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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE DEFINITION OF A “TOURIST DESTINATION” IN FRAMES OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ВИЗНАЧЕННЯ ПОНЯТТЯ «ТУРИСТИЧНА ДЕСТИНАЦІЯ» В КОНТЕКСТІ СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТУ

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Abstract. This study conducts a systematic review of the tourist destinations strategic management literature. The scientific approaches to the definition of the term “tourist destination” are considered. In post-Soviet countries, lately the concept of “tourist destination” has been used alongside the term “destination”, as a crucial element of the regional tourism system and a subject to regional development management. Definitions of the “tourist destination” vary significantly, which indicates a lack of consensus on its definition as a scientific category. The fast-growing tourism industry has been considerably weakened due to the global risks, such as COVID-19 pandemic and Russian Federation’s global scale invasion to Ukraine in 2022. These challenges evoked the necessity to elaborate and apply various managerial strategies to a tourist destination, considering a range of external factors. The primary goal of this research was to define the concept of a tourism destination from perspective of strategic management and to review the theoretical approaches in this field of study. Based on analyzed scientific concepts it was found out that one of the main advantages of strategic planning in tourism is constant monitoring of the effectiveness of activities performed by all the involved entities. By distinguishing the long-term plan and the short-term plan, the research clarifies the difference between a tourism management strategy and its marketing tactics. The principal stages of the strategic planning in tourism were identified as continued and interdependent. The paper furthermore provides an overview of the concept of territory marketing that emerged in close connection with strategic management. Tourist destinations have their image that directly attracts tourists, motivates them to receive appropriate services and thus activates the entire tourism system.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist destination, Strategic management, Strategic planning, Theoretical approaches, Territorial image.

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Анотація. У статті проведено систематичний огляд літератури зі стратегічного управління туристичними дестинаціями. Розглянуто наукові підходи до визначення терміну «туристична дестинація». Визначено, що в країнах пострадянського простору останнім часом поряд із терміном «дестинація» вживається поняття «туристична дестинація», як найважливіший елемент регіональної туристичної системи та суб’єкт управління регіональним розвитком. З’ясовано, що визначення «туристичної дестинації» суттєво різняться, що свідчить про відсутність консенсусу щодо її визначення як наукової категорії. Швидко зростаюча індустрія туризму була значно ослаблена через глобальні ризики, такі як пандемія COVID-19 та повномасштабне вторгнення Російської Федерації в Україну в 2022 році. Ці виклики створили необхідність до вивчення та застосування різних стратегій управління туристичними дестинаціями з урахуванням ряду зовнішніх факторів. Основною метою дослідження є визначення поняття туристичної дестинації в контексті менеджменту та огляд теоретичних підходів у цій галузі дослідження. На основі проаналізованих наукових концепцій з’ясовано, що однією з основних переваг стратегічного планування в туризмі є постійний моніторинг ефективності діяльності всіх залучених суб’єктів. Проводячи паралель між довгостроковим планом і короткостроковим планом, дослідження висвітлює різницю між стратегією управління туризмом і його маркетинговою тактикою. Основні етапи стратегічного планування в туризмі були визначені як тривалі та взаємозалежні. Крім того, у статті представлено огляд концепції маркетингу територій, яка виникла в тісному зв’язку зі стратегічним менеджментом. Туристичні дестинації мають свій власний імідж, який безпосередньо приваблює туристів, мотивує їх до отримання відповідних послуг і тим самим активізує всю туристичну систему окремого міста чи регіону.

Ключові слова: Туризм, Туристична дестинація, Стратегічний менеджмент, Стратегічне планування, Теоретичні підходи, Імідж території.

Формул: 0; *рис.:* 0; *табл.:* 1, *бібл.:* 48

Problem statement. Over the past two decades, tourism has proven to be one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy generating 10.4% of global GDP and 10.6% of all jobs [1]. Nowadays, territorial units such as cities and regions compete between themselves just like products and services. Basing on this idea, numerous marketing strategies are applied to the “economic, political and cultural development of cities, regions and countries” [2]. Strategic management is the management of businesses for long term survival to provide competitive advantage in the business that can bring above average profit and not the daily or ordinary business management [3].

Despite the widespread use of the term “destination” (ukr. «дестинація») in post-Soviet countries, lately the concept of “tourist destination” has been used alongside it as a crucial element of the regional tourism system and a subject to regional development management. The managerial aspect as a criterion characterizing the concept of “tourist destination” consists in considering the tourist destination as an object of management and assuming the presence of management subjects in the field [4].

For the first time, the term “tourist destination” was introduced into scientific circulation by N. Leiper (1979), who used it to identify “a certain geographical area that is attractive to travelers” [5]. On international level, the development of tourism as an important component of the country’s overall economy was firstly mentioned in The Hague Declaration on Tourism, adopted in April 1989: “Tourism can be an effective instrument for socioeconomic growth for all countries, if at the same time the necessary measures are taken to tackle the more urgent national priorities and to allow the national economy to reach an acceptable level of self-sufficiency in which the country does not have to spend in excess of what it can hope to earn from tourism” [6]. This gave impetus to a comprehensive study of the tourism industry using the term “tourist destination” as well as to developing a variety of interdisciplinary

approaches to the definition and management of a tourist destination. Interdisciplinary approaches should be applied in tourism planning, “where destinations are exposed to a variety of externalities and must develop strategies to adapt to changing operational conditions” [7].

Considering the global development of tourism over the past three decades, as well as the present challenges, the need for strategic planning in this area is undeniable. For instance, as the world faced an unprecedented global health emergency in the face of COVID-19 pandemic, the travel sector has become one of the most affected in the global economy, with strict quarantine restrictions affecting almost every country. According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in the first 10 months of 2020 alone, the volume of international tourist arrivals fell by 70%, reaching the level of 1990. This led to a loss of \$935 billion export revenues from international tourist transportation, which is more than 10 times greater than the losses in 2009 due to the global economic crisis [8]. Thus, only a balanced development strategy can guarantee effectiveness in achieving the set goals and ensure the sustainable functioning of either an individual destination, or a regional travel sector.

Strategic planning in tourism should also support sustainability practices adoption to avoid any circumstance that may result in loss of the territory’s attractiveness [9]. There generally are two motivating factors behind adoption of sustainability practices [10]:

- Most strategies adopt sustainability practices due to external pressure from multiple agencies such as NGOs, governments, customers, and other stakeholders [11].
- Territorial units seek opportunities from sustainability practices adoption to gain marketing and competitive advantages, for instance to improve reputation [12].

Analysis of recent studies and publications. The literature review covered papers published during the period from 1979

to 2022. 1979 has been taken as base year, since no significant study on theoretical approaches to the strategic management of tourism destinations has been found before that year. Multiple databases such as Elsevier Science Direct, ORCID, JSTOR, Springer, Tourlib, Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine Internet archive and KROK University Science Notes were used to select literature. 48 scientific studies have been reviewed in this paper. The classification of theoretical approaches has been done through content analysis.

The purpose of the study is to define the concept of a tourism destination from the perspective of strategic management, to review theoretical approaches in this field of study and to establish liaison between strategic management and development of tourism destinations.

The results of the research. The term “destination” first appeared during the Roman Empire and comes from the Latin word ‘destino’, meaning “destination, location” [13]. The modern Oxford Tourism Dictionary defines a destination as: “Countries, regions, cities and other territories that attract tourists are the main locations of tourist activities, tourist flows and their costs; places of maximum concentration of tourist attractions, means of accommodation, food, entertainment, other services and economic, social and physical impact of tourism” [24]. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) provides its definition: “A destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one day. It includes tourism products such as services and attractions as well as tourism resources within one day of travel. This space has physical and administrative boundaries that determine the form of its management, image, and reputation, which affect its competitiveness in the tourist market” [1].

Despite the widespread use of the term “destination”, lately the concept of “tourist destination” has been used alongside it in the post-Soviet countries to underline the significance of a destination as of the crucial element of the regional tourism system and a subject to regional development management. As mentioned in the paper’s introduction, the

term “tourist destination” was initially introduced into scientific circulation by N. Leiper (1979), who used it to identify “a certain geographical area that is attractive to travelers” [5]. He also developed a concept, in which the tourism system is presented as a model that includes a set of interacting elements. The model represents two geographically and economically unrelated regions: the first, where “potential tourists” live (tourist generating region) and the second – the actual tourist destination, where the “objects of tourist interest are located, for the purpose of traveling to which tourists temporarily leave their place of permanent residence” [15].

One popular way of encapsulating the complexity of the tourism phenomenon is to adopt the systems concept, that is, an operational structure built of a set of interacting components. The industry provides the logistical and promotional energy that fuels the system, operationalizing and integrating demand and supply [16]. Dominguez et al. (2021) noted that the features of a tourist destination, its geographic situation, its attractions, and the quality of its services determine the average expenditure of tourists, and the function that it plays within the global structure of tourism, among other aspects. The differences with regard to flows of tourism within tourist destinations mean that some destinations are more appreciated than others for tourism firms that wish to establish themselves in those places [17].

In 1998, R. Prosser from the University of Manchester, based on N. Leiper’s model, put forward his own vision of the “tourist environment”. Prosser (1998) focused mainly on the internal structure of the tourist destination, which was divided into three main components:

- 1) attractions, including tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- 2) service and facilities;
- 3) host population, which includes the local population, its culture, and customs [16].

Before the official introduction into scientific circulation in 1979 by N. Leiper, N. Georgoulas (1970) was the first to propose the definition of a tourist destination in 1970.

According to him, tourist destinations were considered as “places attractive to visitors (tourists), which are endowed with natural and/or artificial resources that encourage them to various activities” [18]. Besides N. Georgoulas and N. Leiper, K. Gunn (1979) is considered a pioneer in the development of the concept of a tourist destination, who characterized a tourist destination as “a system consisting of attractions, accommodation and maintenance services, advertising, information resources and transport” [19]. K. Gunn also argued that tourism does not consist only of hotels, airlines, and the so-called tourist infrastructure, but rather functions as a set of main components (listed above) connected by close and interdependent ties.

P. Pearce (1981) considered a tourist destination as “a place, the visit of which leaves tourists with different impressions, experiences, and emotions” [20], while C. Metelka (1990) defined a tourist destination somewhat more simply: as a geographical area to which a person travels [21]. P. Kotler (1993) compared tourist destinations with companies and indicated that “governments should develop a unique brand image of a specific destination in order to expand investment opportunities and attract tourism to their country” [22]. Scientists K. Cooper, O. Jorgensen, D. Fletcher (1998) believed that destinations were a set of categories of resources, namely:

- 1) attractions (leisure and entertainment facilities, tourist attractions);
- 2) accessibility (local transport and transport communications);
- 3) comfort (tourist infrastructure: hotel and restaurant business establishments, trade, etc.);
- 4) intermediaries (destination marketing organizations, travel, and excursion bureaus) [23].

Horner (2005) similarly stated that destinations are a composite product which is made up of a number of components, including: accommodation, establishments, restaurants, bars, theatres, cinemas and nightclubs, transport systems such as taxis, metros and buses, natural features like beaches and cliffs, man-made attractions including cathedrals, theme parks and museums, the

availability of excursions to nearby attractions, sports centers and leisure facilities, as well as special events [24].

Dyadechko (2007) noted that tourist destinations are places of interest to tourists (tourist objects) that make it necessary to travel to visit such places [25]. The concept of a tourist destination is complex in so far as different agents and researchers employ it different ways. None of these conceptualizations of a tourist destination is better than another, but each one places the spotlight on one aspect, lessening the importance of others [26], [27].

Framke (2002) proposed four points to define a tourist destination: the geographic limits of a destination; the content of a destination in terms of services and attractions; its consideration as a package in which cooperation takes place between such agents as firms, tourism organizations and authorities; and the behavioral patterns of tourists at that destination [26]. Lohmann and Pearce (2010, 2012) affirmed that when tourist flows and their planning are considered, a place can play roles that are not only destinations, such as points of departure, hubs, gateways, and stopovers. A place of tourism usually plays multiple roles some of which can be intensified due to the others [27], [28], [29]. Destinations exist at a number of different geographical levels which are interrelated [24]. Halpern & Graham (2015), Hvass (2014), Spasojevic et al. (2019), Stephenson, Lohmann, & Spasojevic (2018) have pointed to the interdependence of the different agents who are involved in the development of a tourist destination. These authors underlined the importance of the relations (and of cooperation) between the relevant stakeholders for a tourist destination, principally between an airline, an airport and a DMO, but also between other stakeholders such as tourism firms, suppliers, and authorities. The influence of some on others arises in multiple aspects and in all directions [30], [31], [32], [33].

Following the above analysis, the term “tourist destination” can be interpreted as a place that a tourist chooses to satisfy his/her needs and that meets his/her preferences (for example, natural-climatic, cultural-historical,

medical, entertainment, etc.), where, together with the satisfaction of needs, the tourist receives various impressions, experiences, and emotions. As we can see in Table 1, a significant number of scientists analyzed the

theoretical and methodological foundations of the tourist destination concept. However, research and practice in each field did not develop comprehensively, but in parallel to each other.

Table 1. Interpretations of the concept of “tourist destination” by scientists

Author, year of publication	Proposed interpretation
N. Georgulas (1970)	“Places attractive to visitors (tourists), which are endowed with natural and/or artificial resources that encourage them to various activities”
N. Leiper (1979)	“A certain geographical area that is attractive to travelers”
K. Gunn (1979)	“A system consisting of attractions, accommodation and maintenance services, advertising, information resources and transport”
P. Pearce (1981)	“A place, the visit of which leaves tourists with different impressions, experiences, and emotions”
C. Metelka (1990)	“A geographical area to which a person travel”
Horner (2005)	“A composite product which is made up of a number of components”
Dyadechko (2007)	“Places of interest for tourists (tourist objects) that make it necessary to travel, in order to visit such places”

Source: created by the author based on [5], [18], [19], [20], [21], [24], [25].

Definitions of the “tourist destination” vary significantly, which indicates a lack of consensus on its establishing as a scientific category. Among the reviewed papers, only few applied the concepts of strategic management specifically to the organization and planning of a tourism destination. Strategic management emerged and developed as a new discipline during the last three decades, as evidenced by the presence of many scientific works and publications devoted to this field of management. “New consumer trends, political changes, new technologies, the fragmentation of markets, globalization, vertical, horizontal and diagonal integration, environmental concerns, economic integration and many other key developments are all adding to the complexity of corporate management in tourism” [34]. Besides the above, Hall (2014) has also defined the notion of regional competitiveness as one of the key concepts in contemporary business studies and increasingly so in the study of tourism in the form of destination competitiveness. The focus on competitiveness has emerged out of the belief that globalization has created a world of intense place competition. For example, according to Kotler, Haider & Rein (1996) one of the leading texts of place competition, ‘In a borderless economy, [places] will emerge as the new actors on the world scene’. Following the idea of Kotler et al. (1996), we are living in

a time of ‘place wars’ in which places are competing for their economic survival with other places and regions not only in their own country but throughout the world. ‘All places are in trouble now or will be in the near future. The globalization of the world’s economy and the accelerating pace of technological changes are two forces that require all places to learn how to compete. Places must learn how to think more like businesses, developing products, markets, and customers’ [35].

One of the main advantages of strategic planning in tourism is constant monitoring of the effectiveness of the activities of all involved entities. Thanks to constant monitoring, it is possible to track how efficiently various organizational processes are performed, and how effective is the interaction between existing economic entities [36]. Barney and Hesterly (2018) concluded that the best way for a firm to choose its strategy is to follow strategic management principles [37]. Putri Rozita Tahir et al. (2022) noted that monitoring globalization is an essential strategic management undertaking, adding that “The strategic management framework is a set of evaluations and decisions that will help the firm find a competitive advantage. The strategic management method of a series collection of analyses and choices will improve the probability [38]. Moutinho (1999) stated that long-term plans (those extending

beyond 3 years) are generally very strategic in nature. In them, the firm's long-term goals such as profit margin, market share and market growth are all identified. By identifying the difference between the long-term plan and the short-term plan, the researcher has clarified the difference between a tourism firm's strategy and its marketing tactics. "The strategy is derived from a firm's goals and is a loose framework or set of guidelines that a tourism firm will follow in order to attain their goals. A tactic, meanwhile, consists of specific details as to how to execute the strategy. Whenever a tourism entity begins to analyze a potential market or selling situation, it must have a strategic plan regarding its approach to the market." [34]. Moutinho (1999) in a similar way noted that corporate and public organizations sometimes confuse the terms "policy" and "strategy" or use them interchangeably. "Policy" refers to major goals and objectives of organization and narrowly describes things we want to accomplish. "Strategy", in contrast, more broadly includes capabilities and methods and resources used to accomplish those purposes. [34] Go and Pine (1995) argued that the development of strategies that link the tourism corporation with its surrounding environment takes place on three levels: the corporate strategy, the business strategy, and the marketing strategy [39]. Bauer (2014) added that strategic planning is inherently multi-level. That is, it can be applied at different organizational levels. Thus, as many stakeholders as possible are involved in the process of developing a tourism development strategy: local self-government, small and medium-sized businesses, city and regional authorities; after all, national interests are taken into account [40].

We identify two principal stages of strategic planning in tourism:

- study of the internal environment (internal analysis). Its essence is a thorough analysis of the internal processes and structures of the business to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the tourist destination.

- study of the external environment (external analysis). It concerns the study of the

external environment at the micro and macro levels.

Gurel and Tat (2017) suggested that the external and internal forces' assessment is one core element in strategic management. An external review should help the company identify key competitive risks and opportunities. It also points out that the world of competition is changing, posing new challenges and opportunities for businesses. An internal review identifies a company's strengths and weaknesses. It also shows a company's strengths and resources as sources of competitive advantage rather than gains [41]. According to Moutinho (1999), the strategic planning process consists of five steps that are linked together in continuation: 1) defining a tourism destination's mission in a single statement; 2) SWOT analysis; 3) goals formulation; 4) defining the strategic options; 5) portfolio analysis [34]. Horner (2005) argued that strategic marketing planning always begins with an objective analysis of the organization's current marketing situation. "This analysis needs to take place at a number of levels, including: the organization as a whole; its product portfolios; individual strategic business units or SBUs; individual products." [24]. McDonald (2007) stated that the marketing planning process includes: 1. Corporate objectives 2. Marketing audit 3. SWOT analysis 4. Assumptions 5. Marketing objectives and strategies 6. Estimated expected results 7. Identify alternative plans and mixes 8. Program 9. Measurement and review [42].

We consider it necessary to point out a relative and fairly recent concept of territory marketing that emerged in close connection with strategic management. Territory marketing is largely aimed at forming the image of the territory, associations with a certain place and acting as an attractive force for potential consumers. A marketing approach to the territory means creating such conditions that would increase the attractiveness of the territory as an investment object and as a living environment. Strategic marketing of a tourist destination is an integral part of the general spatial and socio-economic management of the relevant territory. On this basis, it is useful to formulate the mission of the destination,

determine the qualitative and quantitative marketing goals corresponding to the mission, apply the marketing strategy corresponding to the goal, and determine the content of the tourist destination according to marketing needs [43]. Horner (2005), however, argued that the objectives of destination marketing tend to be more complicated than those for other types of marketing, reflecting the fact that most destination marketing is carried out by public-sector bodies rather than private companies: "...no direct price is charged for visiting the destination, so that standard marketing approaches to pricing are not really applicable. This is why, for example, pricing has not yet proved a very successful way of reducing peak demand in destinations which receive more tourists than they can cope with at peak times, like Venice." [24]. To develop a strategy, a tourist destination must define its main objectives. Goals and objectives are based on considering its position on the economic market and general goals. Tourism destination management involves the integration of often very disparate components to provide visitors with a common tourism product. Thus, there is no duplication of activities of entities in the spheres of sales, informing tourists, infrastructure construction. In this case, the main body is professional, private, and state institutions responsible for the development of the tourist destination, as well as increasing its competitiveness. Thus, we find it advisable to start the formation of a strategy for the development of regional tourist destinations with the definition of the mission, which provides a definition of its future state, determines actions that can be formulated in the following way: assessment of the level of development at the present time; formation of a set of development goals, analysis of strategic alternatives, definition of development strategy; implementation of the development strategy to achieve the main goals and objectives.

Finally, a good marketing research can be beneficial in terms of destination strategic planning, as it is aimed to attract potential investors in new projects in the destination; furthermore, it would help the local enterprises to revise their marketing mix basing on

information about the visitors, their income and motivation to visit a specific tourist destination. Following the above, the marketing approach within strategic management of the tourist destination requires that the destination pays special attention to the development of its product, using all its resources and potential according to the demand of tourists. To ensure more effective marketing influence within the framework of territorial marketing, certain groups of target segments should be allocated.

Conclusions. This study presented the framework to examine theoretical approaches within the definition of a tourism destination. It also reviews the relationship between the strategic management and the travel industry. It was found out that sustainable development of the tourism destinations in the long term can be achieved through a balanced strategic planning. The development of new technologies, an endless amount of advertising, the growth of competition in the industry, as well as the strengthening of the global world crisis made attracting potential visitors more difficult than ever before. Because of this, it is important to consider the strategic planning of tourist destinations through the prism of various scientific disciplines, such as regional management, marketing of territories, geography of tourism, and others. It is important to note that the presence of favorable factors (tourist resources), although a necessary condition, is not sufficient for the transformation of the territory into a tourist destination. After analyzing the scientific papers in this field, we can conclude that a single territory must possess a set of certain components (attractions, amenities, available packages, activities, ancillary services, accessibility) to be categorized as a "tourist destination". A key factor in the growth and continuous development of a tourist destination is the quality and efficiency of relations between service providers, as well as their balanced integration into the local environment. Finally, a thoroughly designed and adaptable strategy will lead a tourism destination to a greater success. The implementation of a systemic approach to the development of tourism

includes strategic management of tourist destinations, which is aimed at fulfilling the goals and objectives of the development of society and must be carried out based on legislative acts of a certain state.

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