A. "Pop competitiveness", *PSL Quarterly Review*, Vol. 55, 2012, p. 220.

¹⁶ Poon, A. Best practice destination management: Lessons from the leaders. In *Trends and issues in global tourism 2010* (pp. 159-171). Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2010.

¹⁷ Ritchie, J.R.B., Crouch, G.I. A Model of Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability, In *Tourism Destination Marketing and Management Collaborative strategies*, Wang, Y., Pizam, A. (eds.). London: CABI. 2011.

Sustainable development as a concept itself is extremely complex and difficult to define. It is not surprising that it has fluid connotations¹⁸ and has a most controversial notion mainly regarding its applicability¹⁹. Butler²⁰ claims that sustainability is indefinable because of its numerous dimensions. Therefore, as for the competitiveness, sustainability too has a multidimensional image. Bramwell et al.²¹ name seven of it: economic, social, cultural, political, environmental, managerial and governmental. Due to numerous dimensions of the concept Butler²² express his concerns about the possibilities of its abuse and misuse. He argues that the philosophic and ideological implications of the concept escalate its widespread use and unquestioning acceptance without adequate understanding of the meaning. He is convinced that the major problem of sustainability is absence of it universal definition as well as lack of accurate and reliable indicators for its measurement. Torjman²³ argue that the concept “is not prescriptive” whereas does not indicate explicitly what to do. However, sustainable development will always be integrated in the decision making process²⁴ because it is inseparably connected to the tourism impacts²⁵. From the destination point of view, sustainable development is defined “as tourism activities that maintain and enhance all forms of capital, recognising the primary importance of natural capital”²⁶.

Two decades ago John Elkington developed the sustainability concept; so called Triple Bottom Line (TBL), accounting framework that incorporates three dimensions of performance: social, environmental and economic. It includes economic values and its social and environmental capital. Measuring units for these three dimensions of sustainability are not common, more precisely; there is no universal standard method for calculating the TBL²⁷. Environmental and economic sustainability have more concrete objectives than social and are easier to measure. In fact, some authors think that there is no evident scientific basis for measuring social sustainability²⁸. Still, others strove to apply constructive platform of TBL which is reflected in possibilities to adapt the general framework to the needs of different entities (business or nonprofits) and geographic boundaries (city, region, country). Also, TBL is able to be specific case or

¹⁸ Boström, M. “A missing pillar? Challenges in theorizing and practicing social sustainability: introduction to the special issue”. *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, 8(1), 2012, pp. 3-14.

¹⁹ Kondyli, J. “Measurement and evaluation of sustainable development: A composite indicator for the islands of the North Aegean region, Greece”. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 30(6), 2010, pp. 347-356.

²⁰ Butler, R. W. Sustainable tourism: A state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(1), 1999, p. 11

²¹ Bramwell, B., Richards, G., Henry, I., Jackson, G., van der Straaten, J., van't Zelfde, J. & Larrauri, M. R. *Sustainable Tourism Magement: Principles and Practice*. 1996.

²² Butler, R. W. Sustainable tourism: A state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(1), 1999, pp. 7-25

²³ Torjman, S. *The social dimension of sustainable development*. Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2000.

²⁴ Kondyli, J. “Measurement and evaluation of sustainable development: A composite indicator for the islands of the North Aegean region, Greece”. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 30(6), 2010, pp. 347-356.

²⁵ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Konovalov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13), From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, pp. 219-236.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 220.

²⁷ Slaper, T. F., Hall, T. J. “The triple bottom line: what is it and how does it work?” *The Indiana Business Review*, 86(1), 2011, pp. 4-8.

²⁸ Boström, M. “A missing pillar? Challenges in theorizing and practicing social sustainability: introduction to the special issue”. *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, 8(1), 2012, p. 7.

allow a broad scope – measuring impacts across large geographic boundaries or/and different sectors²⁹. TBL concept can be tailored to nearly any organization because of its flexibility and openness. Therefore integrated assessment is needed in order to get a whole picture of the consequences that a regulation, policy or economic development project may have³⁰.

A measurement process includes operations, instrument, tools, associated indicators or indices, related objectives and benchmark values, according to the business strategies. Performance evaluation analysis and reporting tools are necessary for business decision making to maintain sustainability³¹. If there are no reliable tools for monitoring and measuring the sustainability, there is poor foundation for determining future guidelines for such development. If local people and other stakeholders do not realise of short-term and long-term interests of sustainable practice for themselves, they will simply ignore it³².

2. SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Social dimension of sustainable development is concentrated principally to poverty reduction, social investment and the building of safe and caring community³³. It is less investigated³⁴ in comparison to environmental, but larger oversight is ignored attention to linkages and interaction between all three dimensions of sustainability³⁵. Social sustainability often refer to such aspects as social welfare, quality of life, social justice, social cohesion, cultural diversity, democratic rights, gender issues, workers' rights, broad participation, development of social capital and individual capabilities and so on³⁶.

McKenzie³⁷ defines social sustainability as a process of providing better quality of life in the community. On the basis of resources of the field he argues that defining of the concept is either a description of currently existing positive condition or a goal that remains to be achieved. Moreover, Boström³⁸ draws attention to the fact that social

²⁹ Slaper, T. F., Hall, T. J. "The triple bottom line: what is it and how does it work?" *The Indiana Business Review*, 86(1), 2011, p. 5.

³⁰ Ibid, 2011.

³¹ Feng, S. C., Joung, C., Li, G. Development overview of sustainable manufacturing metrics. In *Proceedings of the 17th CIRP international conference on life cycle engineering*, 2010, p. 11.

³² Butler, R. W. Sustainable tourism: A state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(1), 1999, pp. 7-25

³³ Torjman, S. *The social dimension of sustainable development*. Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2000, p. 9.

³⁴ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Konovalov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13), From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, pp. 219-236.

³⁵ Boström, M. "A missing pillar? Challenges in theorizing and practicing social sustainability: introduction to the special issue". *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, 8(1), 2012.

³⁶ Ibid, 2012, p. 7.

³⁷ McKenzie, S. *Social sustainability: towards some definitions*, Hawke Research Institute, No. 27, University of South Australia Magill, South Australia, 2004.

³⁸ Boström, M. "A missing pillar? Challenges in theorizing and practicing social sustainability: introduction to the special issue". *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, 8(1), 2012.

dimension of sustainability is neglected which directly causes our flawed understanding of the issue of sustainability integrity. He believes that social sustainability should be firstly delimited, framed and filled with content due to the fact that environmental or economic sustainability may be opposite of the social dimension, and secondly to clarify how it relates to the other dimensions. The division between nature and culture (social and environmental dimension) reflects a historical dualism that has been institutionalized in administration and management. Consequently, the integration of those dimensions is not something done overnight, but will require a long-term learning process and careful attention to procedural steps concerning participatory aspects³⁹.

There are lots of examples where tourism sector can play a key role in achieving social goals, such as improving conditions for employees and local communities. On the contrary, there are cases where excessive rigorous social and environmental terms and conditions would constitute huge costs and even prevent a substantial economic impact. Also, the negative economic impacts may undermine or even turn over future growth and wealth creation.

Slaper and Hall⁴⁰ emphasize the responsibility of the organisation to develop a final set of measures reasonable to the task, place and time. In order to make the right decisions and monitoring of the performance in any area (national, regional, local) there should be achieved a high level of cooperation, partnership and co-creation between major stakeholders. Cuthill⁴¹ considers the social sustainability concept as a kind of “communicative platform” or a “meeting place” which tie together the participants. In that context community problem solving represents a process of involvement people from different sectors in deliberations that are looking for rational solutions. They need to be engaged in face-to-face debate and not merely listening to the professional presentations⁴². Thereby they have a possibility to participate in deliberations, represent their views, listen to the others and accept compromise. Their shared objectives should go beyond their own benefits. In that case synergy may be reached and effects of the interventions would undoubtedly overcome the social dimension of sustainability. Therefore, social sustainability is inseparable from environmental and economic dimension, so there are just know-how and experiences that make possible the implementation of integrated sustainable development.

Woodcraft⁴³ addresses social sustainability practical and operational aspects concerning its usefulness for decision making and interventions in urban planning. She claims that the usefulness of the concept as a planning tool depends on how it is accepted in practice, so the scale at which social sustainability is applicable, presents a big challenge. For every attempt to measure social sustainability is essential to develop a

³⁹ Ibid, 2012, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Slaper, T. F., Hall, T. J. “The triple bottom line: what is it and how does it work?” *The Indiana Business Review*, 86(1), 2011, pp. 4-8.

⁴¹ Cuthill, M. “Strengthening the ‘social’ in sustainable development: Developing a conceptual framework for social sustainability in a rapid urban growth region in Australia.” *Sustainable Development*, 18(6), 2010, 362-373.

⁴² Torjman, S. *The social dimension of sustainable development*. Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2000.

⁴³ Woodcraft, S. “Social sustainability and new communities: Moving from concept to practice in the UK.” *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 68, 2012, pp. 29-42.

set of adequate indicators, depend on range of characteristics and conditions regarding the particular case. Translating conceptual ideas about social sustainability into practical planning tools that retain integrity⁴⁴ is crucial for avoiding the common persuasion of fragmented, chaotic and embryonic nature of the concept.

Social capital at the community level entails social interaction, trust, relationships, collective action, cooperation, reciprocity, social identity, shared norms and values⁴⁵. For long time it was unfairly overlooked and neglected by putting natural capital of the destination in the first place as an incremental prerequisite for tourism development. Also, economic capital was recognized as a fundamental condition without which there is no way for tourism development, especially large infrastructure investments. Only balanced presence of all three scopes means the real value and potential for quality development of tourism. Mihalič⁴⁶ found that the socio-cultural element is strongly represented in the studied impact on customer satisfaction. Interesting recognition of her research was the gap between declarative value to the environmental quality of the destination and the socio-cultural value of tourism offerings.

Moscardo et al.⁴⁷ report that good communication systems and cooperative spirit, active participation in tourism, integrated network connecting people throughout the destination, open local community and strong leaders can enhance social capital.

3. RESIDENT'S ATTITUDE AND TOURISM PLANNING

Local community involvement in decision making process of tourism development shows large potential for long term successful destination development. There is an urgent need to determine the appropriate level of community involvement as well as methods and techniques of their integration. However, resident's attitude towards tourism is not a homogeneous value⁴⁸. They represent numerous groups of stakeholders with different interests, benefits and expectations of tourism. Lankford et al.⁴⁹ draw

⁴⁴ Ibid, 2012, 33.

⁴⁵ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Konovalov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13), From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, pp. 219-236.

⁴⁶ Mihalič, T. "Performance of Environmental Resources of a Tourist Destination: Concept and Application." *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(5), 2013, pp. 614-630.

⁴⁷ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Konovalov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13), From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, p. 227.

⁴⁸ Brunt, P., Courtney, P. "Host Perception of Socio-cultural Impacts." *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1999, pp. 493-515, Perez, E. A., Nadal, J. R. "Host Community Perceptions. A Cluster Analysis." *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2005, pp. 925-941, Wang, Y., Pfister, R. E., Morais, D. B. "Residences Attitude toward Tourism Development: A Case Study of Washington," NC. 2006, Proceedings of the 2006 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium. http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr_nrs-p-14/54-wang-p-14.pdf, Sharpley, R. "Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research." *Tourism Management*, 42, 2014, pp. 37-49.

⁴⁹ Lankford, V., Chen, Y. Chen, W. "Tourism's impacts in the Penghu National Scenic Area, Taiwan." *Tourism Management*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1994, p. 224.

attention that: “residents’ attitudes toward tourism are not simply the reflections of the residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts, but the result of interaction between residents’ perceptions and factors affecting their attitudes”. Moreover, Nunkoo et al.⁵⁰ point out the deviations in residents’ perceptions and attitudes comparing developed and developing regions; they doubt about applying the same models and techniques in different environments.

Moscardo et al.⁵¹ discovered that open and inclusive community supports positive social interactions between hosts and the guests. Their empirical research results reveal that not just resident engagement in planning process contribute to the success of destinations, but also their active presence in brother tourism activities and benefits. This engagement is to be expected if there is a strong community leadership, training and education for tourism and about tourism planning, effective communication about tourism, and integration between tourism and other sectors.

Since positive residents’ perceptions and attitude towards tourism are significant to get their support, planners should be cautious of how to present such benefits through marketing and management techniques to obtain the residents’ cooperation⁵². Planners should involve residents in initial stages of destination development to gain their participation and realistic expectations of tourism, not only before making costly investments in infrastructure and new initiatives; almost any intervention should be subject of common deliberation and supported by local community.

Látková and Vogt⁵³ found out in their empirical research that engaging younger residents to collaborate in the tourism planning process, acquainting with their concerns, and empowerment of their active role in development is strongly recommended. Building public relations with different groups within the community through an internal marketing process might beneficially influence the progress in planning efficiency at the destination. Also, they pointed out the strong sense of the community which strengthens local community identity. The clear and strong identity of the community contributes to destination identity and its competitiveness on the tourism market. In line with other researcher they conclude that the extent to which tourism development will be sustained depends on the active involvement of the host communities in the tourism development process.

⁵⁰ Nunkoo, R., Ramkissoon, H., Gursoy, D., Chi, C. “A Model for Understanding Residents’ Support for Tourism in Small Islands.” Paper read at *Hospitality and Tourism Management ICHRIE Annual Conference*, San Francisco, 29 July- 1 August, 2009.

⁵¹ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Konovalov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: *Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13)*, From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, pp. 228-230.

⁵² Oviedo-Garcia, M.A., Castelanos-Verdugo, M. Martin-Ruiz, D. “Gaining Residents’ Support for Tourism and Planning”. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10, 2007, pp. 95-109.

⁵³ Látková, P., Vogt, C. A. “Residents’ attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities.” *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(1), 2012, pp. 50-67.

Additionally, Moscardo et al.⁵⁴ note that programs for public participation in tourism need to be conducted earlier and more often throughout the planning process and need for more explicitly and critically evaluate tourism as a tool for the destination community development. Better evidence of tourism benefits and new ways to measure tourism success are needed.

It would be especially helpful to set measurable goals for the proposed tourism activities and to communicate them to the local population in a way they would respond to – thus involving them in the process of tourism planning. It means that the corresponding terms and conditions for coordinated dialogue between the local community and tourism management should be empowered⁵⁵. It would be necessary for planners and local community representatives to concede the fact that tourism always generates negative and positive impacts on communities. The main reason for collaboration between them is to establish participatory development measures in order to minimize negative and maximize positive tourism impacts. Without such awareness and performance of the necessary measures, tourism sector might gradually lose the local communities' support, which in turn may compromise its sustainability of development in future⁵⁶.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable competitiveness of tourism destination is based on unique tourist experience and this is largely dependent on the quality of hosts-guests interaction and the goodwill of local community. Their attitude, perceptions and behaviour are tied to the tourism impacts, but they are not the same thing. It represents the context of tourist destination and Sharpley⁵⁷ believe that understanding resident perceptions and responses is essential for achieving competitive sustainable development of the destination.

Predominantly quantitative approach to research of the residence perceptions tends to describe what residents perceive, but does not necessarily explain why. But exactly the responses to tourism's social impacts, not just perceptions, would, according to Sharpley, enhance the value of the future research. Yet, lists of tourism impacts are meaningless if we do not know to decode them: they do not provide insights as to why residents perceive them in a particular way.

In this paper we have prepared theoretical background of the sustainable competitiveness issue in relation with the local population involvement in destination's

⁵⁴ Moscardo, G., Schurmann, A., Kononov, E. and McGehee, N. G. Using tourism to build social capital in communities: new pathways to sustainable tourism futures. In: Conference Proceedings of BEST EN Think Tank (13), From: *BEST EN Think Tank XIII: engaging communities in sustainable tourism development*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 23-26 June, 2013, p. 230.

⁵⁵ Vodeb, K., Medarić, Z. "Local community perceptions of tourism impacts on the Slovenian coast." *Academica Turistica*, 6(1), 2013, pp. 49-60.

⁵⁶ Tosun, C. "Host Perceptions of Impacts. A Comparative Tourism Study." *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2001, pp. 231-253.

⁵⁷ Sharpley, R. "Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research." *Tourism Management*, 42, 2014, pp. 37-49.

development. An important step in further empirical research would be implementation of a qualitative research to gain the necessary explanations as well as a more in-depth view on the issue. The research is planned to be conducted among the local community representatives and local tourism officers in the selected destination. Responses to tourism's social impacts and proactive tourism planning process would be focus of the research. Community participation on the destination should be developed in order to establish participatory coordination mechanisms for future planning.

Understanding the residence perceptions in correlation with their responses and behaviours would provide appropriate framework to build the sustaining platform for community participation in tourism planning process. In such a way this insights are becoming significant base for efficient planning tools in decision making process for tourist destination.

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