

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND TURISTIC POTENTIAL IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

Albania is recognized as a touristic destination in the Mediterranean and has a competitive position in international tourism market. Albania has an excellent potential for tourism development and can be positioned according to comparative advantage of countries with high quality in a small geographic area. Despite being one of the newest businesses in the world, tourism is the most developed one not only in the developed countries but also in the developing one. What make Albania unique are the large number of attractions and the relative proximity of these attractions in a unique cultural context for a great number of domestic and international tourists. All over the world, tourism is considered to be only an important element in economic and social terms. What is more, it is an excellent potential as a catalyst for economic growth, for the creation of labor and as a major source of government revenue. Albania is recognized as the most undiscovered tourist destination in Europe, where still could be found precious secrets of nature and of cultural heritage.

Keywords: *touristic destination , tourism, touristic requirments, development of turism.*

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The objective of this study is : to identify the opportunities that lead to the development of tourism, analyzing tourism, as a key factor for the economic development of Albania and the importance of tourism for the development of regional economic indicators.

The study also aims to create an idea about the potential of tourism demand and this demand how this touristic demand is developed.

Methodology : The conduction of this study was based on primary data collection and secondary taking into account the concrete conditions of our country. The study was based on primary data collected from the survey done in several destinations of Albania: Tirana, Vlora, Pogradec and Korca, interviewing tourists visiting these destinations. In order to obtain accurate data for this study, 160 questionnaires were completed, in these four destinations in Albania, so in each destination were filled 40 questionnaires. The questionnaire was simple in order to be appropriate for the general level of tourists. It focused on the information about tourist attitude and tourist information.

The information was gathered from the answer to the questions: how often travel, how long do you stay, why did you choose these destinations, which is the main destination, etc. The information is taken to find the reasons for choosing a certain destination and how did tourists learn about each destination. While the selection was random, statistical processing was done through software. Secondary data were collected from the statistical data of public institutions, from researchers' data and from the data of relevant international organizations of tourism. The study was undertaken to see how demand varies in these tourist destinations in Albania and how tourism development remains a priority to the Albanian economy.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AS A PRIORITY TO THE ALBANIAN ECONOMY

Albania is known as a tourist destination on the Mediterranean coast with a competitive position in the international tourism market, part of which are rare and precious secrets, of nature and cultural heritage. It has an excellent potential for tourism development. Many cultural attractions and natural resources have a very high quality and attract a large number of visitors. What makes Albania unique is the large number of attractions that are offered to a large number of national and foreign tourists. Tourism is a relatively new industry in Albania, which serves as a catalyst for the economic growth of the country and contributes to the development of many branches of economy such as infrastructure, construction, employment, transportation, banking system etc. Today it has taken new dimensions, ranking among the industries with the highest potential for the level of income that generates and for the supply of labor that it creates.

Tourism is above all an important means of employment. Its development is closely related to the opening of a considerable number of new jobs, even though, in most cases, they are only seasonal. One of tourism's main benefits is investment. Albania is open for investors by creating extraordinary opportunities to exploit its advantages. The Albanian government has made efforts to create favorable climate for attracting foreign investments in Albania, followed by design and mitigation policies.

❖ THE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ALBANIA RELIES ON:

- An attractive coastline, which is part of the eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, with generations of long stretches of sand and clean water
- A long summer season, hot and sunny
- An adjacent to major European countries through airline
- An unpolluted nature and natural beauty in some of its regions

- Many historical and cultural centers

❖ **THE MAIN ARGUMENTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ARE:**

- It provides employment opportunities to all categories for tourism is an intensive labor industry.
- Creates an offer to exchange the foreign currency necessary
- Increases revenue
- Requires the development of an infrastructure that will also contribute to the stimulation of the local industry and commerce
- Creates an image of the destination in the whole world
- Gives foreigners an opportunity to recognize the positive side of a not very popular region or country

❖ **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SOME OF THE MAIN DESTINATIONS**

In this tourist season Albania has proven able to provide competitive advantage compared to other countries in the region, increasing, likewise, the number of visitors from year to year. The advertising of the Albanian coast and infrastructure improvements have contributed to this growth.

In this way, owning natural and cultural potentials, Albania is developing tourism and is positioning as a desirable tourist destination.

Desrtinacionet main : Tirana, Vlora, Pogradec, Korce

- **Where did you learn about these destinations?**

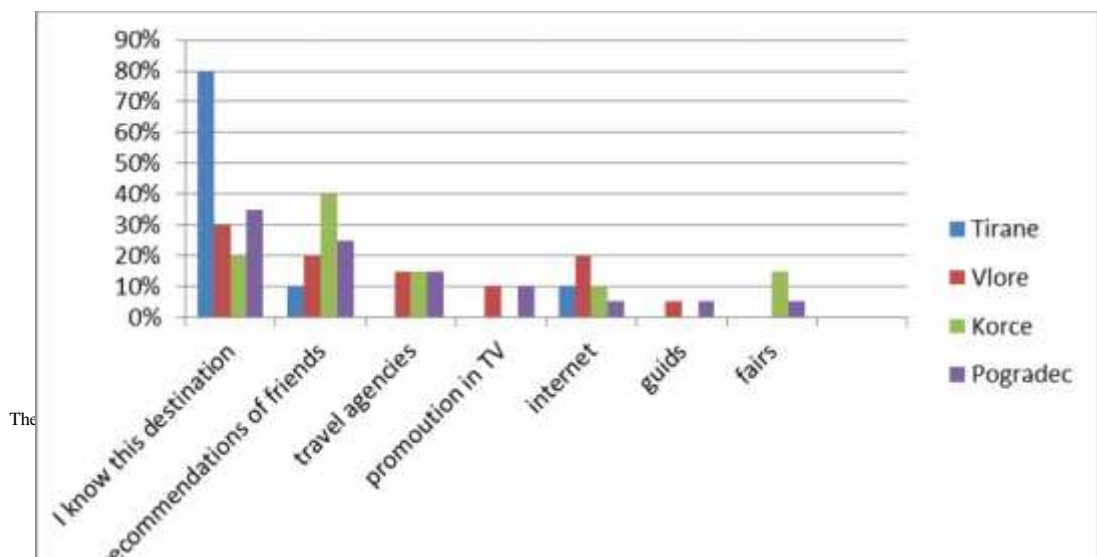


Chart No. 1

Most of the tourists visiting these destinations knew these places and have visited them before. 80% of the tourists knew Tirana in advance, 10% were informed by the Internet and 10% by the recommendations of friends. Most of the tourists who come to Vlora were informed by friends with 20% by agencies, 20% on the Internet and 5% have come as part of the tourist package. The main information in Korçe is taken from recommendations of friends with 40% and 20% knew the place before. 35% of the tourists who have visited Pogradec knew the place before, others are informed by friends (25%) and 15% by the travel agencies.

- **How often do you travel during a year?**

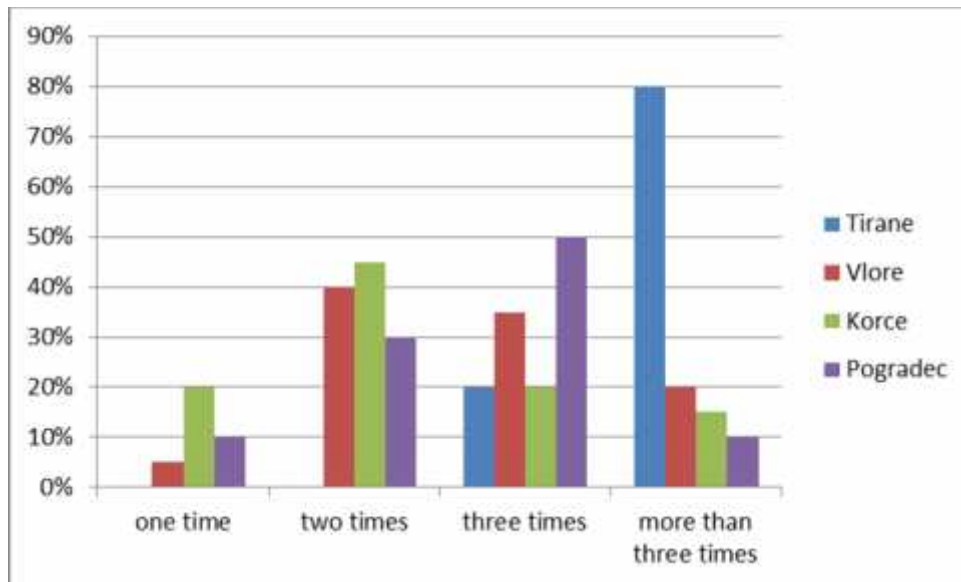


Chart No. 2

The frequency of trips by tourists visiting these destinations varies from one destination to another. Focusing on the chart no.2, it is evident that tourists visiting Tirana have a higher frequency of travelling with more than three times within a year. The frequency of tourists travelling to Vlora and Pogradec is three times within a year, while the frequency of the trips of tourists to Korca is twice within a year.

- **Why did you choose this destination ?**

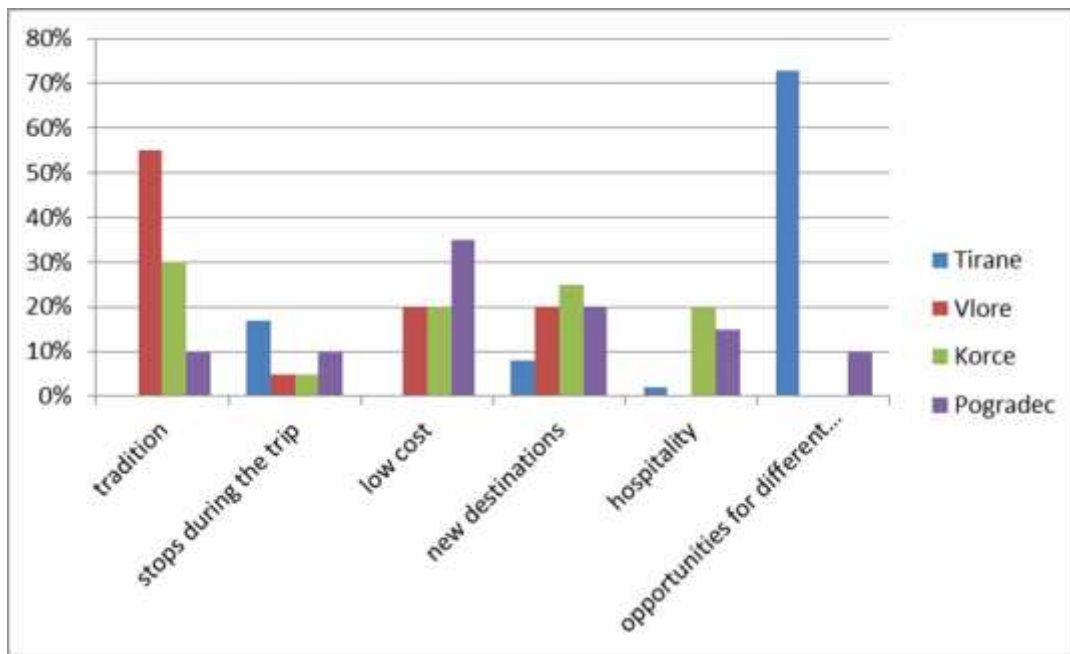


Chart No. 3

The main reason why tourists visit the city of Tirana is the possibility for different activities and this created a considerable percentage of 73%. Tourists visiting Vlora estimating 55% of its traditions. This is a considerable percentage because this study matches the opening of the season. 30% of tourists visit the city of Korca for its traditions, 25% of them visit it to explore

new places and 20% for its hospitality. The reasons why tourists visit Pogradec are: low cost compared to other tourist cities with 35% and learning about new locations by 20%.

CONCLUSIONS

- The priority of economic development in Albania remains tourism, which provides significant income for the local economy.
- Development of tourism is closely linked with the development of other branches of the economy such as infrastructure, construction, agriculture, transportation, banking sector and employment.
- Tourism, for its own characteristics as industry, needs cooperation and coordination. Public administration has its role being interested in its income, investment, employment and currency that tourism brings.
- The results of the questionnaires showed that the highest percentage of tourist planned to go back to those destinations and thought that there was a good premise for the development of tourism demand in these destinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Tourism development should be steadily growing with the purpose to make these destinations competitive tourist destinations.

- For a better development of tourism it is important the investment in promotion, which will bring the creation of an Albanian brand and will improve the image of tourism, and therefore should be studied carefully.
- Among all experiences with international destinations the most successful ones are those that have built partnerships between the public and private sectors. This partnership should be considered in the planning, development, marketing and promotion.

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