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Abstract

At nowadays, where the modernized economy based on networks, Max Weber's theory about the organization as a rigid structure with fixed rules and procedures begins to decompose. In the rapidly changing world of e-commerce, companies must be much more protean and capable to transform simultaneously in order to conform in the new economic conditions. In this new fact, the systemic approach of Kaspar, where tourism consists an open, flexible and interactive system, obtain greater potential.

In the first part, we attempt to analyze Kaspar's systemic approach and its implementation effectiveness in the Greek Tourism. This systemic approach refers to an open system model, as an open flexible structure that interacts with its environment. In this context, we present the operation of tourism enterprises and tourism destinations through their interactions with the environment, as designated by the systemic analysis of Kaspar, having as reference the Greek economic and tourism reality.

Competitiveness has become a central point of tourism policy. As tourism activity intensifies and competition increases, tourism policy focuses on improving competitiveness by creating a statutory framework to protect resources, and monitor, control and enhance quality and efficiency in the industry. Within this context, various organizations and academic researchers developed and suggested frameworks and models to enhance and assess tourism competitiveness. One of these models is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Tourism indicators will be investigated to provide a measure of the past and current activity of Tourism in the Greek economy.

This paper aims to illustrate the importance of tourism as an economic activity and investigate the potential competitiveness effects of the Greek tourism destination, in the context where tourism is perceived as an open and interactive system.

Keywords: Kaspar's systemic approach, Tourism Indicators, Competitiveness, Regional Development.

1. Introduction

The purposes of this article are: (i) to analyse the systemic approach of Kaspar and (ii) to identify and highlight the competitiveness of Greek tourism destination. In addition to, this paper attempts to relate the above purposes with the environments which constitute the open system of Kaspar. The study's aim is addressed by applying the methodology of critical analysis.

In the first section Kaspar's systemic approach is presented, highlighting the fact that tourism system is an interactive open system, where the economic, political, social, ecological, and technological environment influencing decisively tourism growth and development.

The next section deals with the strategic situation analysis of Greek tourism by presenting the performance of Greece over the last years according to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), and presenting the interventional strategies to demonstrate its competitive position.

The last part is devoted to prove that the most important benefits of considering tourism as an open system, are the growth of tourism enterprises and the regional development. Therefore, the competitiveness strategies of Greek tourism coincides with those of an open and interactive tourism system.

2. Analyzing the Tourism System structure by C. Kaspar

Tourism evolution coincides with the most widely accepted political, economic, social, environmental and technological dimension. This dimension refers to the structure of the tourism system, elaborated by C. Kaspar (1976), in an approach based on a systemic analysis (Varvaressos, 2013:50-53).

According to C. Kaspar, the tourism system is composed of two subsystems:

- A) The subject of tourism, which activate the demand of tourist services (tourist-consumer)
- B) The object of tourism. This subsystem includes three variables: the tourist resort, tourist enterprises, and tourism organizations.

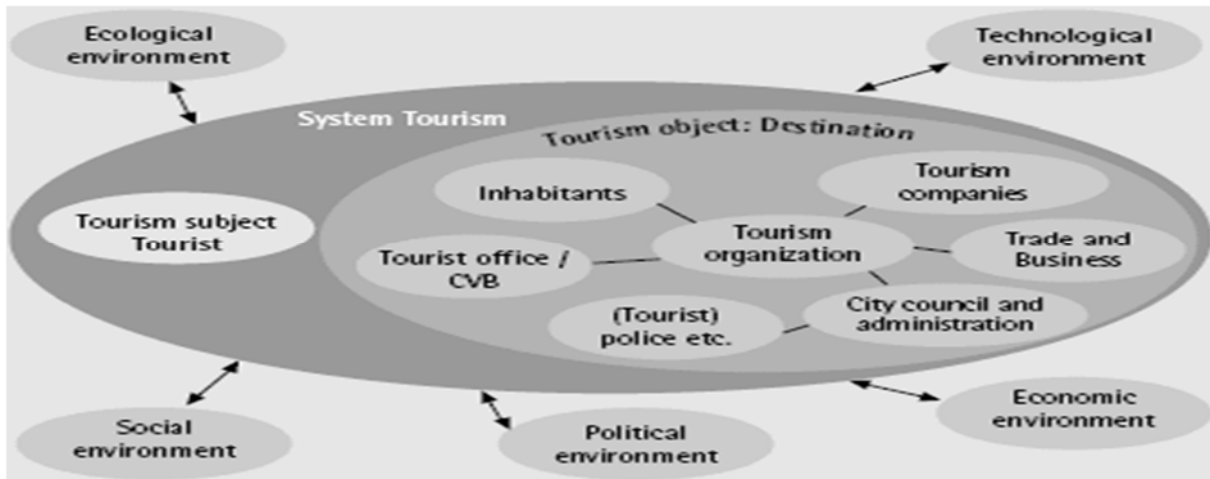
These two subsystems are in a constant interaction and interdependence. Therefore, the tourist activity is structured in different sections that are mutually interdependent and form a structured and well-organized system. A systemic analysis of Tourism by C. Kaspar indicates that the tourism system is an open system, which is characterized in interdependence with the other systems above.

- The most important systems (environment) are:
- The economic environment (Economical)
- The political environment (Political)

- The social environment (Social)
- The technological environment (Technological)
- And the ecological environment (Ecological)

This integrated approach, which facilitates the understanding of the tourism phenomenon, considers as incentive the tourist-consumer. The tourism system determined and simultaneously influenced by the elements of its subsystems, (tourist enterprises), while simultaneously performed an interaction and connection of effects with the existing environment.

Figure 1: Kaspar's Tourism System Structure Analysis



Source: Kaspar,1976.

The external environment of enterprises includes all those external elements and affects either directly or indirectly.

3. The Economic Environment

Tourism consists one of the largest and most dynamic sectors of the global economy, marking a continuous increase and diversification with the emergence of new countries-destinations in the world tourism map. Economic growth and rising living standards in several countries, have contributed to an increase in disposable income, improved infrastructure and transport. The evolution of tourism determinant of social and economic progress has resulted an integral part of international trade. The receipts from foreign tourism ranks fourth worldwide (IOBE, 2012: 7).

According to a survey of the Greek Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), in 2013 Greece was facing high unemployment rate stood at 27.5%. The first quarter of 2014 the figure was 27.8% in the second quarter raised up to 26.6%. (Greek Statistical Authority, 2014). The dynamics of tourism in Greece and its growth state tourist employment around 800 thousand employees (direct, indirect and consequent employment).

The integration of the major sub-sectors of the tourism circuit shows that the tourist productive circuit reaches 88.700 companies. Taking into account a large number of companies and organizations with special tourist and cultural infrastructure by aquariums, sports, museums, collections and exhibitions, as well as a large number

of retail and specialized retail outlets is conservatively estimated about 40,000. The number of production units reaches 129,000 units representing approximately 18% of all production units in the country.

The tourism receipts amounts up to 51.2% of the trade deficit and contribute to 16.4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (SETE, 2014). According to forecasts of SETE for 2014, tourism receipts are expected to be 13.5 billion. Referring to the first half of 2014 we assume that the tourism receipts increased by 13.4%, and the balance of travel services by 12.6%.

Based on the available data of SETE on international air arrivals at major airports, continues the impressive increase of + 15.8% in tourist arrivals level for eight months in 2014, compared to the same periods in 2013(<http://www.traveldailynews.gr>).

Furthermore, the travel services balance showed a significant surplus of 2.916,5 million. Euro in the first half of 2014 compared with the first half 2013 was 2.589,4 million. Euros, up by + 12.6% compared to a high increase by + 26.8% made in the first half of 2013 (<https://www.hol.gr>).

In 2013, 63% of tourism businesses operated without encountering operational difficulties and for the year 2014 the rate decreased by 8%. 1/5 business argues that the reduction resulted from the lack of demand and 17% of the lack of investment (IOBE, 2014).

3.1. Travel and Tourism Indicators

The key role of tourism in the Greek economy has been highlighted by SETE (2013): Tourism contributes 16.2% to the GDP, covers 51.2% of the trade balance deficit, employs 1 out of 5 residents, and generates 34 billion euros total demand. This subsection presents Travel & Tourism (T&T) indicators that aim to provide a measure of the past and current activity of T&T in Greek economy. The contribution of tourism to Greek economy is shown in table 2.

Table 1: Tourism Industry in Greece - Main Indicators (Year 2013)

Indicators	Year 2013
International Tourist Arrivals	16.4 millions
International Tourism Receipts	11.23 billion €
Contribution to GDP	16.2%
Contribution to employment	18.2%
Average per Capita Tourism Expenditure	646 €
European Market Share	2.9%
World Market Share	1.5%

Source: SETE (Greek Tourism Confederation), 2014

The tourism industry has been and still is one of the main pillars of the Greek economy over a period of more than forty years. It has been proved that tourism industry has supported and still does economic development

because the industry cuts across and is linked to many other industries, and its benefits are widely distributed within national economies. In comparison to other industries, it possesses distinct advantages as a driver of economic development (Oxford Economics, 2012). More specifically: (i) tourism has strong linkages to other industries within national economies generating significant indirect benefits; (ii) it is highly dispersed within national economies and its benefits are widely distributed; and (iii) it generates valuable spinoff benefits by developing infrastructure that other industries can use, and by boosting investments in other industries.

4. Political Environment

The political environment includes the system, the institutions and the political situation of the state.

The Ministry of Economics, Infrastructure, Maritime and Tourism is the competent government body in tourism, (Law 2015). Under its supervision there are a few boards, such as the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNOT), the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (Tourism Education and Training). In addition to, the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (S.E.T.E)

Indicatively, as a part of the applied Greek tourism policy constitute the new Law Draft "Special Framework of Spatial Planning for Tourism" (Gov. Gazette 1138/V/2009). The Special Framework of Spatial Planning for Tourism (Gov. Gazette 1138/V/2009) aims primarily at creating or improving the conditions of prosperity and quality of life in the country's regions and communities. Therefore, it sets directions, rules and criteria for the spatial structure and the organization of tourism in Greece and determines the necessary infrastructure. In this way, a realistic action plan for the next 15 years is formulated (2009 - 2024). A draft Joint Ministerial Decision has been set (from 09/03/2012) for Public Consultation, approving the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism and Environmental Impact Assessment, evaluating the experience gained from the implementation of the relevant Ministerial Decision of 2009.

4.1. Educational Programs

Tourism contributes to the promotion of social cohesion by offering development and business opportunities particularly in areas of the country, such as islands, which are characterized by depopulation, while enhancing the standard of living through the jobs it creates. This highlights the importance of tourism education and training, which should be developed in Greece as part of tourism quantitative and qualitative upgrading (IOBE, 2013: 5.7).

4.2. Sponsored employment programs

Also important is the impact of tourism on employment, since several professions are affected directly, but also indirectly from tourism development, and mobilize a significant number of production units working to meet the demand created. The tourism education and training can contribute substantially to upgrade the quality of Greek tourism product, (IOBE, 2013: 5.6).

At a time when the effects of the economic crisis reflected in a largely negative way in the labor market, sponsored employment programs in the tourism sector, enhance entrepreneurship and create new jobs. The above employment programs are part of a new development model, in which tourism should play a more active role for the country's economic development.

5. Social Environment

The social environment includes social structure, social organizations, demographic elements, trade union actions.

The tourist arrivals can influence in the tourism destination, as follows, (Varvaressos, 2000):

- the structure and the operation of social organizations
- the local value stratification
- the behavior of residents

In 2014 there was an increase of tourists from France (1.152 thousand/ 2013). Also slight rise showed the German market (2.267thousand/ 2013) and especially noticeable was the increase of tourists from the United Kingdom (1.846thousand/ 2013). Of the rest of the world growth trends were recorded mainly from the USA (467 thousand/ 2013) and Russia(1.353thousand/ 2013). This situation is the result of:

- a) A stable and moderate promoted image abroad,
- b) Social, political and economic instability which adjacent known tourist destinations face (Egypt, Turkey, etc.)
- c) Development of alternative new (or not) forms of tourism.

In contrast with the high tourist arrivals, the Institute for Tourism Research and Forecasting (ITEP) noted that 74% of Greeks went holidays 2013, as envisaged in 2014 (Dawn, 2014).

6. Technological environment

It is a basic requirement for maintaining a company's competitive position in the market. There are three main areas of technological environment to be taken into account when making decisions (Buhalis, 2001, Poon, 1993)

- The innovation process: is a term more economic rather than technological. It consists the notion, through which the company creates new resources or improve the existing ones. Innovation, therefore, as a dimension of technology is an important development tool for modern businesses.
- The technology transfer process: in businesses technology transfer process becomes either gradually or radically depending on the managerial evaluation of the possible reactions and the adapting of the employees.
- The current state of technology: refers to the most recent technological evolution, although the evaluation of the needs assumed as a prerequisite necessity.

Furthermore, the introduction and implementation of new technology in a business, is a major concern of managers, mainly because of the potential impacts, as it constitutes changes in many levels, such as employment situation, working conditions, product differentiation (Buhalis, 2001, Poon, 1993). Technology, Internet and especially the social media play an important role in the tourism sector. A positive impact of using internet services which invades more and more in hospitality businesses, is a fact. This method is evolving rapidly, although in Greece according to the results of the European Study of Hospitality Services 2014, only 24.6% of the reservations made by this way, when in competitor tourism destinations such as Italy and Spain, the rates reach 40.5% and 36% respectively.

7. Ecological environment

The ecological environment consists of the natural environment and ecological characteristics and problems.

The climatic changes projected to affect the Mediterranean countries in the following years will bring significant reduction of tourist arrivals. Reason for that could be the rising temperatures, the reduced summer rainfall and the increased winter rainfall. Possible consequences may be fires, floods, tropical diseases etc. These changes significantly affecting tourism and hospitality issues, consequently there is a tendency to use friendly environmental policies (Melisidou, Varvaressos, 2004).

Some of the business subsidy programs in which enterprises can participate, in order to implement “green development”, are:

- Operational program “ Environment & Sustainable Development” (EPPERAA)
- Development Law 3299/2004
- Operational program 'Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship (OPC II PRIORITY AXIS 4)
- Project "Green Tourism"

The Ecolabels for tourism enterprises, are listed below:

- AISE Charter for Sustainable Cleaning
- BIO Hellas
- BIO Suisse
- Blue Angel
- "The Green Key" Ecolabel

8. Competitiveness: Concept and its Evaluation

Competitiveness is a comparative concept of the ability and performance of a company, industry, sector or country to sell and supply goods and/or services in a given market. The concept is widely used in business management and economics. Competitiveness captures the awareness of both the limitations and challenges posed by global competition, at a time when effective government action is constrained by budgetary constraints and the private sector faces significant barriers to competing in domestic and international markets. The Global

Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) defines competitiveness as "the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country." (WEF, 2011: 2).

8.1. Tourism Destination Competitiveness

Through the analysis of the structure of Greek tourism system according to the systemic approach of Kaspar, and the assumption that tourism is an open system that receives interactions from the environment, competitiveness is formed in tourist destinations.

According to Vanhove (2011), the concept of competitive destination contains two elements: destination and competitiveness. A tourism destination is a well-defined geographical area within which the tourists enjoy various types of tourism experiences. It is believed that competition in tourism is mainly between clusters and not so much between countries (Sotiriadis, 2012). Applied to tourism the concept of Porter's cluster, it might be defined "as a group of tourism attractions, enterprises and institutions directly or indirectly related to tourism and concentrated in a specific geographical area" (Vanhove, 2011:108). Competitiveness has become a central point of tourism policy. As tourism activity intensifies and competition increases, tourism policy focuses on improving competitiveness by creating a statutory framework to protect resources, and to monitor, control and enhance quality and efficiency in the industry. Within this context, various organizations and scholars developed and suggested frameworks and models to enhance and assess tourism competitiveness. One of these models is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI).

8.2. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index - TTCI

The TTCI is a holistic platform, jointly developed by international bodies and organizations (i.e. the WEF, IATA, UNWTO, and WTTC). This tool has been developed within an effort to better understand the drivers of T&T competitiveness and the challenges that face the industry. The aim and objectives of the TTCI are (Dwyer et al., 2011): (i) to help to explore the factors driving T&T competitiveness worldwide, thus providing a basis for implementing policies on a country-by-country basis; (ii) to provide a comprehensive strategic tool for measuring the factors and policies that make it attractive to develop the T&T industry in different countries; and (iii) to provide benchmarking tools that enable countries to identify key obstacles to competitiveness, and to provide a platform for dialogue among government, business and civil society to discuss the best ways of removing them. Its results can be used by all stakeholders to work together to improve the industry's competitiveness in their national economies, thereby contributing to national growth and prosperity (WEF, 2011). It is believed that TTCI is a useful initiative that allows different countries to assess their performance (i.e. destination competitiveness) against other countries at various levels of development. Further, TTCI is a useful basis for policy making to enhance tourism's potential as an engine for growth. This framework was used to evaluate the performance of Greek tourism industry.

8.3. The Competitive Position of Greek Tourism

This section presents the country's performance on the TTCI and its various components. The competitive score and ranking for Greece over the last years are shown in table 2.

Table 2: TTCI for Greece (Years 2008-2013)

Year	TTCI GREECE	
	Rank (out of 140)	Score (1-7)
2008	22	4.9
2009	24	4.9
2011	29	4.8
2013	32	4.8

Source: WEF, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2013

From the above table it is evident that the competitive position of Greece has been deteriorated over the last six years. Greece is facing competition from traditional and emerging destinations, active in the global tourism arena and aiming at market shares. That is why it is necessary to reposition the Greek tourism offering in the global market by improving, differentiating and enriching its offering (Varvaressos and Soteriadis, 2011a). The evaluation of performance of Greece and of its main Mediterranean competitors (Spain, Croatia, Turkey) in terms of TTCI is depicted in the following table 3.

Table 3: The TTCI in detail (Year 2013)

COUNTRY	GREECE		SPAIN		TURKEY		CROATIA	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
1 st pillar: Policy rules and regulations	4.2	98	4.5	67	4.9	34	4.2	96
2 nd pillar: Environmental sustainability	4.5	72	5.2	25	4.3	95	4.9	44
3 rd pillar: Safety and security	4.7	69	5.7	23	4.6	79	5.3	38
4 th pillar: Health and hygiene	6.4	13	6.1	24	4.9	64	6.0	31
5 th pillar: Prioritization of T&T	5.2	28	5.9	10	4.5	63	4.5	61
6 th pillar: Air transport infrastructure	4.7	20	5.3	10	4.5	29	3.0	68
7 th pillar: Ground transport infrastructure	4.0	58	5.9	10	4.1	52	4.1	53
8 th pillar: Tourism infrastructure	6.8	3	6.7	5	4.8	45	6.7	5
9 th pillar: ICT infrastructure	4.3	33	4.5	28	3.1	71	4.3	30

10 th pillar: Price competitiveness in T&T	3.6	127	4.1	106	4.0	112	4.0	109
11 th pillar: Human resources	5.0	50	5.2	34	4.9	68	4.6	93
12 th pillar: Affinity for T&T	4.8	55	4.9	39	5.0	35	5.1	29
13 th pillar: Natural resources	4.2	40	4.8	29	3.4	78	3.8	56
14 th pillar: Cultural resources	4.3	25	6.6	1	5.2	19	3.9	32

Source: WEF, 2013

The above indicators constitute the factors of an open system which is represented by the systemic approach of Kaspar.

Therefore, the proposed strategies contribute in the improvement of Greek tourism destination's rank, in the context of international competitiveness can focus on two subsystems (Varvaressos, Melisidou et al.: 2013).

- a. Tourism Enterprises and
- b. Regional Development.

9. Greek tourism destination and interventional strategies

This integrated review of the Greek tourism reality, simplifies the notion of tourism system structure and considers that the main motive is the tourist – consumer.

In the Greek case, tourism as an open system could accept interventional strategies, which can operate “therapeutically” in the specific sub-systems, and in whole tourism system. The above strategies considered as:

- a. Tourism Enterprises
- b. Regional Development

- a) Tourism Enterprises

The internal environment includes those elements of the environment with which the tourism destination tourist business develops trade or receives and carries direct interactions. The key elements are (Okumus, Altinay, et al.: 2010):

- The competitors of the undertaking in products and supplies market
- The suppliers of materials or services
- Customers and consumers
- Banks and other creditors
- Trade unions
- The cooperating companies or bodies
- The government agencies.

- The state tourist bodies at national, regional and local level.

The elements of the organization that is available to be used in achieving its objectives, are the resources of the organization. These resources are divided into human, physical, technological, and financial resources.

b) Regional Development

The interaction of the consumption of the tourism product with its regional base is one of the main characteristics of the activity, showing the fundamental role it plays in the strategies for regional development. In most economic activities, it is the product that reaches the consumer, but when it comes to tourism, it is the opposite in that the consumer seeks for tourism services. Because of this characteristic, tourism has a heavy impact on regional development. From this perspective, tourism and regional development are interconnected because they take place if the regional socio-cultural and environmental characteristics are respected where the activity takes place.

10. Conclusions

The Kaspar's system approach is fostering tourism development strategies in a regional level, by introducing a great amount of environments which are interconnected and act interactive within them, having as reference tourism enterprises and the tourist-consumer (Varvaressos, Soteriades : 2011 b).

The most important benefits of considering tourism as an open system, where the specific government policies fostering the competitiveness indicators, listed below:

- Acquisition of new clients due to the "green" trend in the industry by creation of green brands/ Ecolabels to stand out;
- Easier founding if the regional development principles are being applied into companies strategy;
- Lowering the cost of the companies activities by improving their efficiency;
- Encouraging qualified employees to join the companies as there are becoming more attractive;
- Higher competitiveness and quality in the tourist product/ services;
- Long-term regional development;
- More advanced technologies.

The improvement of indicators competitiveness can be achieved if the applied strategies of the Greek tourism policy consider that tourism is an open interactive system, where various environments effect positively in the tourism destinations, enterprises and tourist consumers.

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