

**NYUGAT-MAGYARORSZÁGI EGYETEM
KÖZGAZDASÁGTUDOMÁNYI KAR
GAZDASÁGI FOLYAMATOK ELMÉLETE ÉS GYAKORLATA
DOKTORI ISKOLA
VÁLLALKOZÁS GAZDASÁGTAN ÉS MENEDZSMENT ALPROGRAM**

EVERYDAY TOURISM

Theory and Practice of Tourism

Thesis of a Doctoral (Ph.D.) Dissertation

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1. Reasons for the Choice of the Subject

In spite of the publication of several books and studies on tourism in recent years in Hungary we can experience that the majority of elected officials, senior and middle managers have no expert knowledge. We cannot expect that only experts should make decisions on tourism development on every level in the state and local governments but we can expect well-established decisions.

Socialisation of planning and finding a common basis with those involved, outside experts and the business community can greatly contribute to feasible specific projects in regional and settlement tourism development that are necessarily determined by the touristic market through the specific use of marketing approach and marketing tools.

Writing of this Dissertation has been justified by the bigger and bigger role of tourism in regional and settlement development and there are more and more exploitable but yet unutilised opportunities. We are faced here with the problem of unrealised profit which is widely known to be difficult to show but easy to brand insignificant. Regional and rural development is of key importance because of the intention of getting closer to the economic development level of the EU, while tourism can contribute to the solution of employment problems which have grown as a result of economic structural changes, to the control of undesirable global-

isation effects and to the conservation of and increase in the Hungarian cultural heritage.

The first part of this study reviews the basics of the theory of tourism followed by the theoretic description of changes helping the planning of tourism then by the presentation of a practical example based on own research.

The selection of the subject of this Dissertation is novel at the Faculty of Economics and Doctoral School of the University of Western Hungary. It reflects the support of the leaders of the Faculty and its renowned professors and realisation of social and economic demands. I would like to thank them for their support of launching my research and processing of the subject.

2. The Subject of the Dissertation

Practical application of the theory of tourism in regional and settlement development and conscious development of tourism, assistance in the integrated planning of tourism, coordinated application of development, organisation and marketing approaches on the basis of a specific research in Komárom-Esztergom County.

3. The Objective of the Research

The main objective of the Dissertation is to give a practical tool alloying theoretical basics and everyday practice to those whose relation to and responsibility for tourism is stronger than ordinary people's. This paper is primarily important for those who encounter tourism development ideas as elected representatives or members of a national or local organisation or are in decision-preparing and decision-making positions or are studying in this field. This paper can also assist full- or part-time employees of bodies and organisations and municipalities to learn about the basics of tourism and to implement the tourism development plans of their region, county or settlement.

4. Theses-Questions and Hypotheses

- a.) Komárom-Esztergom County possesses abilities and touristic offer that are competitive or can be made competitive both abroad and domestically. Key areas (basic touristic products) can be selected and developed in accordance with the trends of international demand and significantly influence touristic income.
- b.) The regions and settlements fuelling the county's tourism can be designated. The neighbouring settlements can join in with their complementary service packages.

- c.) The unique objects (settlements, facilities or attractions) can be selected that are worth supporting as independent development projects.
- d.) The efficiency and competitiveness of touristic product development can be established through regional cooperation even in not very attractive areas.
- e.) The county government lives up to its legal obligations not only verbally but through actions to organise the region's tourism.

5. The Results and Consequences of the Research

- a.) Summarising the experiences of the primary research we can state that the touristic offer of Komárom-Esztergom County is not specified in terms of structure or the expected guests. The county has no specific, easy-to-identify image either on the domestic or the international touristic market. The production of touristic products is spontaneous, financially not supported on the county's level and is independent mostly on the programme host and the opportunities of the enterprises. There have been no significant products of international market value.

In spite of having a lot of natural and cultural and architectural values in the county, their market significance compared to the potential possibilities is very low, indeed.

The considerable tourist-receiving areas of the county are its major historical towns and forests. The possibilities connected to waters are unutilised.

The attractiveness of the county's touristic offer is very different by region. The county's tourist centres to be developed are: Esztergom, Komárom, Bábolna, Kisbér, Tata and the regions alongside the River Danube. The mosaic-like potential attractions can be grouped and converted to products of unique image.

The directions of development are as follows:

- Cultural and heritage tourism
- Active tourism
- Catering and wine-culture
- Village tourism
- Conference and convention tourism
- Health tourism

The county can get involved in the development programme of the national tourism development concept and the new national tourism development strategy in the following fields: cultural and heritage tourism, thermal and health tourism, cycling and horse-riding tourism.

The outlined future calls for the entrepreneurs' action to use the results of the county's regular marketing research –

coupled with product development – to define the development directions of the attractions and the related services. As a consequence of developments and the concentration of sales, the composition of tourists visiting the county will change. The number of organised, package tourists will increase as proper programs and accommodation is provided. The target holiday areas of domestic families will be created. The average length of stay of tourists spending nights in the county will grow as the programs become more varied.

The sustainability of the county's tourism will be ensured by the organisational background with defined duties and decision-making competences, the intellectual basis trained at several levels, the result-oriented, planned implementation, the cooperation skills and regular follow-up of results.

Thinking and acting in systems will be characteristic. The organisation and implementation of developments will be conscious and controlled.

- b.) During the research the regions and settlements have been designated which will be the locomotives of the county's tourism to which the neighbouring settlements can join in with their complementary service packages.

Tourism junction-points will be established from the regional centres of considerable touristic products in Komárom, Esztergom, Bábolna-Kisbér and Tata and along the Danube. The tourist infrastructure of these junction points will satisfy the needs of the characteristic focus groups of the product offered.

In a 25-30 km circle around the tourist junction points the business basis of tourist enterprises can be services to tourists and the provision of complementary programs.

In the foreseeable future the basis of the county's tourism can be provided by a high-level service infrastructure background. The infrastructure of tourism will develop continually along with the product developments and will match their level.

The harmonic cooperation of the transport system and the tourist junction points is feasible.

A unified information network about tourist junction points will be established. The regular, coordinated information flow between the info points will be established. The service providers and info points will be in contact based on interest and motivation.

- c.) One of the major results of the research is the designation of unique objects (settlements, facilities and attractions) that are worth supporting as independent development projects such as the Castle and Basilica in Esztergom, the Fényes-spa and the Old Lake in Tata with its connected facilities and programs and Kisbér and Bábolna as horse-riding tourist centres.
- d.) It has been proven that the efficiency and competitiveness of touristic product development can be established through cooperation even in less attractive areas. This statement has been underpinned by the several-year, successful operation of the local Village Tourism Association. Tát has been representing a good example of touristic exploitation of nationality relationships for a long time. A special and unique cooperation has been established between the Abbey of Pannonhalma, the Monostori Fort and the Bábolna Horse-Riding Yard. It has been also confirmed that competitive advantage can be achieved only through cooperation of the county's touristic areas.
- e.) The county government in this case met its legal obligation not only verbally but also in action to organise the region's tourism although the related ruling is not very incentive.

It has been proven that the region and the county in their current form are neither suitable nor interested in real tourism development. Some settlements are much more advanced than either one. However, an outside expert and advisor cannot evade the principle of integrated planning and must conform to the golden rule of touristic planning, i.e. it is advise able to involve and ask everyone in the planning process who, later will or may have a say or a vote in the establishment and implementation of the operative programs and subprograms related to the strategy.

The assumption of continuous management and maintenance and continuous publicity of the strategy's establishment and implementation has also been confirmed, otherwise it can land in the bottom a drawer like many other plans in the past decades. The system and financial background of the continuous road show of the touristic strategy has to be established.

It has been confirmed that continuous training and further training would be necessary for the elected officials and employees of municipalities who are decision-makers in rural, regional and settlement development to strengthen their touristic minds.

6. Summary

Komárom-Esztergom is a county divided into two regarding tourism. Its Eastern parts are more strongly connected to the capital city and the neighbouring areas than to the other parts of the county. The cohesion strength irradiated by the county government cannot balance this division which is also reflected in belonging to two touristic regions.

In the county we can see a lot of local initiatives and civil organisations aimed at the same goal. This is a very important basis of development because it is a greater force than measures at a higher level. The county government supports the development of tourism but its legally defined economic system currently excludes financial contribution to developments. In the development plans tasks by competences are missing, therefore, good planning has scarcely been followed by implementation. There has been no integrated county organisation for tourism, only individual players are operating – mostly alone. The problems listed, the achievements and tasks waiting for solution all show that integrated tourism planning, continuous product development and a more intense market presence relying on proven marketing tools will be inevitably beneficial for the county on the long run. A very important task is raising the skills level and preparation of decision-makers for their tasks – which has been the objective of this paper.

7. Publications of the Author on the Subject

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