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## MARKETING ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM SERVICES COMPETITIVENESS

### МАРКЕТИНГОВА ОЦІНКА КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНОСТІ ТУРИСТИЧНИХ ПОСЛУГ

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*Zakharchenko V.I., Kovtunenکو D.Yu., Chichkan O.S. Marketing assessment of tourism services' competitiveness. Scientific and methodical article.*

The article proposes a methodology for marketing assessment of the competitiveness of tourism services. This methodology is based on the use of expert survey methods and weighting factors. An important criterion for this method of evaluation is that it is aimed at collecting and analyzing consumer criteria. Having considered these criteria and wishes of the clients it is possible to achieve the increase of competitiveness of the services of the enterprise of tourism and to improve its position in this market.

*Keywords:* enterprise, tourism, service, competitiveness, evaluation, criterion, expert, factor, consumer

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The chosen method involves five stages, each containing a set of procedures aimed at determining the criteria by which it is possible to raise the competitiveness of not only services but also of enterprises as a whole. Taking into account the point of view of consumers and the quality of marketing activities of a tourist enterprise, there are great opportunities for development.

*Keywords:* enterprise, tourism, service, competitiveness, evaluation, criterion, expert, factor, consumer

Competitive advantages of the services (products) of the enterprise are the most important part of its competitiveness in general. This statement explains the essence of the entity's approach to assessing the entity's competitiveness (hereinafter referred to as the COP), which is based on accounting for the characteristics of its products, among which the ratio of price and quality of services is central. In most methods based on this approach, during calculations carried out using marketing and qualitative measurements, for each type of enterprise services, economic and parametric indices of the COP are determined, which are determined by summing separate indices of each estimated parameter taking into account weighting factors. One or another separate index is the ratio of the actual value of the parameter under consideration to the value of the competing service indicator (or the service selected on the basis of comparison) [9].

Today, experts thoroughly explore a wide range of methods used in the analysis of organizational and competitive data and information that includes models of statistical, competitive, consumer, evolutionary, hourly analysis, and environmental analysis. It helps business analysts and decision makers make effective conclusions based on limited data and bring information that at first glance is not likely to be more consistent [18].

#### Analysis of recent researches and publications

The research of problems of marketing support for increasing the competitiveness of products (services) was carried out by such specialists as V. Adamik [1], A. Afonin [2], N. Voskolovich [5], A. Durovich [7], V. Dubnitsky [8], V. Krivorotov [9], M. Malskaya [10], L. Moroz and N. Chukhry [12], V. Nikolaichuk [13], N. Pavlova [14], M. Stelmakh [16], S. Klimentko [17] and others.

But outside of the research there were specific features of the service sector very often. Similarly, the relevant tools offered by the authors relate to the definition of a COP of material products.

### Unsolved aspects of the problem

For each tourist enterprise an important component of existence is the analysis of market opportunities. This analysis is the basis for the successful implementation of activities in accordance with the management concept. It is indisputable that it acquires enormous practical value. It is not a secret that the consumer acts as the main lever, which points to the seller for his mistakes and what needs to be offered to the market. In order for the travel company to succeed in its activities, it is necessary to offer the market such services that fully satisfy the needs of customers. That is why the study of the COP tourism enterprises through the point of view of consumers can be called the most important task of marketing.

*The aim of the article is to improve the marketing approach to assessing the competitiveness of services on the example of enterprises of the tourism industry.*

### The main part

In the scientific and educational literature of the COP there are many different definitions of the competitiveness of services. For example, Dubnitsky V. gives a rather general definition within the limits of the pyramid of objects of competitiveness: micro-competitiveness – is the competitiveness of staff, innovations, technologies, means of production of an enterprise (firm)/organization; enterprises/organizations in general, manufactured by these subjects of goods and services; systemic development of complex potential for market orientation on external markets [8].

It is also necessary to take into account the distribution of tourist services for the main and additional: tourist services main – these are the main services that travel company provides, including: services for the organization of transportation, accommodation, food for tourists. Additional services include: excursion services; tourist insurance services; services of guides, guides-translators; services for transportation of a tourist from its place of arrival to the country (place of its temporary stay) to the place of return (transfer), as well as any other transportation within the country (place of temporary stay) provided for by the conditions of travel; repair and rental of equipment, etc. The main services are those that are specified in the contract. Additional tourist services will be purchased independently at the place of stay, they will not be transferred to the cost of the trip. In most cases, the main tourist services consist of transport services, accommodation and catering services. However, during the organization of travel with cognitive, professional, business, sports, and religious purposes, services traditionally referred to as additional ones may include the tour. Thus, the difference between the main and the additional services is in their ratio to the original purchased service package. In addition to intangible services, it can be given specific goods or material services to the tourist. For example: city plans, metro map, souvenirs, tourist equipment, etc. [4].

There are quite a few different definitions of the product/service competitiveness [3; 5-8; 11; 12; 14] in the academic and scientific literature on marketing. In the framework of this research, we determine the competitiveness of the service (hereinafter CS) as the ability of the service to meet the requirements of a competitive market and be realized on it at this time period.

In most cases, the CS score, which maximizes other performance indicators based on the cost-benefit ratio. For our study, the evaluation of the CS will try to deduce from the argument that the consumer in the process of service comparison wins the one whose ratio of the total cost of the purchase and use of the service (U) to the useful effect (E) that is possible to obtain from this service is minimal in comparison with other similar services. That is:

$$CS=U/E \rightarrow \min \quad (1)$$

The beneficial effect of E is calculated as an integral indicator of the quality of the service, which includes three groups of indicators: the main characteristics of the service (quality of service, conditions of service, culture of service), which are regulated (that is, they meet the standards), parameters and attributes (availability of services, financing conditions) [14]. Each indicator is included in the integral indicator with its weight, which depends on the importance to the consumer.

Final cost of the acquisition: the use of the service (U) includes the cost of service, transaction costs, taxes, insurance, and so on.

Thus, the assessment of the CS is based on the consideration of two integral indicators – its quality and consumption prices, that is, CS can be reflected as a function of two complex indicators:

$$CS=f(U,E) \quad (2)$$

In practice, the criteria by which a consumer assesses and chooses a service involves a considerably greater number of indicators than price and quality [13]. Therefore, from the point of view of marketing, when people assess the COP, it is necessary to consider not only the consumer's requirements for its price and quality, but also the requirements that are mainly related to the scope of the contract and the subsequent consumption of the service. It is also necessary to take into account the degree of awareness of the brand (trade mark) and the commitment to its consumers [16]. In different markets, the weight of each of these criteria may be different, but therefore the CS assessment should be done in each market individually.

However, when the COP indicator takes into account all the criteria for the consumers of a particular market, then it reflects just expectations and not real COP. For successful sales of services, it is necessary that it be formed in the market where it is really needed in the necessary amount, at the right moment of time, so that the consumer is prepared for the appearance of the product, and the corresponding marketing program was better than that of competitors [1]. All this depends on the effective performance of marketers marketing functions: market research, management of the development and promotion of services.

Thus, the concept of marketing leads to a wider understanding of the real CS, which depends not only on the ratio of "quality-price" and compliance with the criteria of consumers, but also from the COP of all marketing activities of the enterprise:

$$COP=f(\text{consumer criteria} + \text{COP of enterprise's marketing measures}) \quad (2)$$

The expediency of this conclusion is confirmed by the researches of the reasons for the failure of new services in the market of tourist services [5]. Studies also show that there are seven main reasons for the failure of new services [6]. These include:

- a) insufficient pre-certainty of the market or service;
- b) lack of certainty of the characteristics of the new service;
- c) ineffective means of promoting services to the market;
- d) underestimation of the degree of the market's attractiveness;
- e) low quality of service according to the main characteristics;
- f) unsuccessful choice of time to enter the service market;
- g) lack of effective representation of the market for a new service.

If we analyze the above-mentioned reasons, it should be noted that the basis of their occurrence is the inadequate performance of marketing functions: market research (reasons a, b, c), management of the development and implementation of services (a, b, e), management of service promotion (f, g).

Summarizing the above-mentioned existing methods [7, 10, 14], it is possible to propose a methodology for marketing assessment of CS. Let's distinguish the following stages:

1. Generalization of consumer requirements for services.
2. Estimated expected CS on the basis of consumer criteria.
3. Estimation of the system of marketing services with respect to competitive enterprises.
4. Calculation of the economic efficiency of the measures.
5. Conclusions on the real CS and determination of directions for its increase.

Consider the features of each stage.

Stage 1. To generalize the requirements of consumers to any service, it is possible to determine the relevant criteria for services using the Boston Consulting Group method [2]. According to this methodology, questionnaires are compiled (tab. 1).

Table 1. Questionnaire for the survey to identify consumer criteria for tourism services

№	Criteria's name	Weight in points
1	Expenditure on service availability (example)	4.5
2	...	...
...	...	...

Source: compiled by the authors on the materials [2, 8]

The table should list the criteria that may be important to consumers. Then it is necessary to conduct a survey among the consumers: ask them to evaluate the weight (importance of the degree) of each of the specified criteria on the corresponding (5, 10, 100-point scale) and add to the table uncounted, in their view, criteria – also along with an assessment of their weight. Processing a certain number of these questionnaire tables allows you to identify the real consumer criteria and arrange them in descending order of their weight, which is calculated as the arithmetic mean for the collected questionnaire.

Stage 2. Estimated CS expected to be provided to experts (to have a sufficient mathematical sample of at least 13), based on the analysis and comparison of specific criteria values for the study of competitors' services and services. Such an assessment will be more accurate, if the experts will understand the demands of consumers in the market segment of tourist services better, which is implemented this service.

For the convenience of conducting this evaluation it is advisable to construct a table of criteria values for each of the services, that are investigated first (criteria are recommended to be placed in the order of decreasing their weight) (tab. 2).

Note: It is recommended to measure the weight of the criterion on a 7-point scale, and an expert assessment of tourism services on a 10-point scale.

On the basis of tab. 2 and calculations, we obtain the final indicators of the CS for all the criteria set out in the table for the research service of the tourism enterprise and analogue services of competing enterprises.

Stage 3. Assessment of the COP marketing activity of the tourism enterprise in relation to the competitor is also provided by experts. To carry out such an assessment, it is necessary to gather information about

competitors and give estimates for this information, for example, on a 7-point scale (tab. 3). It should be emphasized that the reliability of such an assessment is largely due to the completeness, breadth and specificity of the competing information collected and summarized.

Table 2. Estimation of the expected competitiveness of tourism services

№	Criteria's name	Weight in points	Investigated service		Service-analog of enterprise 1		...	Service-analog of enterprise i	
			Expert score (points)	gr.3×gr.4	Expert score (points)	gr.3×gr.6		...	Expert score (points)
1									
2									
...									
Result				Σb		Σ1			Σi

Source: compiled by the authors on the materials [2, 8]

Table 3. Estimation of competitiveness of marketing activity of the tourism's enterprise

№	The name of COP marketing factor of the tourism enterprise	Estimation of the factor for the investigated enterprise, points	An assessment of the factor for a competitor			
			1	2	...	H
1	Manage development					
2	Marketing researches					
3	Assessment of market risks					
4	Logistics management					
5	Promotion management					
6	Advertising activity					
Result		Σd	Σ	Σ	...	ΣH

Source: own elaboration

Note: in column 2, we place the factors of the COP marketing activity of the tourism enterprise. Each function to improve the accuracy of the evaluation is expedient to represent in more detail if it is divided into components – then the indicator that characterizes the function will be equal to the sum of indicators that determine it. In column 3 and subsequent graphs, expert evaluations of the factors of the COP for the investigated enterprise and competitors are compiled with the calculation of the final indicators that characterize the marketing activity of each enterprise.

Tab. 3 provides an opportunity to assess how effectively a tourism company performs its marketing functions in comparison with its competitors. Their more effective implementation provides a solid basis for ensuring the CS of the tourism enterprise during its development and introduction into the market.

Stage 4. Calculation of the economic efficiency of measures to improve the CS in tourism enterprises. This can be done by the formula:

$$E = (Eet/ICT) \times 100\% \quad (4)$$

where: Eet – expenses of the enterprise of tourism on measures to improve the CS;

ICT – an increase in the conditional turnover of the tourism enterprise through the implementation of measures to improve the CS.

It is necessary to carry out such a calculation each year and to make a comparison with the value of commission interest (commissions for intermediation [4]) that it is possible to pay to other enterprises in the event that they transfer the rights to such services.

Stage 5. At this stage, it is necessary to draw conclusions about the real CS and determine the directions of the efforts to increase it.

Based on the analysis of tab. 2 and 3, it is possible to draw conclusions:

1. If  $\Sigma b > \Sigma i$  and  $\Sigma d \geq \Sigma H$  – then the studied tourist service is likely to be more competitive than the similar service of the enterprise and.
2. If  $\Sigma b < \Sigma i$  and  $\Sigma d < \Sigma H$  – then the service under investigation is likely to be less competitive than the similar service of the enterprise and.
3. If  $\Sigma b > \Sigma i$ , and  $\Sigma d < \Sigma H$ , or if  $\Sigma b < \Sigma i$ , and  $\Sigma d > \Sigma H$  – then it is necessary to follow which criteria it is necessary to raise the expected CS (tab. 2) or on what factors it is necessary to increase the COP of marketing of the enterprise (tab. 3).

The proposed methodological approach provides an opportunity not only to evaluate the CS, but also to see the weaknesses in its promotion to the market of tourist services, as the comparison of services and comparison of the tourism enterprise takes place according to each individual criterion and factor. Detecting weaknesses makes it possible to understand the need to make efforts to really improve the CS.

The considered approach is relatively labour-intensive, but the provision of a real CS in the saturated market of tourist services is a rather complicated task. In some cases, such an approach may be performed in abridged version, limited to Step 2 (that is, without conducting an analysis of the COP marketing activity of the tourism enterprise). In this case, the estimation of the expected CS based on several most important consumer criteria may have some advantages over the evaluation based on only two criteria: quality and price.

Next, let's look at an example of a CS evaluation using the above-mentioned approach. As an exploratory tourist service, we will choose the rest of the ski resorts in Bulgaria and as the competitive tourism enterprises (market of tourist services in Odessa), the following companies: UP Travel (T1), Municipal Odessa (T3), Salix-ecotourism (T3).

1. Let's determine the criteria (requirements) and their weight by polling consumers who use the services of these tourism enterprises. To do this, it is necessary to conduct a survey of a rather representative sample of consumers who wish to have a rest in Bulgaria, using the developed questionnaire (tab. 1).

Assume that as a result of the processing of the received questionnaires, certain criteria have been identified which can be formed as shown in table 4 (calculated as the arithmetic mean for the collected questionnaires for each criterion).

Table 4. Criteria for tourism services received on the basis of questionnaire processing (on a five-point scale)

№	Name of the criterion	Weight, points
1	Completeness and breadth of assortment of tourist services	4.3
2	Compliance with international standards of rest	4.1
3	The image of the enterprise in the market of tourist services	3.9
4	Politeness, perseverance and attentiveness of the personnel of the tourism enterprise	3.8
5	Expenditure on the availability of tourist services	3.4
6	Time of presence on the tourist services market	3.2
7	Availability of work with tourism consultants	2.7
8	Frequency of change in the range of travel services	2.6
9	Material and technical base of the tourism enterprise	2.2

Source: own elaboration

2. Estimate the expected CS of enterprise T1. To do this, take the following steps:

- 2.1. It is necessary to build a table of values of the criteria for a particular tourism service (holiday in Bulgaria) for each enterprise (tab. 5). The criteria are arranged in the following sequence, as defined in table 4.
- 2.2. Conduct an expert assessment of the values of the criteria that the guidance in tab. 5. On its basis, similar to tab. 2, we build tab. 6.
3. On the basis of the generalization of information about competitors-companies (on the 7-point scale), an assessment of the COP of marketing activities of the tourism enterprise is presented (shown in tab. 7, similar to tab. 3).

Table 5. Value of consumer criteria for services of tourism enterprises (on a ten-point scale)

№	Name of the criterion	T1	T2	T3
1	Completeness and breadth of assortment of tourist services	High	Medium	Medium
2	Compliance with international standards of rest	Sufficient	Inadequate	Poorly sufficient
3	The image of the enterprise in the market of tourist services	High	High	Medium
4	Politeness, perseverance and attentiveness of the personnel of the tourism enterprise	Sufficient	Poorly sufficient	Poorly sufficient
5	Expenditure on the availability of tourist services	Low	Medium	High
6	Time of presence on the tourist services market	Long	Long	Not long
7	Availability of work with tourism consultants	Available	Partly	Partly
8	Frequency of change in the range of travel services	Constantly changing	Changing from time to time	Unchanged
9	Material and technical base of the tourism enterprise	Sufficient	Inadequate	Medium

Source: own elaboration

4. Conclusions about the COP of tourism enterprises are carried out on the basis of the analysis of the data of tab. 6 and 7.



Table 6. Estimation of the expected competitiveness of tourism enterprises

№	Name of the criterion	Weight, points	T1		T2		T3	
			Expert score (points)	gr.3× gr. 4	Expert score (points)	gr.3× gr. 6	Expert score (points)	gr.3× gr. 8
1	Completeness and breadth of assortment of tourist services	4.3	8	34.4	6	25.8	6	25.8
2	Compliance with international standards of rest	4.1	9	36.9	4	16.4	5	20.5
3	The image of the enterprise in the market of tourist services	3.9	8	31.2	8	31.2	6	23.4
4	Politeness, perseverance and attentiveness of the personnel of the tourism enterprise	3.8	7	26.6	3	11.4	3	11.4
5	Expenditure on the availability of tourist services	3.4	9	30.6	7	23.8	5	17.0
6	Time of presence on the tourist services market	3.2	9	28.8	9	28.8	4	12.8
7	Availability of work with tourism consultants	2.7	8	21.6	6	16.2	6	16.2
8	Frequency of change in the range of travel services	2.6	9	23.4	7	18.2	5	113.0
9	Material and technical base of the tourism enterprise	2.2	8	17.6	5	11.0	7	15.4
Result			252.1		182.8		155.5	

Source: own elaboration

Tab. 6 shows that the total expert assessment of the expected COP of enterprise T1 is higher than that of enterprises T2 and T3.

№	The name of the factor of the COP marketing activity of the tourism enterprise	Estimation of the factor for enterprise		
		T1	T2	T3
1	Manage development	6.5	5.0	4.0
2	Marketing researches	5.0	5.0	5.0
3	Assessment of market risks	4.5	5.0	5.0
4	Logistics management	6.4	5.8	4.5
5	Promotion management	5.6	5.0	4.0
6	Advertising activity	6.5	4.0	5.0
Result		34.5	29.8	27.5

Source: own elaboration

Tab. 7 shows that the total expert estimation of COP marketing activity of enterprise T1 is higher than that of enterprises T2 and T3. Companies T2 and T3 urgently need to develop programs for developing their marketing activities within the framework of the regional tourism development program [15] and start their implementation.

### Conclusions

With a high degree of probability it is possible to say that the real CS on the first of the considered tourism enterprises is significantly higher than the other two. This is confirmed both by experts and consumers; sufficiently high level of marketing activity at the first enterprise.

An important component of marketing, developing a tourism company for its target market, is a tourist service/product. A well-balanced and consistent product policy lays the foundation for market success. A scientifically grounded food policy should be based on planned research using appropriate measures and methods aimed at increasing the competitiveness of tourist services, first of all, its qualitative and cost-effective characteristics, which are in line with the needs of consumers [10].

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### Abstract

The competitiveness of products is one of the most important components of the enterprise's competitiveness as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to monitor continuously and qualitatively that the services or products of the company meet the requirements of the market and consumers. It is a consumer who determines the direction of the enterprise's activity in the system of market economy. And consumers also point out what needs to be offered to the market.

Today, experts thoroughly explore a wide range of methods used in the analysis of organizational and competitive data and information that includes models of statistical, competitive, consumer, evolutionary, hourly analysis, and environmental analysis.

The purpose of the article is to improve the marketing approach to assessing the competitiveness of services. This topic is disclosed on the example of tourism enterprises.

For each tourist enterprise, an analysis of market opportunities is an essential component of the existence. This analysis is the basis for the successful implementation of activities in accordance with the management concept. It is indisputable that it acquires enormous practical value.

In the study, a method was proposed to determine the competitiveness of the products of a tourist enterprise using the costs of purchasing and the useful effect. Thus, the assessment of product competitiveness is based on the analysis of two integrated indicators - the price and quality of products.

There was the method of marketing evaluation of the competitiveness index also proposed. It consists of five stages: the first is the generalization of the requirements of consumers. The second stage is to assess the competitiveness of services based on certain consumer criteria. At the third stage, the marketing system is evaluated in comparison with competitors. The fourth stage is the calculation of economic efficiency. The final stage is the description of the conclusions of the analysis done.

The proposed methods for assessing the competitiveness of services of tourist enterprises were tested in practice. The analysis was carried out on the example of really functioning enterprises. The obtained results showed the practical expediency of the proposed method.

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