

Porter's Competitive Forces in the Modern Globalized Hospitality Sector - The case of a Greek Tourism Destination

DR. SOTIRIOS VARELAS

University of Piraeus, Department of Business Administration

PROF. NIKOLAOS GEORGOPOULOS

University of Piraeus, Department of Business Administration

ABSTRACT

The challenges which modern hotel businesses are called upon to address within a constantly changing globalized world, with rapid technological developments that dictate new corporate governance models, render the strategic analysis of competition necessary for their growth. This study views competition as one of the fundamental parameters when implementing holistic strategic management in a business, in an effort to give it a competitive edge, with special emphasis on how this is reflected on the business's performance. Our study focuses on tourism businesses where competition and competitive forces attract special interest. Special reference is made to Porter's competitive forces, which are analyzed from the standpoint of tourism businesses.

Key Word: Porter's competitive forces, hospitality sector, destination

1 METHODOLOGY

This paper seeks to analyze the intensity of competition and how critical it is in the industry of tourism businesses, and particularly main hotel accommodations. The study included the review of the literature on the forces of competition as regards the analysis of the external micro environment and Porter's five forces. The literature review was mainly focused on the tourism industry, and hotel businesses in particular. Reference is respectively made to Porter's five forces in the globalized environment. In the context of the research, the case study of a tourism destination in Greece, in the area of the Peloponnese, was analyzed. Initially, in order to assist in better understanding the results, the existing hotel businesses were geographically mapped, followed by the analysis of the destination according to Porter's five forces.

2 PORTER'S FIVE FORCES IN TOURISM

The external environment is one of the critical factors as regards the growth and operation of a tourism business. Porter (1980), (as cited in Kim & Oh, 2004; Roney, 2004) provides a model for an industry that is influenced by five market forces (Kim & Oh, 2004). The evaluation of the five forces reveals the intensity of competition in an industry, and as a result, its attractiveness for strategic development (Roney, 2004). Recognition by a tourism business of the attractiveness of the corresponding industry, helps it create the appropriate favorable climate for the smooth operation of the tourism business. Below follows a presentation of Porter's five forces adapted to the tourism industry, based on the existing literature (Kim & Oh, 2004; Roney, 2004).

Threat of new entrants in the industry

According to Longenecker, Moore & Petty (1997), all tourism businesses have a negative view of new entrants, their purpose being not to disrupt the status quo they have established. Newly entering businesses, in addition to introducing dynamism to the sector, also want a share of a market that is finite as well as significant resources (Georgopoulos, 2013). For this reason, Bain (1956) cites additional barriers that will obstruct the entry of new businesses in the sector, such as customer loyalty, the absolute advantage as regards cost, and the economies of scale by the large hotel businesses. Also according to Georgopoulos (2013), other barriers to entry that can be applied are demands for funds during entry, access to distribution networks, cost advantages of existing businesses, as well as governmental policy. In particular, when it comes to tourism and the critical industry of hotel businesses an influx of new businesses is capable of harming the destination itself (environmental footprint, oversupply of beds, etc.). For this purpose, in many countries, such as Greece, the infrastructure regions are classified into saturated and non-saturated in terms of hotels, in order to help formulate the country's investment policy (Hatzinikolaou, 2008). Especially as regards the accommodation sector, the threat of new entrants applies to destinations that are in their maturity and regeneration phase, as regards their lifecycle. Respectively, in destination which are in the startup and growth phase, the entry of new businesses in the sector is certainly not a threat, but an imperative need. The limited number of beds does not allow travel agents, airlines, online travel agents (OTAs), etc., to invest in a destination since it cannot support economies of scale. The empirical method used by foreign tour operators, to decide whether to invest in a destination, which is a capacity of at least 15,000 beds, is telling.

Threat of substitute products or services

Substitutes meet needs that are similar to those of the other businesses of the tourism industry and belong to different industries. When we encounter a large number of substitute products, the tourism business is not able to increase its prices at the risk of reducing its clientèle (Andriotis, 2004). A good example of substitute products in the hotel industry is the implementation of the sharing economy, by renting apartments for a period shorter than 30 days through web platforms (e.g Airbnb). This substitute, which introduces dramatic changes to the tourism economy will be analyzed more extensively in a subsequent section.

Bargaining power of buyers

According to Porter (1980), buyers have a strong bargaining power when the industry consists of many small-scale businesses and many buyers. This applies to the Greek tourism product, which is characterized by a small number of beds and a restriction on the incoming tourism purchases. Respectively, buyers have a low bargaining power when facing oligopoly and monopoly situations, when the cost for switching to substitutes is high and when the product is perceived as important-differentiated (Kiochos & Papanikolaou, 1999). Correspondingly, the profile of the modern consumer-tourist, as analyzed in a previous section, is sufficiently different from the past, with the visitor preferring customized trips, having demands, interacting with the environment, seeking to become acquainted with an area's culture, thus enhancing his bargaining power

compared to the past, when the tour operator would decide on his behalf, offering packages based on the "sun-sea" model. Respectively, the customer-business relations, are open to many differentiations in the tourism industry, where the customer may become a co-owner through time-sharing accommodation and rental pool type contracts, as is the case at the international level in tourism real estate with the condo hotels (Varelas & Georgopoulos, 2011).

Bargaining power of suppliers

As regards the bargaining power of suppliers, Wheelen & Hunger (2014) report that it is strengthened when there are few raw material suppliers, there are no alternative supply sources, their sales do not constitute a high percentage of the sold products, their product constitutes a significant input to the industry, as well as when they have differentiated products and they have the ability to forward vertically integrate. When it comes to the tourism industry, the concept of supplier can mean the supplier of the raw materials for the operation of a tourism unit, as well as suppliers of the workforce (Andriotis, 2004). Several accommodation and food service businesses choose to import products when it comes to the supply of raw materials, thus reducing the bargaining power of buyers, due to the low price and the shortage of raw materials during the high season. The complexity of the tourism product overturns this longstanding view, since according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), 45% of travelers across the world, consider local products and local food as one of the criteria for choosing the locations they visit, thus reinforcing the bargaining power of suppliers (Greek Tourism Confederation, 2009).

Intensity of competition between existing companies of the industry

In cases where the competition between tourism businesses is weak, then each business can increase its prices and profitability, something which competition does not allow at price level. According to Hills & Jones (1995), competition depends on the number and size of the businesses that comprise the industry, the demand trends (e.g. a decrease in the demand for a destination increases competition between existing businesses), as well as the exit barriers (special regulation is required for retiring hotels, the Xenia institution, etc). As regards the tourism industry, and in particular the hotel sector, there is a particularity when it comes to competition. For example, a small number of hotel businesses cannot ensure high competition for the reason that they cannot form a destination and attract tour operators, travel agents, or airline flights, as already analyzed.

Porter's model adopts an 'outside-in' approach, starting from external factors and ending with the performance of the tourism businesses, considering that the competitive edge emerges from these five forces. Therefore, the success of a tourism business depends greatly on the way in which it reacts and responds to the market's signals, as well as the accuracy of the forecasts on the development of the tourism industry structure (Kim & Oh, 2004). Other factors that affect competition according to Hills and Jones (1995), are the degree of differentiation of the service, the level of fixed cost, the switching cost and the industry's growth in general.

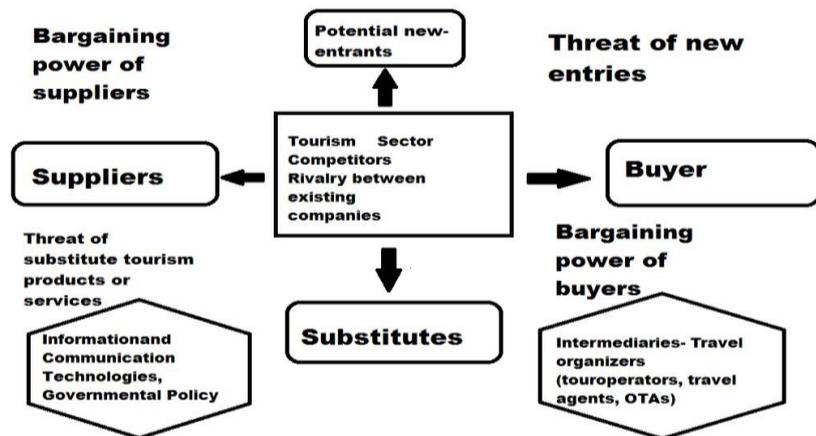


Chart 1. Porter's Tourism five-force model

Porter argues that management executives have the option of choosing between less competitive sectors or taking steps to reduce competition in the industry (Georgopoulos, 2013). Even though separate analyses have been presented, it is worth giving an overall presentation of the changes caused by the Internet and the new technologies on Porter's five forces of competition.

According to Buhalis and Zoge (2007), the Internet is the technological development that decisively affected the perception in respect of Porter's five forces on tourism, since it redefines competition conditions in the modern marketplace. It initially affects new entrants, since the Internet has an impact on the entrance barrier, due to the changes effected in the economies of scale and the percentage required for competition within the industry. In competition between already existing tourism businesses, the new technologies and the Internet affect product differentiation, the structural cost and the switching cost. Likewise, the bargaining power of buyers, as mentioned above, is enhanced thanks to the greater accessibility to information and the switching cost. The Internet further affects the bargaining power of suppliers by offering access to alternative proposals for new dynamic suppliers. Finally, as regards substitute products, it also affects the price/quality ratio and the cost of switching to substitute products (Buhalis and Zoge, 2007).

Despite Porter's five force model serving as a good start when it comes to understanding the forces that shape competition, in particular when it comes to the industry sector, it nevertheless presents a range of limitations, mainly as regards the tourism industry (Campbell et al., 2003). It initially accepts that suppliers, buyers and competitors are a threat. In several destinations, raw material suppliers, such as local producers, enter into Local Quality Pacts with accommodation and food service businesses, aiming at promoting the authenticity of the destination and securing the best prices for the products for the businesses. The strategy of synergies and co-opetition have emerged as a significant factor of the business landscape as regards the tourism industry, a fact highlighted by a number of researchers (Evans et al. 2005).

A second limitation is the fact that Porter (1980) claims that his model enables the assessment of the potential profitability of the sector under examination, while there are also strong voices, such as Rumelt (1991) claiming that the forces pertaining specifically to each business as regards profitability are more important than those pertaining to the industry. A third limitation is the fact that Porter (1980) accepts that the five forces affect industry competitors to the same degree. In reality, the forces affect each business differently depending on its size, with larger businesses facing the supplier threat to a lesser extent compared to smaller businesses (Campbell et al., 2003).

Also, Porter's model does not consider Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a distinct force of the five forces, but a supplementary one. Nevertheless, several authors such as McFarlan (1984), Thurlby (1998), Connolly and Olsen (2000) consider information and communication technologies capable of creating a competitive edge and shape competition (Andriotis, 2004).

Andriotis (2004), in a comprehensive approach of Porter's five force model and its application to tourism in general, introduces new forces, such as that of intermediaries. Travel organizers (tour operators, travel agents, OTAs) in several papers are referred to us customers, or erroneously as suppliers, however, the important role they play in the tourism industry dictates the need to refer to them as a distinct force that affects competition. Travel organizers (tour operators, travel agents, OTAs) who operate as intermediaries between businesses and end customers are in a position of influencing the destination choice, offering a standardized service price list which they can easily adjust. Travel agents can thus manipulate competition between individual hotels as well as entire destinations that belong to the same competitive group. Tour operators also control to a great extent the availability of seats when it comes to a destination's airlines, as well as the setting of the prices that will be offered across the market (Bastakis et al., 2004 as cited in Koutoulas, 2006). The intermediary's role can also cover food service businesses, as well as alternative activities. Nonetheless, the relationships of suppliers with tourism businesses are more complex when it comes to the latter, because they form collaborative schemes with the tour operators undertaking themselves the management of the unit through management contracts.

A factor that negatively affects competition is that of governmental policy, which we have already analyzed as a factor of the wider macro-environment. Nevertheless, the criticality of governmental policies in terms of infrastructures, transportation, safety, international promotion campaigns of countries (Andriotis, 2000, 2002a; Elliot, 1987), have led several researchers to include them either in the new entrant sector especially as regards new infrastructures under development laws (Yarborough and Yarborough, 1990), or as a distinct Porter force, since a change in governmental policy will globally affect the business's overall strategy (Rugman and Verbeke, 2000) as mentioned in Andriotis (2000).

2.1 Porter's international strategies

As already mentioned, Porter (1980) argued that the competitive edge of an organization is based on choosing and adopting one of the three business strategies (differentiation, cost leadership or focus). In 1986, Porter expanded his model as regards strategy in businesses with an international scope, as well as the corresponding business strategy choices. Porter's now five business strategies for the international globalized business are defined according to their position in relation to the degree of the industry it belongs to, as well as the range of the sectors served by competitive products (Porter 1980).

Porter's five strategies of a Global Business Strategy, as listed by Evans et al. (2005) are:

Global cost leadership: where the business seeks to have the lowest service cost of a product at a global level.

Global differentiation: where the business seeks to differentiate the tourism products and its services at a global level.

Global segmentation: this is the global variation of a focus strategy, when a single segment of the market aims at a global base that include either cost leadership or differentiation, e.g. in niche markets which larger competitors have left untapped (benchmark & sidestep strategy).

Protected markets: the business activity of an enterprise is favored or protected by the government of the host country. For example, further to the diplomatic relations of a number of states, e.g. Russia-Turkey in the past, the states have signed agreements to facilitate tourism entrepreneurship between them, such as not requiring visas for traveling between the two countries.

National responsiveness: The business adjusts its strategy to meet the particular needs of markets at local level. This strategy is appropriate for purely domestic businesses (Porter, 1986a).

Porter's model is based on two key dimensions. The degree of harmonization between similar but dispersed activities, and the configuration, coordination of the activities themselves. As regards the harmonization degree, if it is low, the subsidiaries are independent, whereas if it is high, then there is close control by the

parent company. Correspondingly, as regards the configuration of activities, all the activities of the value chain may be performed by each subsidiary or only by certain ones (Papadakis, 2012).

3 CASE STUDY AT A TOURISM DESTINATION

The destination of the Peloponnese, which is one of Greece's 13 regions, was chosen for the field study on hotel businesses, for the reason that we can find the entire range of tourism-hotel units, including integrated destination resorts, such as the Costa Navarino, which we do not find in any other Region of the country. Likewise, the data of the Peloponnese at quota level, as regards the classification of stars, does not vary much from those presented at country level. Below follows the analysis via secondary data and the break-down of the 5 forces of competition for the Peloponnese. According to the most recent data by the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (31/12/2015), the Region of the Peloponnese has 6.9% of the country's total tourism beds. The capacity of the Peloponnese in respect of beds, is 54,143 beds of the country's total 784,315 beds, and they are distributed between 861 units. At camping level, the Peloponnese has 19,010 beds (81 camping sites across the Peloponnese), reaching 23.6% of the country's total (HCH, 2015).

3.1 Geographical mapping of competition in the Peloponnese

The following chart gives the geographical dispersion of competition of all hotel businesses in the Peloponnese. This mapping of the hotel units of the Peloponnese is based on their star classification, while the ArcMap program was used after geocofication. The chart that was created for the needs of the thesis clearly demonstrates the fact that the hotel infrastructure of the Peloponnese developed, precisely as it did at national level, along the Peloponnese shoreline, the important archaeological sites -UNESCO World Heritage Monuments of the Peloponnese, the urban destinations of the capitals, as well as the mountains of Arkadia and Corinthia. The prevalence and concentration of 3-star units across the Peloponnese can be easily seen, as well as the dynamic development of 5-star and boutique hotels in up-and-coming destinations.

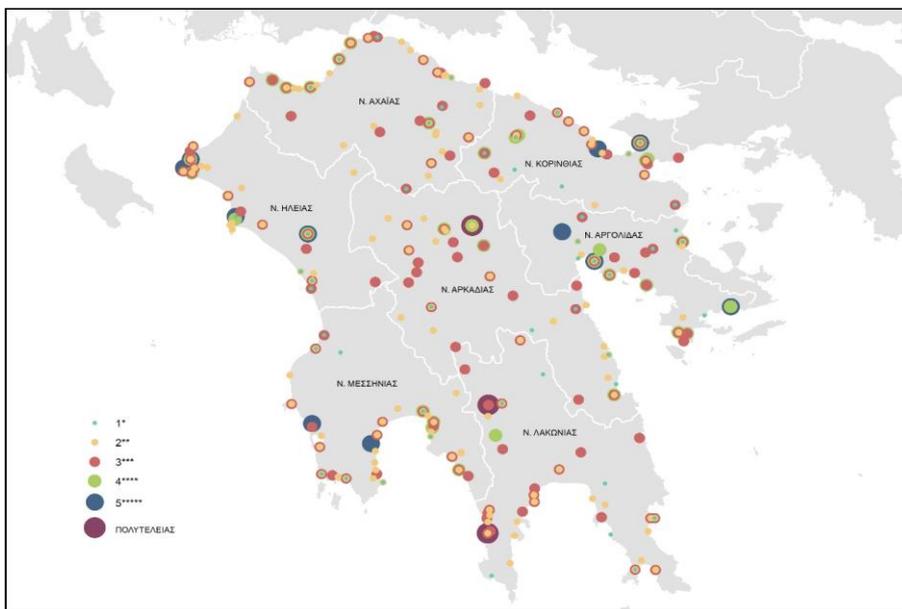


Chart 2. Geographical Mapping of Hotels of the Peloponnese based on stars

3.2 Analysis of Hotel Industry of the Peloponnese based on Porter's five forces

Below follows the analysis of the external micro environment of a hotel business at the Peloponnese destination according to Porter's five forces. The research was based on secondary data, in line with the literature that has preceded.

Threat of new entrants in the industry

The entry of new businesses in the hotel industry of the Peloponnese must not be considered a threat, given the small number of beds of the Peloponnese compared to its size. New development laws and investment programs are expected to reinforce the entry of new businesses in the sector. Despite the Peloponnese being at the epicenter of tourism growth, as analyzed above, the tourism growth period coincided with the financial recession, resulting in a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises that had been included in the development law, not proceeding with the realization of their plans.

A big part of the large tourism high-quality investments is currently being realized. Specifically (Kousounis, 2015):

- the 5 star Grace chain of international reputation will be launched in 2017, with 125 luxury rooms and suites and 40 villas,
- Byzantium S.A. with the creation of a 5-star hotel, with a 332 room and 820 bed capacity,
- the 2nd and biggest investment phase of Costa Navarino is starting, with two integrated tourist accommodations and furnished residences, with a capacity of 900 beds,
- the Mareza - Kokosi island in Corinthia, with the creation of an integrated tourism 5-star unit, with a hotel, bungalows, furnished tourist residences and a spa, with a capacity of 810 beds,
- the mountain resort investment of "Petros Iliopoulos Tourism Enterprises SA" with the creation of a 5-star hotel, holiday residences and a conference center,
- in the Kilada area of the Municipality of Ermionis the "Kilada Hills" is planned for construction, by the Dolphin Capital Investors group, on an area of 2,000,000 square meters,
- the luxury residence Aman Resort and international luxury hotel chain Niki Beach are already operating in Porto Heli.

These investments in the hotel industry are in fact not competitive, and they furthermore upgrade the quality of the destination, significantly increasing the number of beds in the Peloponnese. In fact such types of high-quality large-scale investments serve as a promotion for the destination.

Threat of substitute products or services

As already recorded in the technological and cultural environment analysis, the sharing economy in the tourism industry can be applied either to the exchange of hospitality via basic platforms (couch surfing, hospitality club, home exchange), or by leasing residences and apartments without the obligation of a Greek National Tourism Organization (EOT) license, via an application on the web platform (airbnb) (HCH, 2014).

The loan agreement's prerequisites provide for abolishing the 30-day limit with regards to the lease period, causing significant disruption to the existing hotel accommodations that are obliged to have a License from the Greek National Tourism Organization, meeting the requirements of the law, in contrast to the newly entering owners of other accommodations, who through the modern sharing economy tools (airbnb) will deliver a critical blow to competitiveness. The number of beds is expected to dramatically increase, essentially legalizing tax evasion and the provision of services by unlicensed undertakings. According to a study by the Hellenic Chamber of Greece, the offer of accommodation through short-term leases is calculated at nation-wide level at 9,677 hotels, 401,332 rooms and 773,445 beds (HCG, 2014).

Alternative accommodation choices are thus created for visitors, through substitute accommodations for the visitors of the Peloponnese, resulting in the increase of the quantity and a drop in prices, flexibility as well as incomes.

Bargaining power of buyers

By buyer we mean the incoming visitor of the Peloponnese destination, whether a Greek or a foreigner. As already mentioned in a previous section, the total incoming tourism of the Peloponnese stands at a ratio of 70% Greek visitors and 30% foreigners. The dramatic decrease of Greeks during the years of the financial crisis and the drop in bookings at the destination hotels significantly increased the bargaining power of buyers, leading to a decrease of prices as regards hotels, as well as an enhancement of the amenities offered. Greek tourism, which is so important for the hotel industry of the Peloponnese, is displaying a growing trend for the coming period, according to the Qualitative Characteristics of resident tourists (Vacation Survey), of year 2014, the number of trips is increasing by 15.9% compared to 2013, the total nights spent by +8.8% and the total expenditure by +7.2% (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014).

The bargaining power of buyers has increased, since the modern visitor's profile has changed significantly compared to the past when they were guided by tour operators and travel agents, their only wish being accommodation and transportation packages.

The profile of modern visitors includes travelers who plan and realize the trip on their own (online search, online booking and payment), interact with the environment (write positive or negative comments on social networking platforms), seek experiences and wish to discover the local culture and the destination's gastronomy. It is apparent that the use of the Internet and ICTs in general has significantly increased the bargaining power of buyers, forcing hotels to adapt to the new competitive environment by improving the price-quality ratio and enhancing the services they offer.

Despite all of the buyers' demands, hotels that rely on the individual visitor who they have attracted on their own (without the intervention of OTAs, TOs) have a higher operating profit of 26.4% compared to 18.5% of the others who rely on suppliers (NBG, 2015).

Bargaining power of suppliers

By supplier we mainly mean the providers of raw materials to accommodation and food service businesses, with emphasis on local producers. The short tourism period, since 68% of international arrivals in 2014 took place between June and September, in combination with the low cost, traditionally drives accommodation and food service businesses to import products from third countries. Correspondingly, the limited production, but with high-quality products, leads to high-priced basic raw materials. The Region of the Peloponnese has launched an effort to establish a Quality Pact for the Peloponnese, aiming at a win-win relationship between local producers (suppliers) and accommodation and food service businesses.

Bargaining power of intermediaries

As mentioned during the analysis of Porter's five forces, when it comes to the hotel industry of the Peloponnese in particular, we will analyze Greek or foreign businesses, that organize trips, tour operators, travels agencies or platforms for the electronic planning of trips, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), from the standpoint of intermediaries. According to a recent study by the National Bank of Greece on the hotel industry, foreign tour operators influence the prices of hotels they cooperate with at a rate of 56%. It is worth noting that the average price given by a hotel to a tour operator is 77 euros, while at the same time the same room reaches 140 euros (NBG, 2015). The significance of the Peloponnese suppliers as regards tour operators is determined from a small number who operate at the destination, as well as the fact that the destination does not depend on a specific market. The modern management trends lead many tour operators to vertically integrate their activity backwards renting existing destination hotels for a long period, thus changing category, and from supplier becoming at the same time a competitive business of the industry.

Respectively, in terms of OTA booking platforms, which are suppliers of customers for hotel businesses (booking.com, expedia, etc.), we also find an oligopoly, as in the case of tour operators, resulting in the platforms themselves setting the commission percentage per booking (at around 15-20% of sales).

Nevertheless the development of the airline flight network in the Peloponnese significantly reduced the bargaining power of the tour operators.

Competition intensity between the industry's hotel businesses

Competition intensity remains low as regards the Peloponnese, since the number of units in operation has ranged at the same levels over the past decade, the capacity of the destination is under its potential capacity since it comprises only 7% of the tourist units at nation-wide level, with overnight stays reaching only 3.8% as aforementioned. The Peloponnese had remained in the periphery of the investment explosion for several years, in contrast to other popular destinations, resulting in a limited number of small and medium-sized businesses. The low intensity of competition in certain areas over the previous years had led to an increase of the bargaining power of the existing businesses vis-a-vis the customers and an increase of the prices per overnight stay (Mountainous Corinthia, Arkadia) but in these recent years of the financial crisis prices have adjusted to a very good quality-price ratio. This mild competition between the small and medium-sized units that are typical of the Peloponnese, as well as the dispersion of these units across large areas (as seen in the geographical mapping), are a deterrent for the big foreign tour operators, preventing them from executing itineraries. It is worth noting, that in order for a tour operator to execute an itinerary and include a destination in its portfolio, it must have approximately 15,000 beds at close proximity. We see a lack of uniformity in terms of the offered product, with the Peloponnese covering the entirety of the investments.

4 CONCLUSION

The preceded research clarifies the substantial role of the Porter's five competition forces which are dominated theories for the strategic analysis of the enterprises micro environment. In our research we focus on tourism and particularly hospitality enterprises, analyzing a series of former bibliographical studies. Additionally, the determinant factor that the IT and communication technologies play, change radically the competitive potentials of the tourism sector. The theoretical approach of the Porters' competition forces on the tourism field are combined with additional case study of hospitality enterprises from the Region of Peloponnese in Greece.

REFERENCES

- Andriotis, K. (2004). **Tourism business management**. Athens.
- Bain, J. (1956). **Barriers to new competition**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bastakis, C., Buhalis, D., & Butler, R. (2004). **The perception of small and medium sized tourism accommodation providers on the impacts of the tour operators' power in Eastern Mediterranean**. *Tourism Management* 25, 151–170.
- Bennett, M. M. (1997). **Strategic alliances in the world airline industry**. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3, 213-223.
- Buhalis, D., & Zoge, M. (2007). **The strategic impact of the internet on the tourism industry**, in Sigala, M., Mich, L., Murphy, J. (Eds), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2007* (pp. 481-492). Springer, Wien.
- Campbell, A. J., & Verbeke, A. (1994). **The globalisation of service multinationals**. *Long Range Planning*, 27(2), 95-102.

- Connolly, D. J., & Olsen, M. D. (2000). **An environmental assessment of how technology is reshaping the hospitality industry.** *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3(1), 73-93.
- Dev, C. S., & Klein, S. (1993). **Strategic alliances in the hotel industry.** *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 43-45.
- Donne, M. (2000). **The future of international airline alliances,** *Travel and Tourism Analyst*, 6, 3-21.
- Elliott, J. (1987). **Government management of tourism – a Thai case study.** *Tourism Management*, 8(3), 223-232.
- Evans, N. (2005). **Assessing the balanced scorecard as a management tool for hotels.** *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(5), 376-390.
- Evans, N., Campbell, D., & Stonehouse, G. (2005). **Strategic management for travel and tourism** (3rd ed.). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Evans, N., Campbell, D., & Stonehouse, G. (2003). **Strategic management for travel and tourism.** Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Evans, N. (2001a). **Collaborative strategy: an analysis of the changing world of international airlines alliances.** *Tourism Management*, 22, 229-243.
- Evans, N. (2001b). **Alliances in the international travel industry: sustainable travel options?** *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 2(1), 1-26.
- Georgopoulos, N. (2013). **Strategic management.** Athens: Benou Eds.
- Go, F. M., & Pine, R. (1995). **Globalization strategy in the hotel industry.** London: Routledge.
- Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE) (2009). **Gastronomy in the marketing menu of Greek tourism .** Athens.
- Hatzinikolaou, E. (2008). **Legislation for tourism businesses.** Athens: Propompos Eds.
- Hill, J. W., & Jones, G. (1995). **Strategic management theory: an integrated approach** (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Kim, B. Y., & Oh, H. (2004). **How do hotel firms obtain a competitive advantage?** *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(1), 65-71.
- Kiochos, P. A., & Papanikolaou, C. (1999). **Scheduling of business actions.** Athens: Stamoulis Eds.
- Koutoulas, D. (2006). **The market influence of tour operators on the hospitality industry.** Research Gate.
- Longenecker, J., Moore, C., & Petty, J. (1997). **Small business management: an entrepreneurial emphasis** (10th ed.). SWC Publishing.
- McFarlan, F. (1984). **IT changes the way you compete.** Harvard Business.
- Okumus, F. and Roper, A. (1999). **A Review of Disparate Approaches to Strategy Implementation in Hospitality Firms,** *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 23 (1), 20–38.
- Okumus, F. (2002). **Can hospitality researchers contribute to the strategic management literature?,** *Hospitality Management*, 21, 105 – 110.
- Okumus, F. (2003). **A Framework to Implement Strategies in Organizations,** *Management Decision*, 41 (9), 871–883.
- Okumus, F. & Wong, K. (2005). **In Pursuit of Contemporary Content for Courses on Strategic Management in Tourism and Hospitality Schools,** *International Journal of Hospitality Management*.

- Okumus, F., Altinay, L. & Chathoth, P. (2010). **Strategic Management for Hospitality and Tourism**, Elsevier Ltd., Oxford, UK.
- Olsen, M.D. and DeNoble, A. (1981). **Strategic Planning in Dynamic Times**, Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 21(4), 75–80.
- Olsen, M.D. (1993). **International Growth Strategies of major US Hotel Companies**. Travel and Tourism Analyst, 3, 51-64.
- Olsen, M. D., Tse, E. C. & West, J. J. (1998). **Strategic management in the hospitality industry**, 2nd ed, John Wiley and Sons, Inc, New York.
- Olsen, M.D. & Roper, A. (1998). **Research in strategic management in the hospitality industry**, Hospitality Management, 17, 111 – 124.
- Olsen, M. (2001). **Hospitality Research and Theories: A Review**. In A. Lockwood and S. Medlik, Tourism and Hospitality in the 21st Century. Oxford: Butter- worth and Heinemann.
- Oosthuitze, H. (2002), **Business strategy and marketing: the positioning versus resource-based dichotomy and the way forward**, South African Journal of Business Management, 33(3), 1 – 16.
- Oum, T. H., & Park, J. H. (1997). **Airline alliances: current status, policy issues, and future directions**. Journal of Air Transport Management, 3(3), 133-144.
- Porter, M. E.(1985). **Competitive advantage: creating and sustaining superior performance**. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Porter, M. E. (1980). **Competitive strategy**. New York: The Free Press.
- Porter, M. E. (1979). **The structure within industries and companies performance**. Review of Economics and Statistics 61(2), 214-27.
- Rhoades, D. L., & Lush, H. (1997). **A typology of strategic alliances in the airline industry: propositions for stability and duration**. Journal of Air Transport Management, 3(3), 109-114.
- Roney, C. W. (2004). **Strategic management methodology: generally accepted principles for practitioners, guidelines for strategists**. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Thurlby, B. (1998). **Competitive forces are also subject to change**. Management Decision. 36(1), 19-24.
- Varelas, S., Georgopoulos, N., & Katsanakis, I. (2011). **Greek tourism under crisis-strategies, and the way out**. Proceedings of the International Conference "Rethinking Business and Business Education in the Age of Crisis", Chios.
- Varelas, S., Georgopoulos, N. (2010). **The strategic use of Travel 2.0 and its importance for the tourism sector**. Presented at the 6th National & International HSSS Conference "Systemic Approaches in Social Structures", Mytilene.
- Wheelen, T. L., & Hunger, D. J. (2014). **Strategic management and business policy: toward global sustainability**. Pearson.