

ENHANCING NAUTICAL TOURISM OFFER BY CREATING AN INTEGRATED TOURISM PRODUCT

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Abstract: *The subject of this paper is based on the theoretical elaboration of the offer that includes additional services in the charter segment of nautical tourism products in the Republic of Croatia. Nautical tourism is one of the most profitable and the most perspective tourism segments that are developed in Croatia, but within nautical tourism, apart from infrastructural requirements, there is a growing demand for a suitable superstructure that would further enrich the existing offer of additional services and increase competitiveness on the international nautical market. One of the possibilities to improve nautical tourism offer and thus the issue of seasonality represents the inclusion of various complementary tourism forms that have less expressed seasonality into an integrated nautical tourism product.*

The aim of this paper is to define more precisely complementary forms of tourism that can be integrated with nautical tourism, i.e. to explain the current offer of additional services of nautical tourism in the Republic of Croatia, and to explore boaters' attitudes on the new offer of additional services for boaters who sail along the Croatian Adriatic.

The empirical part of the immediate research is related to the views of foreign boaters on the offer of additional services during their stay on a vessel in the Adriatic Sea, as well as the attitudes and perception of the profession on possibilities to enhance the current service by integrating other complementary forms into nautical tourism.

The authors have carried out a research whether enjoying natural beauties and activities such as swimming and sailing are enough for boaters or the boaters while sailing want to extend their activities to other forms of tourism such as cultural tourism, and whether enhancing the offer of additional services would have an impact on the increase of boaters' consumption. The survey was carried out by a questionnaire. An additional goal has been to point out to unused potentials such as cultural heritage, gastronomy, sport, recreation and other activities that can be integrated with nautical tourism. The seasonality effect would be reduced by developing an integrated nautical product and the position among competitors on the European and world market would be enhanced. The contribution of work is manifested through the views and opinions of boaters who sailed and stayed in the Croatian part of the Adriatic in 2017. This study has proved that foreign boaters are very interested in cultural values and other activities as elements of nautical offer, but they are currently all poorly presented to the boaters so the boaters aren't familiar with cultural and other potentials that Croatian coast has. It is obvious that boaters are willing to increase their expenses while sailing to expand their experience and take part in additional activities other than the usual ones. It has been proven that their integration into a nautical product would further strengthen the attractiveness of itineraries and routes boaters take and at the same time boaters' satisfaction with Croatia as the nautical destination. Therefore, this paper presents new knowledge on boaters' attitudes and satisfaction regarding the subject of the research.

Keywords: *nautical tourism, offer of additional nautical services, nautical product*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Coastlines are perceived as a highly valuable natural resource in all aspects, especially in tourism for every country, including Croatia. Nautical tourism has developed as the result of an advanced demand and human needs taking into account the presence of natural resources.⁶⁸ The importance of nautical tourism for developing countries derives from boaters' consumption who are one of the best consumers in tourism. The latest researches on nautical tourism indicate that tourism consumption will grow faster than any other cost. However, the current problem of nautical tourism in the Republic of Croatia is the absence of services that would enable boaters to increase additional consumption while sailing. In order to increase the development of the nautical product, it is necessary to improve the cooperation: among some types of tourism, within the very nautical tourism industry, and between stakeholders of nautical tourism and tourist boards.

The basic research hypothesis according to the subject of the research states: the creation of an integrated nautical product as a part of the additional services' offer of nautical tourism will increase the satisfaction of boaters who sail and stay in the Republic of Croatia. In order to prove the hypothesis, the authors carried out a field survey on foreign boaters who sailed along the Croatian coast in 2017 using a survey method and the instrument by which the results were obtained was a questionnaire.

2. COMPETITIVE POSITION AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF NAUTICAL TOURISM CONDITION

General factors of nautical tourism development such as climatic conditions, natural beauties, purity of the sea, landscape, and indented coastline are essential for achieving a competitive advantage in developing nautical tourism. Even though the spatial and natural basis provides a very high degree of satisfaction, their mere existence is not enough for achieving greater balance of income and expenditure. Due to frequent changes in the market and the emergence of demanding service users, there is a need to harmonize all elements of this system in order to achieve a more successful market development.⁶⁹

The most prominent factors when choosing a destination are the location, which means country's natural position and the attractiveness of the location. A large number of islands in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea offer a multitude of itineraries and options for yachtsmen, and especially attractive is the fact that each island has a rich cultural heritage and a historical story that can be used in order to create a nautical product which will differ from the competitors. The abovementioned elements should be especially valued and offered to boaters as a recognizable feature of the destination.

The lack of nautical tourism in Croatia is evident from the tourism offer, its service and the level of services in marinas. Furthermore, it has been noticed that a well-developed overall nautical product, which would meet the tourism demands of boaters, has not been established, nor has the initiative to improve nautical tourism products. Therefore, a major disadvantage of nautical tourism in Croatia is the tourism offer.

⁶⁸ Luković, T., Gržetić.Z. (2007.), Nautičko turističko tržište u teoriji i praksi Hrvatske i Europskog dijela Mediterana, Hrvatski hidrografski institut, Split. p.31

⁶⁹ Dundović, Č., Kovačić, M., Badurina-Tomić, P.(2015) Prilog istraživanju postojećeg stanja i tendencije razvitka nautičkog turizma u Republici Hrvatskoj. Pomorski zbornik, Vol.49-50, No.1, p.217

This refers to the offer of services in marines and the lack of capacities, i.e. the number of berths. According to the data of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 70% of the total income realized in nautical tourism ports in 2017 was realized from the basic berthing service.⁷⁰ This datum leads to the following conclusion: new services and facilities are needed in order to achieve additional growth in the total revenue and competitiveness in comparison to other Mediterranean countries, and to increase the satisfaction of boaters with the overall tourism offer which would extend their stay.

It has been noted that boaters are least satisfied with the offer in culture, sports, entertainment and shopping, i.e. additional services. Any type of activity which would extend an active stay in the marina or at a destination is essential. Nautical demand trends will condition the development of these elements of the offer, if the aim is to be competitive on the international market. However, the impression is that the offer is not fulfilling the demand in the Croatian nautical tourism, which points to the scope for the development of quality offers.

3. COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES AND FORMS OF TOURISM

In accordance with modern sociological trends, there is a significant decrease in interest in tourism destinations offering only opportunities for meeting the basic needs which are characteristics of mass tourism, while the demand for a quality, safe and profound vacation, which includes more entertainment, culture and a more emphasized need for physical activities, constantly grows. The analysis of cultural and historical resources developed for the purpose of the Cultural Tourism Development Strategy of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia has shown that Croatia, besides compact urban and rural historical areas, UNESCO sites and sites which can potentially become international tourist attractions, has a high concentration of quality cultural institutions, rich intangible cultural heritage presented on various festivals and traditional ceremonies, and rich heritage of legends and myths which can easily weave into almost every locality and thus be presented as a tourism story.⁷¹ It should be pointed out that these historic attractions are situated on sailing routes, but are poorly integrated or not integrated at all into the nautical products. The integration of cultural and nautical tourism would create a special and complete experience for boaters while sailing.

4. RESEARCH

Two surveys were conducted by the author of this paper in the period from March to April 2018 in order to investigate the problem of the research which was defined at the beginning of the paper and to determine the opinions of the professionals (stakeholders of nautical tourism) and boaters about the offer of additional services within nautical tourism. Two questionnaires were also drawn up as experts' opinions were examined, i.e. opinions from employees involved in nautical tourism industry, and users of services - boaters. Survey questionnaire for professionals (N=45) has been used to examine their views on the quality of additional services for boaters, and on the complementarities and importance of nautical and cultural tourism which are to be integrated into a unique product. The second questionnaire was filled by foreign yachtsmen (N=38) who sailed the Adriatic Sea. This questionnaire examined the satisfaction with additional services and nautical offer while sailing along the Croatian Adriatic Sea, their knowledge about cultural potentials of the route they sailed, and their interest in complementary forms of tourism during their voyage.

⁷⁰The Croatian Bureau of Statistics: NAUTIČKI TURIZAM: Kapaciteti i poslovanje luka nautičkog turizma u 2017. (Internet), available at: <https://www.dzs.hr/>

⁷¹Jelinčić, D. (2008): Abeceda kulturnog turizma, Mendarmedia, Zagreb, p.264

4.1 RESEARCH CARRIED OUT AMONG THE PROFESSIONALS

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents' variables - business stakeholders

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>The importance of cultural heritage and cultural resources within nautical offer</i>	45	4.58	.690	.103
<i>The cultural heritage of central Dalmatian cities and islands should be better integrated into a nautical product</i>	45	4.27	.539	.080
<i>An integrated cultural nautical product will have an impact on the (better) promotion of the Republic of Croatia and a possible boaters' return within a different form of tourism</i>	45	4.27	.447	.067
<i>The inclusion of additional activities in nautical tourism will positively affect nautical consumption</i>	45	4.47	.505	.075
<i>The quality of additional services in marinas and ports within nautical tourism</i>	45	2.80	.786	.117
<i>Integration of cultural heritage into a nautical product increases the attractiveness of nautical itineraries</i>	45	4.38	.576	.086

Table 1 shows mean ratings or average degrees of respondents' agreement with a particular statement. The rating ranges from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). According to the data presented in Table 1, it is visible that all average ratings are high except the average rating of the quality of additional services that is 2.80 according to opinions of business stakeholders of nautical tourism.

Table 2: Testing mean ratings of examined variables - business stakeholders

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
<i>Rate the importance of cultural heritage and cultural resources as an element of nautical offer</i>	15.328	44	.000	1.578	1.37	1.79
<i>The cultural heritage of islands should be better integrated into a nautical product</i>	15.754	44	.000	1.267	1.10	1.43
<i>An integrated cultural nautical product will have an impact on better promotion of the Republic of Croatia and boaters' return within a different form of tourism</i>	19.000	44	.000	1.267	1.13	1.40
<i>The inclusion of additional activities in nautical tourism will positively affect nautical consumption</i>	19.501	44	.000	1.467	1.32	1.62

<i>The quality of additional services in marinas and nautical tourism ports</i>	-1.706	44	.095	-.200	-.44	.04
<i>The attractiveness of nautical itineraries is increased by integrating cultural heritage into a nautical product</i>	16.057	44	.000	1.378	1.20	1.55

In the next step, the specified variables have also been proved by the t-test, i.e. the statistical significance of the abovementioned indicators have also been determined. The data in Table 2 has proved whether the observed variables are also statistically significantly higher, i.e. whether business stakeholders of nautical tourism agree with the statements. The conclusion on the significance has been made on the basis of comparing empirical significance with a predetermined significance of 5%. Namely, if the empirical significance (Sig. 2-tailed) of an individual t-test is less than 5%, it will be concluded that business stakeholders of nautical tourism agree with a certain statement.

Mean rating of *the importance of cultural heritage and cultural resources as an element of nautical offers* is 4.58, while the corresponding empirical significance is 0% ($\alpha \approx 0\%$) < 5%, it is therefore concluded that business stakeholders of nautical tourism give an above average rating to the importance of cultural heritage and cultural resources. It is further concluded that they believe that *the cultural heritage of the central Dalmatian cities and islands should be better integrated into a nautical product, that an integrated cultural nautical product will have a positive impact on the promotion of the Republic of Croatia and on the return of boaters within a different form of tourism, that the inclusion of additional services (such as autochthonous products, thematic tours, etc.) in nautical tourism will positively affect nautical consumption, and that the attractiveness of nautical itineraries will be increased by integrating cultural heritage into a nautical product.* Mean rating of *the quality of additional services in marinas and nautical tourism ports* is 2.8, while the corresponding empirical significance is 9.5% > 5%. It is therefore concluded that business stakeholders of nautical tourism give an average rating to the quality of additional services.

4.2 RESEARCH CARRIED OUT AMONG BOATERS

Table 3: Mean ratings of examined variables - boaters

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>Cultural heritage can be a motive when choosing nautical destinations</i>	38	4.21	.704	.114
<i>The familiarity with cultural potentials of the Croatian coast and islands</i>	38	3.05	.928	.151
<i>The attractiveness of nautical itineraries is increased by integrating cultural heritage into a nautical product</i>	38	4.34	.745	.121
<i>The integration of cultural heritage into a nautical offer will positively affect the satisfaction of boaters</i>	38	4.34	.627	.102

Table 3 shows average degrees of respondents' agreements (foreign boaters) with survey statements as well as an average rating on the familiarity with the subject. It is visible that average degrees of agreement of foreign boaters with survey statements exceed average rating, while the average rating of the familiarity with cultural potentials of the Croatian coast and

islands is 3.05. In the next step, the specified average variables have also been proved by the t-test, i.e. the statistical significance of the abovementioned indicators has also been determined.

Table 4: Testing mean ratings of examined variables - boaters

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
<i>Cultural heritage can be a motive when choosing a nautical destination</i>	10.606	37	.000	1.211	.98	1.44
<i>The familiarity with cultural potentials of the Croatian coast and islands</i>	.349	37	.729	.053	-.25	.36
<i>The attractiveness of nautical itineraries is increased by integrating cultural heritage into a nautical product</i>	11.101	37	.000	1.342	1.10	1.59
<i>The integration of cultural heritage into a nautical offer will positively affect the satisfaction of yachtsmen</i>	13.192	37	.000	1.342	1.14	1.55

An average degree of agreement of foreign boaters with the statement that *rich cultural heritage is one of the motives when choosing a nautical destination* is 4.21, while the corresponding empirical significance is 0% ($\alpha \approx 0\%$) < 5%. It is therefore concluded that foreign boaters believe that rich cultural heritage could be one of the motives when selecting a nautical destination.

Mean rating of *the familiarity with cultural potentials of the Croatian coast and islands* is 3.05, while the corresponding empirical significance is 72.9% > 5%. It is therefore concluded that foreign yachtsmen are not significantly acquainted with the cultural potentials of the Croatian coast and islands. It is further established that they agree with the statements that *the attractiveness of nautical itineraries would be increased by integrating cultural heritage into a nautical product*, and that *the integration of cultural-historical heritage into the Croatian nautical offer would positively affect the satisfaction of users when choosing Croatia as a nautical destination*.

Table 5: Interest of foreign boaters in other activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	94.7	94.7	94.7
	No	2	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the answers of foreign boaters regarding their interest in other activities other than the usual ones such as enjoying natural beauties, swimming and sailing. It is evident from the Table 5 that 36 respondents or 94.7% are interested in other activities.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NAUTICAL TOURISM

Current events in the international nautical market indicate that Croatia is becoming one of the most desirable nautical destinations. Due to the current situation, it is necessary to transform the present offer of nautical tourism with great knowledge, feeling and above all, innovation. The entire offer both in marinas and nautical tourism ports, as well as in charter companies, needs to be enriched and redesigned in a high quality manner.

The need to define and develop new products by expanding the entire offer and complementary services based on boaters' wishes and requirements arises in order to create a competitive position in relation to the environment and competition and to achieve the increase of the overall socioeconomic indicators in the areas of activity and organization including indirect and direct factors.⁷² As the coast and islands, besides valuable natural resources, have a rich cultural heritage, it is evident that these two resources of high value must be interconnected and offered to boaters as an integrated product and thus positioned on the strong international nautical market.

The offers of marinas and ports in creating the offer for boaters must be complemented by the offer of nearby destinations, which can be achieved through the active participation of tourist boards where marinas are located and where boaters stay. The integration among various selective forms of tourism increasingly becomes a necessity which must be recognized by the most capable stakeholders of nautical tourism with a strong vision.

The aforementioned suggestions and the further expansion of the nautical infrastructure would help to realize the mission of the nautical tourism system of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. a quality service would be ensured for every boater in order to satisfy his needs as well as socioeconomic prosperity of the location where the activity is carried out.

6. CONCLUSION

Natural resources are a God-given potential which can lead the Croatian nautical tourism to the very top of the international nautical market, however in order to surpass competitive destinations the mere possession of resources is not sufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to develop other parts of the nautical tourism system such as its infrastructure and accompanying services which require actions of stakeholders and the state. The current development is based solely on natural beauties and the indented coastline, which presents an attractive "pull factor" for boaters when choosing their nautical vacation destinations, however these elements are insufficient for boaters during their vacation compared to competitors' offers.

The research has proved that foreign boaters are very interested in culture but are not familiar enough with cultural and other potentials of the Croatian coast due to their current poor presentation. It has been proved that their integration into the nautical product would further strengthen the attractiveness of itineraries and routes along which boaters sail, and also the satisfaction of boaters with Croatia as a nautical destination. It is therefore necessary to create interesting nautical products that will reflect and be intertwined with the autochthonous tradition and culture, and be interconnected with other complementary island activities in order to enrich stay of boaters on the Adriatic with an unforgettable experience which will certainly result in their later return. Nautical tourism can only maximize its effects through synergic

⁷² Hrvatski hidrografski institut, op.cit., p.146

interaction of different types of tourism. Therefore, by creating an integrated product which would include elements of other tourism forms, diversification of products could be achieved and thus the position on the strong international market. This type of product can enable market positioning in relation to the direct and indirect competition, and most of all provide additional value to boaters.

7. REFERENCES

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