



DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES OF CITY TOURISM OFFER OF RIJEKA

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Abstract:

The demand for city tourism product is growing on a daily basis. The specificity and uniqueness of its tourism resources enable creation of a unique tourism offer, for a city to become recognizable, and compete on the international tourism market. In the Republic of Croatia, one of the cities with a significant predisposition to become recognizable on the European and world level is the city of Rijeka. The purpose of the paper is to indicate importance of city tourism as a selective tourism form for the purpose of achieving competitiveness of the city of Rijeka and the Republic of Croatia on the tourism market, while the goal of the paper is to present theoretical characteristics of the city tourism offer, current tourism offer of the city of Rijeka with the use of statistical indicators and results of empirical research, and to propose possible developmental guidelines for upgrading its future tourism offer.

Key words:

city tourism,
tourism offer of Rijeka,
Republic of Croatia,
competitiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades of 20th century, cities attracted a growing interest of tourists. Tourism is seen as a new discovery in some cities following the big changes in the economic and social system of a city in the last years and is recognized as a helpful activity for the overall services sector of the city. Within the context of growing new destinations on the world tourism market, the cities could be seen as a permanent attracting factor for tourists. Old European cities, with great history and cultural heritage, beautiful architecture and special »spirit« are popular destinations and have many economic benefits from tourism, but at the same time they have to deal with the specific problems which arise with tourism development (Smolčić-Jurdana & Magaš, 2006). Cities are constantly changing; they are built, transformed and continuously growing and in a constant state of change to provide its visitors the experiences and products they expect and these products and experiences are also constantly changing in order to adapt to an increasing demand. All this triggers a constant investment in infrastructure, promotion and conservation ultimately benefiting tourists and local residents. Cities appeal to a broader market, they are easy to reach and they have a lot

to offer, this also brings a new spending pattern that can go from those staying in budget hotels to the five star hotel customer, but all have one thing in mind: they want to discover and visit other cities. Cities need to assess their products and understand which of their products offerings appeal to the market (UNWTO, 2012). According to Kolb (2006), cities can be described as being in one of three stages of economic health: economically strong, in decline, or in transition. An economically healthy city will have expanding business and industry sectors that induce new residents to move to the city due to employment opportunities. Such a city will probably already have an established tourism industry because its positive image attracts tourists. In fact, local residents might even complain about the negative effects caused by (the great number of tourists) the many visiting the city.

City tourism has been promoted and made easier in a more globalized, and for many, more prosperous world. Boundaries and barriers of many sorts have been dissolving. Higher disposable incomes and changing working patterns have allowed more spending on leisure travel, and encouraged additional short breaks, for which cities are especially suitable, with their ease of access and range of activities (Maitland, 2009).

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Cities are multi-purpose destinations. They attract many visitors to friends and relatives because they have a large population. They draw visitors to their attractions and events because these are often much better developed than in other types of destination area. These amenities are being further developed at the moment as a deliberate policy on the part of the cities that expand their tourist industry. Museums, concert halls, theatres, arenas, stadiums are being built or improved and potential tourism quarters redeveloped. Cities also have other advantages to attract tourists. With airports and scheduled services, they are easily accessible. Usually, there are many hotels intended to serve business travelers, which are underused at the weekend. Accordingly, cheap weekend breaks can be offered (Smolčić-Jurdana, 2012 according to Law, 1997). For the city it can be justifiably said that it combines the offer of other numerous selective tourism forms whose elements are continuously upgraded, and their uniqueness and particularity make an integral and competitive tourist product. Selective tourism forms presented in the following table are part of the City Tourism offer.

Cities usually attract different market segments. The cultural heritage of the city attracts the educated population of tourists, while an elderly population is likely to appreciate both cultural heritage and experience active outdoor holidays. Young people, on the other hand, are more attracted to the excitement found in the city, the entertainment, and night life and sports events. As a destination for a business traveler, cities boast the facilities available for meetings and

trade shows, access to education, and different logistics services (Smolčić-Jurdana, 2012). The city of Rijeka possesses a high potential of even more competitive development of City Tourism offer in relation to the present state. However, in order to achieve higher level of success, it is necessary to continuously monitor the "pulse" on the European and World Tourism Market, respectively, the desires and tendencies of contemporary tourists, adapt the present tourist offer to their preferences, while applying the best practice in relation to the world competitive cities, bearing in mind the importance of preserving their own identity, and necessity of application of sustainable development postulates. Taking all that into consideration, the authors have set the following hypothesis: Further successful development of city tourism offer development can contribute to the development of the Croatian tourism product, and achieving a competitive advantage on the tourism market. The purpose of this paper was to present how city tourism as a selective tourism form can contribute to achieving competitive advantages of the city of Rijeka (and the Republic of Croatia) on the contemporary international tourism market, while the goal of the paper was to present some theoretical characteristics of the city tourism offer, current state of the tourism offer of the city of Rijeka, using statistical indicators and the results of the conducted empirical research, and finally to propose possible developmental guidelines for its tourism offer. In this paper, the authors used the following research methods: method of analysis and synthesis, statistical method based on secondary data sources, classification and comparative method.

Table 1. Selective tourism forms as part of the city tourism offer

Selective Tourism Forms	Characteristics
<i>Cultural Tourism</i>	Numerous museums, galleries, cultural-historical monuments, archaeological excavations, buildings which represent important historical and other facts about the city, and are typical for that city.
<i>Health Tourism</i>	Plays an important role in preserving health, improving their psycho-physical condition, reducing stress caused by everyday dynamic way of life. Conceived on the combination of natural healing subjects, such as healing mineral water sources, healing mud or pheloid, climate, <i>etc.</i> , and healing objects such as spas, healing centers and thalassotherapy, as well as various contents available within these objects (adapted according to Gračan <i>et al.</i> 2008);
<i>Religious Tourism</i>	Tourists visit the destination to visit numerous religious buildings such as churches, mosques, temples, <i>etc.</i> , as well as shrines with a goal of spiritual renewal.
<i>Education Tourism</i>	Visitors visit the destination mostly for education and research work (students, postgraduates, researchers on scientific and professional projects). They use their free time to explore tourist products and services.
<i>Shopping Tourism</i>	Visits to the world renowned destinations for the purpose of shopping (mostly clothes, jewelry, <i>etc.</i>).
<i>Event Tourism</i>	Tourists visit the destination exclusively to attend a certain event, or they can attend and experience it "by the way", respectively, if they accidentally happened to be at the destination while the event was taking place. Events can be cultural-historical, gastronomic, enological, sports, <i>etc.</i> They reflect the specificity of a tradition of a destination, and provide a possibility of creating a recognizable image and branding.
<i>Business Tourism</i>	Scientists visit the destination to participate in scientific-professional conferences, <i>etc.</i> , business professionals attend business meetings, exhibitions, fairs, <i>etc.</i> In the past, it was normal that they visited the destination exclusively for business reasons, and left it after finishing the obligations. Today's contemporary trend points to increasing visits accompanied by their families and partners, as well as extension of their stays at the destination (which significantly reflects on the increasing of the tourist turnover).
<i>Gastronomy and Wine Tourism</i>	Gastronomy and wine offer differs from one country to another, from one region to another one (<i>i.e.</i> Eastern and Northern Croatia). Tourists visit the destination to rest, and enjoy various specialties and high-quality wines and spirits.

Source: Author's analysis

2. REVIEW OF CURRENT TOURISM OFFER OF RIJEKA

Modern perspectives look at the city as more than a mere concentration of people, and consider it a hub of trade, culture, information and industry. Because of the increasing urbanization, cities play ever more important roles in their country's economic development and may perform a crucial role in global or regional networks. As such, cities are increasingly competing with one another to attract visitors, investors and residents, and to host international events or corporate headquarters (Alvarez & Yarcán, 2010 according to UN-Habitat, 2006). In the period 2009-2013, there was a significant increase of 47% of city holidays (World Travel Monitor 2013), meaning that interest in city tourism is rapidly growing, and countries need to invest their efforts in the development of this selective form of tourism. In Croatia, a huge emphasis was rightfully being placed on the capital city of Zagreb, followed by Dalmatian cities Split, Zadar, Dubrovnik, followed by Istria peninsula and cities of Umag, Novigrad, Pula, and many others. However, the city of Rijeka was insufficiently mentioned, which encouraged the authors to write this paper. As a tourist destination, every city has something special and particular that makes it special and different from other destinations. When discussing the role of the city of Rijeka in tourism offer development, it is necessary to point out that it possesses all natural, cultural-historical and other resources, organization of cul-

tural events such as the famous Rijeka Carnival and others, good connection with the neighboring countries (such as Slovenia, Austria, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, etc.), which is a significant pre-condition for achieving success on the tourism market. The opinion of the authors is that the true potential has not still been completely reached. In order to propose adequate and efficient guidelines for further development of tourism offer, the authors will further present the statistical indicators which present the state of tourism offer development, the grade of tourist satisfaction with Rijeka's tourist offer, and finally, propose strategic developmental guidelines for development of a competitive city tourism offer.

Data presented in the previous table show the achieved tourist arrivals and overnight stays for the period 2004-2014. When monitoring overall tourist arrivals, it is evident that in the period 2004-2014, there were some significant turbulences until 2013, when the number of arrivals increased. Namely, 90.717 tourist arrivals were achieved in 2014, which compared to the year 2004 represents a growth of 68.33%. However, during that period significant oscillations were observed in the number of domestic and foreign tourist arrivals. As regards tourist overnights, 173.549 tourist overnights were achieved in 2014, which represents the growth of 64.04% compared to the year 2004. However, when monitoring domestic and foreign tourist overnight stays during this period, some serious oscillations can also be observed.

Table 2. Achieved Tourist Arrivals in the City of Rijeka in the period 2004-2014

Year	Tourist Arrivals			Tourist Overnights		
	Foreign	Domestic	Total	Foreign	Domestic	Total
2004	34.226	19.665	53.891	72.441	33.355	105.796
2005	30.889	19.763	50.652	65.750	33.466	99.216
2006	40.582	22.177	62.759	78.838	38.988	117.826
2007	48.522	21.132	69.654	91.802	37.828	129.630
2008	44.955	21.334	66.289	79.990	37.287	117.277
2009	47.600	18.238	65.838	91.262	32.765	124.027
2010	51.082	17.336	68.418	95.381	31.962	127.343
2011	53.781	17.016	70.797	101.935	33.845	135.780
2012	52.997	16.695	69.692	102.016	33.564	135.580
2013	58.646	17.653	76.299	112.656	33.521	146.177
2014	69.541	21.176	90.717	132.238	41.311	173.549

Source: http://press.visitrijeka.hr/Statisticki_podaci

Table 3. A review of the number of beds in the city of Rijeka in the period 2004-2014.

Category	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Index 2014/2004
Hotels	456	387	502	515	515	554	554	554	554	554	554	121,49
Hostels	...	...	61	61	61	61	61	91	120	448	429	...
Priv. accomod.	42	63	92	105	126	173	189	213	272	411	573	1.364,29
Camps	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	100,00
Lodging	882	882	882	882	378	378	378	378	378	378	378	42,86
Campuses*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	116	...
Beds total	1.730	1.682	1.887	1.913	1.430	1.516	1.532	1.586	1.674	2.141	2.400	...

Source: http://press.visitrijeka.hr/Statisticki_podaci

* In the city of Rijeka, Student's accommodation facilities are situated on different locations, away from the faculties the students attend, while in the USA, i.e., the faculties and accommodation capacities are situated on the same grounds.



Data in the previous table point to some significant changes in the structure of accommodation capacities for the period 2004-2014. During that period, the highest increase of beds was achieved in private accommodation (13 times), and in hotels (21.49%). There were no changes in the number of beds in camps, while a decrease in the number of beds in the lodgings (57.14%) was observed. Hostels were introduced in 2006, and campuses in 2014, so it wasn't possible to compare their growth and state with other types of accommodation during the period 2004-2014. Accordingly, daily consumption of tourists of the city of Rijeka will be presented.

Table 4. Daily consumption of tourists of the city of Rijeka (%)

Amount in EURO	Less than 30 €	30-50€	50-100€	More than 100€
Rijeka	40.4	31.9	25.5	2.2

Source: Tourism Destination Research (2012, p. 33)

The highest number of tourists (40.4%) spends less than 30 Euro on a daily basis, 31.9% of them spends between 30-50 Euro, 25.5% of them spends 50-100 Euro, while only 2.2% of tourists spends over 100 Euro. The presented data indicate a low level of tourist consumption.

Along with the results of tourists, the elements of tourist offer of the city of Rijeka will be presented. Likert Scale, with range 1-7 (1-the worst grade, 7-the best grade), was used for the purpose of this research.

Table 5. Tourist satisfaction with the elements of tourism offer in the city of Rijeka

Rank	Elements of tourism offer in the city of Rijeka	Grade
1	Space, resources, environment	5.64
2	Organization of the destination	5.55
3	Facilities	5.47
4	Inhabitants, employees in tourism	5.40
4	Recognizability, safety, level of information	5.40

Source: Tourism Destination Research (2012, p. 43)

Data in the previous table undoubtedly show that tourists are most satisfied with the preservation of space, resources and the environment (5.64). The second highest graded element was the organization of the destination (5.55), followed by the offer of tourist facilities (5.47). A bit lower grade (5.40) was given to hospitality of domestic population and employees in tourism, as well as recognizability, safety, and the level of reachable information in and about the destination.

Table 6. Tourist satisfaction with the facilities of tourist offer of the city of Rijeka

Rank	Facilities	Grade
1	Entertainment facilities	5.85
2	Accommodation capacities	5.79
3	Events	5.60
4	Restaurants	5.55
5	Field-trips offer	5.51
6	Nautical offer	5.47
7	Local gastronomy	5.45
8	Facilities for health tourism	5.38
9	Historical-cultural heritage	5.26
9	Facilities for children	5.26
10	Relation of price and quality	5.21
10	Meetings and Conferences	5.21
10	Cultural facilities	5.21
11	Sports facilities	5.04
	Average grade	5.47

Source: Marković *et al.* (2012, pp. 43-44)

Tourist facilities represent an important part of the total tourist offer of a destination, particularly because their diversity enables satisfaction of all types and preferences of tourists. According to the data from the previous table, in the city of Rijeka, the tourists are most satisfied with entertainment facilities (5.85) and the offer and quality of accommodation capacities (5.79). They are followed by organization of events (5.60) such as the Rijeka Carnival, and other events. The offer of restaurant capacities (5.55), organization of field trips (5.51), nautical offer (5.47) were graded slightly lower. Local gastronomy was graded lower in relation to its potentials and possibilities (5.45). Considering that the city of Rijeka does not possess significant resources for health tourism development, the lower grade was to be expected (5.38). Historical-cultural heritage was also graded lower (5.26) despite numerous historical-cultural resources. What is most concerning is the lower grade of relation of price and quality, Meetings and Conferences (offer of MICE tourism) and cultural facilities (5.21). Sports facilities were the lowest graded (5.04). The average grade of the total offer of tourist facilities is 5.47. Previously presented results indicate that certain changes will have to be made in order to improve the quality of the overall tourism products and offer and increase the level of competitiveness of the city of Rijeka on the international tourism market.

3. STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPETITIVE CITY TOURISM OFFER OF RIJEKA

In order to enable maximum tourist development of the city of Rijeka, the weaknesses and threats of the tourist offer need to be eliminated or reduced to the minimum, while strengths and opportunities need to be used as an advantage in achieving competitiveness on the tourism market. The following table presents the SWOT analysis of the tourism offer of the city of Rijeka.



Table 7. SWOT analysis of City tourism of the city of Rijeka

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rich and preserved resource base for city tourism development. - Pleasant climate, clean sea, clean air. - Good traffic connections and easy access. - Recognizability on traditional tourist generating markets (Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Germany, <i>etc.</i>). - Kindness of the population and employees in tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficiently profiled offer. - Lack of innovation. - Lack of organization. - Insufficient value for money. - Insufficient recognizability on the new market niches.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of selective forms of tourism within the city tourism offer. - Possibility of achieving greater recognizability on traditional tourist generating markets (Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Germany, <i>etc.</i>). - Creating of a brand of city tourism. - Investment in knowledge. - Development of new experiences based on the unique tourist offer of Rijeka. - Sustainable tourism development. - Raising of general quality of the facilities. - Creation of synergy between culture and tourism. - Public-private partnership. - New possibilities for project funding (Cohesion Funds of the EU, public-private partnership, development incentives by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pollution of the environment. - Uncoordinated development. - Rapid growth of new markets. - Creation of competitive destinations and products.

Source: Authors' adaptation according to Cerović *et al.* (2014)

Previously presented SWOT analysis indicates the complexity of development of a city tourism product. Its development must be carefully planned at all levels, along with undertaking adequate marketing activities. Bearing in mind

all previously mentioned, the authors recommend using the following model "Chain of Values in City Tourism offer". Its application will certainly contribute to development of a successful and competitive city tourist offer.

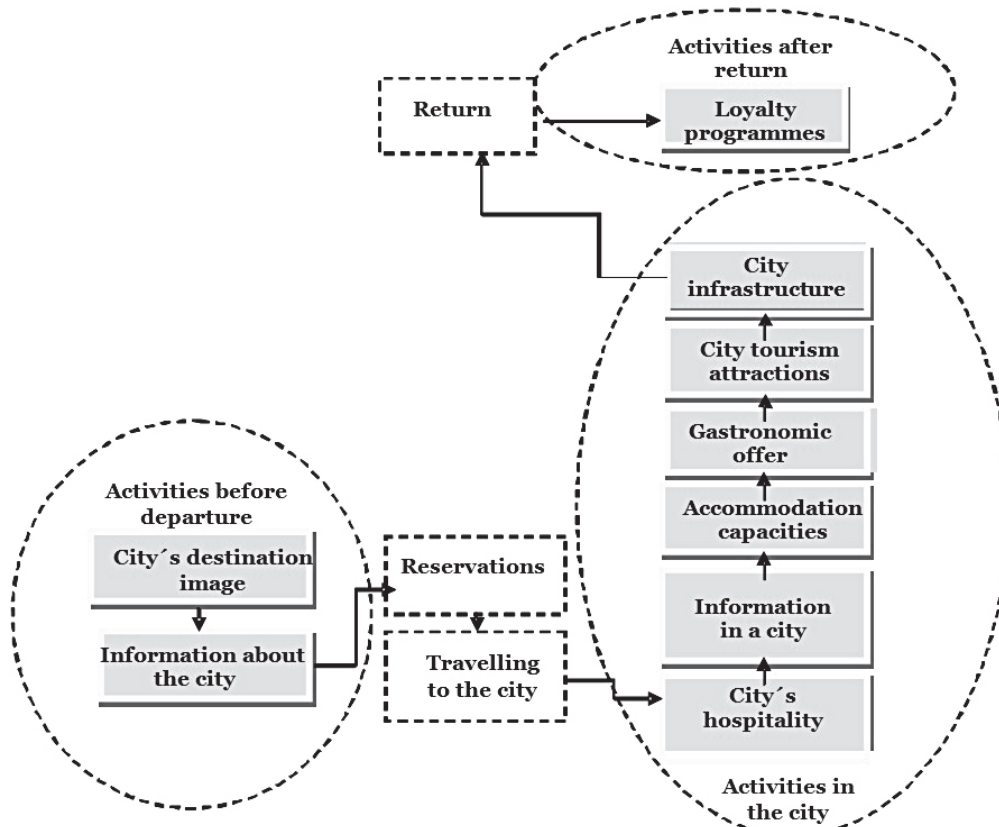


Figure 1. Chain of Values in City Tourism offer

Source: Authors' adaptation according to Alkier Radnić *et al.* (2012)



The previously presented model shows the value chain of a successful and competitive city tourism offer. Its application conditions a successful planning and development of the offer of city tourism, which will enable tourists to satisfy their needs for rest, relaxation, acquisition of new knowledge about the culture and tradition, learning languages, feeling welcome, and achieving value and experience for money.

The market and competition are forcing tourist destinations to design a product that is considerably more complex than the uniform product. The tourism product is defined as the destination's product, and is the result of the destination's entire tourism experience. By bringing together different kinds of services, this product offers a complete experience laced with the specific features of the local community. In order to design such a product, the application of market and marketing concepts is required. Creating a destination product exceeds the competences and authority of the tourism sector, making it an issue of interest for the entire tourism destination, and implying the coordinated activities of various agents within the destination: tourism development policy makers, destination management, quality control, providers of tourism sub-products, market intermediates, human resource education providers, guests and residents (Authors' adaptation according to Alkier Radnić, 2006). The necessity for further development of City tourism is growing on a daily basis, and considerable research is being conducted in order to rethink further developmental guidelines and strategies.

In 2012, the United World Tourism Organization published an important publication *Global Report on City Tourism AM Reports: Volume Six*, where they proposed the following developmental guidelines for City Tourism development:

- ◆ Raise awareness of the economic and social impact of city tourism on national and local economies.
- ◆ Integrate urban tourism as a key pillar of government policies at all levels.
- ◆ Establish effective and renewed instruments for partnerships between all stakeholders involved with tourism in order to ensure sharing of information, initiatives and knowledge to benefit the destination, tourists and local residents.
- ◆ Highlight the importance of human capital and consequently, invest in professional training.
- ◆ Favour measures to encourage, foster and recognize sustainable local policies and initiatives that can serve as models and guides for all international tourism actors.
- ◆ Implement innovative strategies to provide the city with new and more specialized products with high added value, addressing niche markets and upgrading the quality of the visitor experience.
- ◆ Advance towards the concept of 'Smart Cities', urban destinations that prioritize strategies and actions that include sustainable policies and innovative technological developments as integral elements.

Previously mentioned developmental guidelines brought by the UNWTO need to be taken into consideration and applied in order for the city of Rijeka to reach a higher level of development of its tourism offer. It is necessary to:

- ◆ form a high quality tourism offer which will enable whole year business (particular accent on cultural, religious and event tourism) and would result in re-

duction of oscillations in tourist turnover, as well as an increase of the tourist consumption;

- ◆ apply in practice the value chain of city tourism offer previously presented in the paper, with a goal of profiling a recognizable image and forming a recognizable tourist brand;
- ◆ show the real importance and benefits of development of tourism for the city to domestic population;
- ◆ enable additional learning educational programs for tourism and hospitality staff based on the European and world's best practices, which will enable them not only to learn how to provide even higher quality of services in restaurant business, but also to self-develop and increase their level of satisfaction, which is of high importance for achieving competitive business results;
- ◆ enable higher level of information availability regarding the tourism offer of Rijeka
- ◆ increase the level of recognizability on the tourism market through suitable marketing activities and application of the latest marketing tools;
- ◆ assure adequate level of safety and point that to potential tourists, considering that terrorist attacks and natural hazards occur quite often on the world level. The recognizability of the destination as a safe one is an important factor affecting consumer's decision to visit the destination;
- ◆ Through adequate marketing activities to form a unique and recognizable image and brand the tourist offer of Rijeka.

5. CONCLUSION

Contemporary tourism trends on the European and world level point to the growing importance of city tourism, and its possible contribution to formation of an integral and recognizable tourist product, capable of meeting the requirements of various tourist profiles. The level of Rijeka's tourist offer development still hasn't reached its true reach. In order to achieve further success, positive experiences of the competing cities as tourist destinations will have to be implemented, while preserving its own uniqueness and specificity. Further development will result in numerous socio-economic advantages for the domestic population, the county of Primorje-Gorski Kotar, and the Republic of Croatia, as it will improve the level of recognizability on the tourism market. The hypothesis set forth in this paper has been successfully proven by the use of statistical data and the results of the conducted empirical research. Based on the research results, the authors offered some developmental guidelines which, in their opinion, can contribute to successful development of Rijeka's tourism offer.

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