

„EVENT TURIZAM“ U HRVATSKOJ: UČINCI I IMPLIKACIJE ZA MALE DESTINACIJE

EVENTS TOURISM IN CROATIA: IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SMALL DESTINATIONS

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SAŽETAK

Osnovni cilj ovog rada je ukazivanje na potencijal turizma događaja kao katalizatora turističkog razvoja, pogotovo manjih sredina u Hrvatskoj, te utvrđivanje prepreka koje ugrožavaju razvoj turizma događaja kao ozbiljan segment unutar turističke ponude destinacije. Analiziraju se izazovi koji se moraju prevladati kako bi emitivna tržišta prepoznala događaj kao razlog dolaska u destinaciju, te uvjeti koje moraju ispuniti receptivna tržišta za maksimalnu kvalitetu boravka i doživljaja događaja s obzirom na nosivi kapacitet destinacije. Predviđaju se mjere i potrebne odluke koje bi poboljšale kompetitivnost događaja i razvoj istog u kratkom i dužem vremenskom razdoblju. Sve navedeno potrebno je promotriti u kontekstu razvoja turizma kroz povijest te perspektive u turizmu budućnosti vodeći računa o konkurentskim prednostima i specifičnosti pojedine destinacije.

Ključne riječi: *razvoj turizma, potencijal turizma događaja, kompetitivnost, konkurentske prednosti.*

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this paper is to point out the potential of event tourism as a catalyst for tourism development, especially of smaller communities in Croatia, and to identify obstacles that threaten the development of event tourism as a serious segment within the tourist offer of a destination. For this reason, the challenges that must be overcome for the broadcasting markets to recognize the event as a reason for choosing

a destination are analyzed, so the receptive markets can offer maximum quality of stay and experience, given the carrying capacity of the destination. Thus, possible measures and necessary decisions can be envisaged to improve competitiveness and develop the event over a short and long period of time. All of the above needs to be considered in the context of tourism development through the history and perspectives on tourism of the future, taking into account the competitive advantages.

Keywords: *tourism development, event tourism potential, competitiveness, competitive advantages.*

1. UVOD

1. INTRODUCTION

To organise a high-quality event, it is necessary to define the demand perspective: who travels to events, why they travel, and who attends events while travelling [1]. It is also important to understand what an "event tourist" does and consumes. A key consideration is assessing the value of events in promoting the positive attributes of the destination, their marketing orientation, and their alignment with the values promoted by the destination. On the supply side, it is essential to plan the development of the destination, facilitate the realisation and promotion of all types of events, and meet the needs of a wider audience. The primary goal of events is to attract visitors. Events also act as catalysts for the economic development of the

destination and promote the destination as an open, modern environment that values its culture and tradition [2]. Events in tourism today are extremely complex, as the entire tourism industry is connected to them, and they are becoming a new branch within the industry itself. Therefore, there is no unambiguous definition of events, but one is emerging, along with the industry surrounding them. From the above, it is clear that all actors in Croatian tourism already recognise the potential of events for the development and promotion of tourist destinations [2]. This paper examines the impact of event organisation on smaller communities in Croatia through its influence on the local economy, tourism, and social life, as well as the issues of sustainability, seasonality, and limited resources that may reduce long-term benefits for the community.

2. UČINCI TURIZMA DOGAĐAJA NA MALE SREDINE

2. *EFFECTS OF EVENT TOURISM ON SMALL COMMUNITIES*

Event tourism is an important segment of contemporary tourism that significantly contributes to the development of destinations, particularly by reducing seasonality and increasing tourism demand. By organising cultural, sports, and entertainment events, destinations attract visitors and enhance their market recognition [6].

For smaller communities, event tourism plays a special role as it enables the valorisation of local resources, strengthens identity, and stimulates economic development. It can also contribute to increased employment and improved quality of life for the local population [9].

Sociokulturološki učinci događaja na male sredine

Sociocultural effects of events on small communities

Events impact every aspect of human life, including economic, social, cultural, and political spheres [2]. In smaller communities, this impact is particularly significant. The

growing popularity and number of events in tourism can be attributed to the predominance of positive effects over negative ones, especially regarding the environment and society in which they occur. Event tourism is increasingly studied and analysed to further minimise the negative effects on the local population and to enhance financial benefits and local participation [1]. The positive impacts of events on smaller communities include the sharing of common experiences, the revalorisation of traditional values and culture, and the homogenisation of society when the event is recognised as a common good [3]. By actively involving the community in organising and implementing events, the quality of services and the knowledge transferable to other sectors of the community's economy are improved. Besides fostering closer ties among the local population, events encourage proactive thinking and action in addressing new challenges and ideas [3]. The most important positive effects are the broadening of cultural perspectives, increased tolerance, and the growth of hospitality. However, there is also a risk of negative effects from an unsuccessful event, which may result from poor allocation of financial resources, lack of authority, negative marketing, and loss of the destination's identity [4].

These examples highlight the complexity of socio-political relations in the context of events in smaller communities, but openness to events and their short duration ensure that their impact on life in the destination is minimal. Nevertheless, if an event is not properly managed and well planned, it can have a devastating effect on the socio-cultural values of the destination [1]. Donald Getz identifies the reasons why the effects of events in smaller communities are positive [2]:

- The local population willingly participates in events,
- A high level of social integration is achieved,
- Organisers and volunteers advance professionally,
- Most participants and residents experience a strong sense of shared spirit and belonging,
- Entertainment occurs in a cheerful, positive atmosphere.

Ekonomski učinci događaja na male sredine

Economic impacts of events on small communities

The economic effects on smaller communities primarily depend on the organiser and the investment in the event itself, and should be considered as direct and indirect effects, along with an analysis of both positive and negative impacts [3]. Direct positive effects are mainly seen in the promotion of the destination and increased attendance during, before, and after the event. For larger international events, the destination becomes more desirable simply through media exposure, and depending on the quality and type of event, it can also attract targeted visitors. Event tourism is unique in that it does not depend on climatic or weather conditions, but solely on the event itself, which serves as the main motive for visiting a particular destination and therefore has the potential for success (planned attendance) regardless of the timing [3]. By scheduling an event immediately before or after the main season, it is possible to extend the tourist season, increase revenue from tourist services, and thereby improve the quality of life in the destination [5]. Negative economic effects usually arise from poor destination management and resistance from the local community, especially among those not directly involved in the tourism sector [6]. There is also a risk of losing the authenticity of the destination; if the event is inappropriate, it may damage the destination's reputation, attracting visitors with lower purchasing power and resulting in weaker economic effects even during the main season [5]. Furthermore, there is a risk of labour exploitation, unrealistic price increases in the destination, and other situations that may lead to direct financial losses and a decline in the standard of living. Risks are present in every entrepreneurial venture and must be understood in order to minimise them [6].

Ekološki učinci događaja na male sredine

Ecological impacts of events on small environments

When considering the environmental effects of events on smaller communities, their short duration should be highlighted as the main positive factor. Each event must be adapted to the carrying capacity

of the destination to prevent damage caused by infrastructure overload [7]. Organisers in smaller communities should ensure that the planned number of visitors does not exceed the maximum number of guests during the peak tourist season. Positive environmental effects of events include raising awareness of environmental protection, developing destination infrastructure, improving transport and communication, and renewing the destination, all aimed at presenting it in the best possible way to visitors and emphasising environmental awareness, which is now one of the most powerful marketing tools. Therefore, it is not in the organiser's interest to damage the natural environment of the destination; during event promotion, the organiser can also highlight the natural beauty of the destination, clean nature, air, and water, regardless of the type of event [6]. However, there are also environmental risks that must be well understood when organising events, such as environmental damage and pollution, destruction of cultural heritage, noise, traffic congestion, and lack of social control. Through preventive measures and an environmental protection study, all these effects can be minimised or kept within acceptable limits [1]. For an event to be environmentally acceptable, it is necessary to identify all negative consequences for the destination and all positive effects of the event, and to decide on hosting the event based on a balance of positive and negative parameters. Environmental issues are sometimes cited as a limiting factor and an excuse for rejecting anything new and innovative, which positions our tourism as merely an offer of sun and sea. In his books, Donald Getz emphasises that an event is periodic and short-term, which affects environmental impacts, especially if there are no permanent spatial changes for a particular event; therefore, the environmental component in the case of events is minimised and should not have a decisive influence on the decision to initiate an event in a smaller destination [1].

Preduvjeti za realizaciju događaja u maloj sredini

Prerequisites for holding an event in a small community

Unlike large cities, smaller communities do not have a choice, and if they lack natural attractions that generate visits, both seasonal and year-round,

they must artificially create new content [7]. The ideal driver for any smaller destination is the organisation of a recognisable and ambitious event. Almost 90% of events are organised and rely on regional one-day visitors [8]. To organise a successful event, which over time can become attractive enough to be a reason in itself to visit the destination even outside the season, a wide range of competencies among the staff involved in the development of the event is necessary [4].

3. SWOT I TOWS ANALIZA TURIZMA DOGAĐAJA U MALIM MJESTIMA

3. SWOT AND TOWS ANALYSIS OF EVENT TOURISM IN SMALL TOWNS

Special emphasis must be placed on the compatibility between the local mentality and the target population of event visitors. Knowledge of contemporary tourism trends and time constraints for event realisation forms the basis for initiating a quality event. Time management and the decision-making process are fundamental to the successful realisation of an event in tourism. The decision to initiate an event should be based on objective

parameters by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the idea, which is only possible through the preparation of a high-quality SWOT and TOWS analysis for a specific destination and idea [7].

SWOT and TOWS analyses clearly show that smaller tourist communities in Croatia possess strong comparative advantages, but at the same time suffer from structural and organisational weaknesses.

On the one hand, prominent strengths such as unspoiled nature, cultural and historical heritage, tradition, gastronomy, and multiculturalism form the basis for developing an authentic and differentiated tourist offer. The proximity of source markets (e.g., Germany, Austria, Italy) further increases market potential, while price competitiveness and hospitality make the destination attractive to a wider range of guests [7].

On the other hand, weaknesses such as inadequate infrastructure, weaker destination management, complex institutional organisation and insufficient environmental protection indicate a lack of

Tablica 1 Tablični pregled SWOT analiza manje sredine kao turističke destinacije u Hrvatskoj

Table 1 SWOT analyses for a smaller community as a tourist destination in Croatia

S (STRENGTHS)	W (WEAKNESSES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • untouched nature • cultural and historical heritage • tradition • multiculturalism • gastronomy • proximity to source markets • price competitiveness • hospitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infrastructure • perception of the recent past • level of environmental protection • control of land use • quality of accommodation facilities • destination management • partnership, cooperation, synergy • complex institutional organisation
O (OPPORTUNITIES)	T (THREATS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trends: nature, adventure, entertainment, health, etc. • new tourist products • connecting agriculture and tourism • improving accommodation quality • destination promotion • acquiring new markets • public-private sector partnership • destination openness • integral destination quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opposition to development options and projects • insufficient financial resources • socio-political stability • increasing competition • attitude towards nature and space • visual pollution of the area • tourism personnel • complex institutional organisation • changes in external factors (politics, economic stagnation, etc.)

Tablica 2 Tablični pregled TOWS matrica turizma događaja u manjim sredina općenito

Table 2 TOWS matrix of event tourism in smaller communities in general

	INTERNAL STRENGTHS 1. Size of the destination 2. Price competitiveness 3. Hospitality	INTERNAL WEAKNESSES 1. Infrastructure 2. Destination management 3. Accommodation units
EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES 1. Trends in tourism: - Nature - Adventure - Fun - Health 2. New tourist products 3. Concurring new markets	Opportunity (O)-Strength (S): 1. There is currently an increasing demand for smaller destinations. 2. When designing events, highlight all the advantages of the destination regardless of the type of event 3. Present the event in new markets accompanied by footage of the destination	Opportunity (O)-Weakness (W) 1. Events should be planned in accordance with the carrying capacity of the destination 2. It is necessary to establish a DMO to ensure the quality of event development as support the local economy. 3. Adapt the quality of accommodation units to the target population
EXTERNAL THREATS 1. Competition 2. Foreign investors (risk of environmental and spatial degradation) 3. Economic crisis and socio-political instability	Threat (T)-Strength (S): 1. Competitiveness is enhanced by monitoring technologies and developing the destination 2. Contract with foreign investors must ensure that the quality of life in the destination does not decline 3. Educate the local population and improve hospitality	Threat (T)-Weakness (W): 1. Allocate part of the revenue for infrastructure development, to increase competitiveness 2. Minimise investments by foreign investors, allowing concessions without selling land 3. Address the economic crisis and unemployment through a strategy of destination self-sufficiency and planned development.

strategic coordination and long-term planning. The problem lies not in the resources themselves, but in the way they are managed [8].

The key issue of the paper arises from the disproportion between:

- strong natural and cultural resources
- and an insufficiently developed destination management system

The destination may have potential, but it does not always possess the mechanisms for its optimal utilisation [9].

Three key messages can be drawn from the tables:

Potential for differentiation exists

Trends in tourism – such as nature, adventure, health, and authentic experiences – favour smaller communities. These communities can develop

new tourism products based on sustainability, local gastronomy, and the connection between agriculture and tourism [9].

The greatest risks come from internal misalignment

Opposition to development options, insufficient financial resources, weak partnerships, and complicated institutional organisation represent a more serious threat than competition itself. The problem is often not in the market, but in stakeholder coordination [7].

Sustainability is key

Attitudes towards nature and space, visual pollution, and uncontrolled use of space can, in the long term, undermine the very strengths that make the destination competitive. If authenticity and environmental quality are lost, the basis for development is lost [8].

SWOT and TOWS analyses show that smaller tourist communities in Croatia have a strong development basis, but long-term success will depend on:

- improving institutional efficiency,
- strengthening partnership and cooperation,
- strategic spatial management, and
- raising quality and sustainability.

If strengths and opportunities are aligned through coordinated destination management, a small community can become a competitive, sustainable and recognisable tourist destination [9].

7. ZAKLJUČAK

7. CONCLUSION

In small communities, events can serve as a prerequisite for the development of both the local economy and the destination itself. However, events in small communities may also have several negative effects on these areas, which must be anticipated and examined before deciding on the type of event to introduce.

The decision-making process for selecting events should include representatives of the local population to ensure a balance between event development and destination development in line with the community's wishes.

Event tourism in Croatia has strong potential for the positive transformation of small destinations, but only under the following conditions:

- professional management,
- community involvement,
- respect for carrying capacity,
- a long-term strategy.

In conclusion, this paper indicates that without a systematic approach, events remain isolated projects without a lasting developmental impact on the community. The future of Croatian tourism does not lie in the quantity of events, but in their strategic integration into destination ecosystem development.

8. REFERENCE

8. REFERENCES

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