

INCREASING TOURIST CIRCULATION IN NAVODARI AREA - EFFECT OF ADAPTING MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY STAKEHOLDERS IN TOURISM TO MARKET DEMANDS

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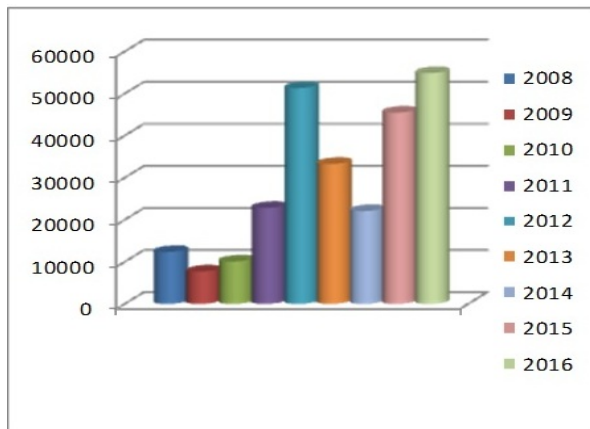
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Abstract: During the last 5 years, the tourist circulation in Navodari area has registered a significant increase. This is due mainly to the increase in the number of tourist structures, the adaptation of the marketing strategies adopted by stakeholders in tourism in this region and the promotion of tourism products offered for sale on the domestic tourism market. Marketing strategies have targeted the launch of some diversified travel packages made to fully satisfy tourist demand manifested among segments of domestic tourists. As regards product policy, strategies of differentiation and flexibility have been adopted which aimed to adapt the offer to the needs of tourists. Tourism entrepreneurs in this area have given special attention to recreation services which have experienced a significant development in recent years.

Keywords: tourism, strategy, demand, diversification.

1. Tourist circulation

In recent years, tourist circulation manifested in Navodari area has registered a significant increase, resident tourists preferring this area since charges for food and accommodation services are more affordable than in Mamaia resort and recreational tourist services have diversified.

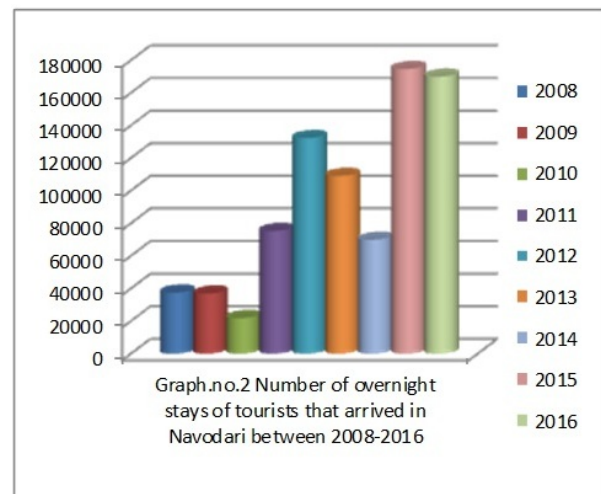


Graph. no. 1 Number of tourists that arrived in Navodari, between 2008-2016

Source: processing based on data taken from The National Institute of Statistics, login <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop>, on 24.02.2017

At the level of the year 2016, it was registered an increase in the number of tourists that chose Navodari as a tourist destination, with 20.64% compared to the prior year. Navodari area identifies on the national tourist market through its beach large size compared to other resorts on the Romanian Coast, where the erosion phenomenon

has been quite accentuated lately. Due to the increase of the attractiveness of this area among tourists, the number of overnight stays has increased in recent years. This reflects on the average stay.



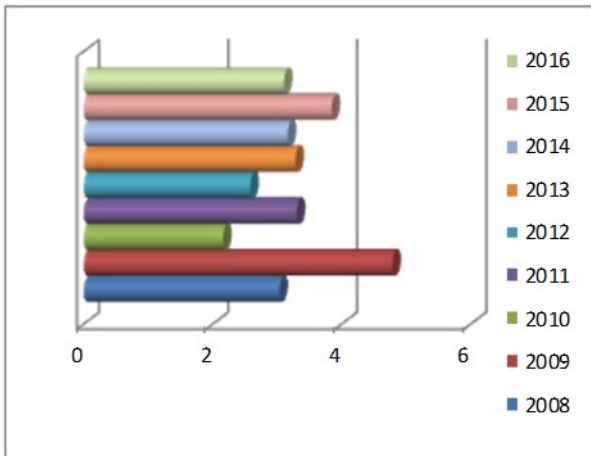
Graph.no.2 Number of overnight stays of tourists that arrived in Navodari between 2008-2016

Source: processing based on data taken from The National Institute of Statistics, login <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop>, on 24.02.2017

In the reporting period, the highest level of the number of overnights was recorded in the year 2015. This increase is due to the exodus of families with children towards this area of the Romanian Coast, for spending holidays.

In the period 2008-2016, the average stay in the area recorded values between 2,58 days/tourist and 4.78 days/tourist. Compared to Mamaia resort, where the average stay has lower values due to the growth of tourist traffic at weekends,

the average stay in Navodari recorded higher values which show the tendency to pass from the practice of weekend tourism towards short stay tourism.



Graph no. 3 The average stay made by tourists in Navodari, between 2008 – 2016 (no. days/tourist)

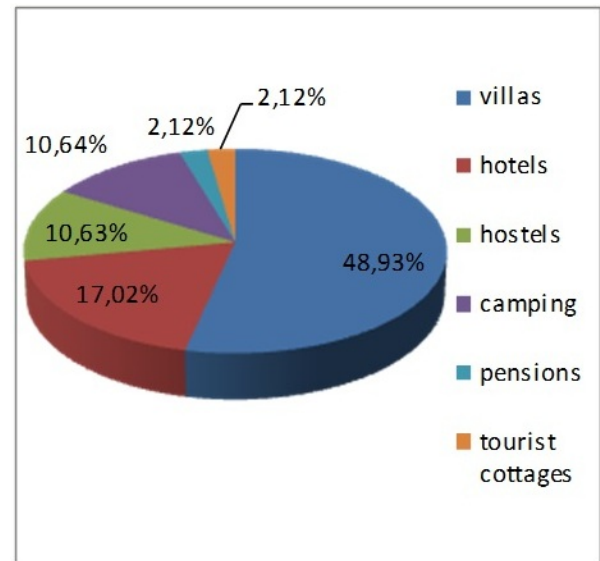
Source: processing based on data taken from The National Institute of Statistics, login <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop>, on 24.02.2017

For now, the tourist flow is mainly supported by domestic tourism, the number of foreign tourists being quite low. But this tourist area can attract significant revenues by increasing Romanian tourist loyalty, through the strengthening of tourist markets and by organizing artistic attractive cultural events among young people.

2. Tourist reception infrastructure

The tourist offer of Navodari area has registered a diversification of tourist accommodation structures. 4 star hotels and pensions have entered the tourist circuit and in the area there are resorts featuring recreation, SPA areas, tourist animation etc. In terms of accommodation, tourist reception structures differ in classification and existing facilities. At the level of the month of August 2016, in Navodari area there were 47 accommodation structures of tourist reception. The largest share consists of tourist villas (48.3%).

In terms of accommodation capacity, at the level of 2016 summer season, there were 5,268 accommodation facilities, and the operating accommodation capacity corresponding to the same year was of 472,917 days of operation corresponding to existing accommodation. In the past five years, there have been significant investments in tourism infrastructure. This has caused an increase in the tourist attractiveness among tourists who have access to various types of tourist services.



Graph no. 4 Types of tourist accommodation structures available in August 2016 in Navodari and their overall share

Source: processing based on data taken from The National Institute of Statistics, login <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop>, on 24.02.2017

3. Marketing strategies

Development strategy of the seaside tourist product represents, for entrepreneurs in this area, a way forward, taking into account, first of all, the significant growth of tourist traffic in this region. The historic remains of Dobrogea could be turned to good account, by including some thematic trips in holiday packages.

As nightlife recreation, accessed by young people, is an important source of tourism revenues produced by this area, day recreational services should be diversified so that water sports become an attraction for tourists between 18 and 35 years old.

In terms of summer recreation, this area lacks sports and children's play grounds. Because during high season the beach is not very crowded as it is the case of Mamaia resort, this area is also accessed by families with children. Unfortunately, except for the helio-marine treatment, children do not have other things to do. The differentiation strategy is another alternative which has the role to increase tourist traffic. Differences are associated, first and foremost, with tariffs and the content of the traded tourist packages. Acting on quite segmented markets, tourism firms in Navodari area should opt for a particular strategy of adapting the quality of tourism products to the specific requirements of the different segments of visitors or for a strategy of qualitative differentiation from competitors from countries that offer similar products [2].

In recent years, the tourist services provided in many of the villas of Navodari have improved from a qualitative point of view, which nevertheless led

to high price strategies. However, the degree of occupation is fairly high in summer. In the area, there is only one resort (Phoenicia Holiday Resort) which works according to the pattern of large structures in Antalya.

Travel packages marketed by this resort are complex and are organized in an all inclusive system. Despite the practice of high rates, the occupancy rate of the resort during summer season is 100%. A similar approach is necessary and useful in the case of food services. Every tourist stay at a seaside destination induces the tourist *the desire of consumption of various dishes different from those consumed in everyday life* [1]. As a result, tourism entrepreneurs in this area should diversify the culinary offer by selling fish products. The specialization of a significant number of restaurants offering typical seaside and Delta food products would represent a great asset of this area.

The strategy of upgrading and innovation of the tourist offer also represents a solution for the development of tourism in Navodari and to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of this resort. In this area, innovation could regard some tourist food programs related to fish dishes, the effective and creative valorisation of the local cultural potential, of the area traditions, and tourist packages with a day trip in the Danube Delta.

Tourism in Năvodari currently records a shortage of qualified staff. Most entrepreneurs, due to seasonal activity, do not employ qualified staff, nor do they invest in training. This fact is reflected in the quality of services provided by an undertrained staff, also poorly motivated by low pay [2].

It is true that in tourism, employee performance is defining because the tourist makes contact with the receptionist the moment he enters the hotel or pension. If the receptionist is not able to respond to all requests and solve them, then the whole vacation will be affected by this first contact. If possible, the entrepreneur should ensure that he has a qualified workforce, responsible, able to engage decisively in ensuring customer satisfaction.

Unfortunately, in the area there are still managers of tourist structures who do not give a major importance to ensure a climate of partnership with their employees, and this is reflected in their performance and ultimately in the degree of tourist satisfaction.

Recruiting and hiring the right employees implies, in the first instance, to clearly set the job description, without any major operation over time, of each position in the organizational structure of the tourism enterprise [1]. Thus, the employee will know his duties, what this position involves and how to communicate with tourists.

The degree of tourist satisfaction will influence the future of the business and consequently the generation of a high rate of accommodation occupancy. Staff recruiting should be treated with seriousness, because workers fluctuation has a negative impact on the overall business activity.

Staff ongoing training should be a priority for tourism entrepreneurs in Navodari area. The organization of some simple but concrete internal programs that take place with a well established periodicity and include all categories of staff is a solution in this direction. In this sense, one can organize short courses within the tourist structures, for staff to learn basic concepts for conversations with foreign tourists. The promotion of team spirit is an essential strategic direction for applying the principles of internal marketing [1].

The organization of team-building programs, inside or outside the tourist structure, the granting of an adequate remuneration for a superior quality performance of the employee, will motivate the worker and will also determine him to improve the activity he develops within the tourist structure. When tourism entrepreneurs in Navodari area understand that there is a close relationship between the quality of employees' performance, the existing facilities and the financial results of the company, we will be able to talk about competitiveness. The measuring and rewarding of performance should represent compulsory strategic directions in tourism activity. Currently, employees of coastal tourism are rewarded with low wages, have mediocre training, some of them do not know foreign languages and are not able to provide quality services. This fact is reflected in the attitude they have towards tourists and their demands. In conclusion, within the framework of staff policy, strategies of staff motivation are needed to be adopted.

Romanian seaside tourism in our country has a significant potential which unfortunately is not turned to good account. A good understanding of the real values that characterize the Romanian tourist sector [1], a right analysis of travel motivations and of the demands voiced among major segments of tourists, the study of international tourism trends, accompanied by the outlining of some marketing strategies tailored to the realities of the area are several ways to follow in order to revive the Romanian coastal tourism.

In terms of price policy, entrepreneurs in Năvodari, should apply fair rates that reflect the real service quality they provide. Some entrepreneurs in this area apply the all-inclusive system. During the summer period, entrepreneurs in Năvodari area apply high price strategies. This strategy has no real correspondence in the quality

of the services they provide, which generates some dissension among tourists.

The strategic variants most often used by tourism businesses in Navodari in the distribution activities are represented by selective distribution adopted by entrepreneurs who use a limited number of agents and the intensive strategy used by tourism businesses who sell their products and services through a significant number of intermediaries [3]. Depending on the evolution of activities in time [4], tourism operators in the area adopt the strategy of

permanent or intermittent marketing communication strategy. In order to increase tourist traffic it would be suited to create a strong brand in the area supported through a variety of promotional techniques. It is very true that in recent years, thanks to events and concerts held on the beaches of Navodari area, the notoriety degree of the resort has increased, fact reflected in the increase of tourist traffic.

Conclusions

In order to increase tourist traffic and the level of attractiveness of this area among the tourists, it is necessary that stakeholders adopt marketing strategies that aim to improve the quality of tourism workers performance, and also market complex and innovative tourist packages and develop daytime entertainment. Also, it is required an aggressive promotion of this destination on both internal and external market through specific promotional techniques and by creating a representative brand for this area.

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