

Tourism Marketing Science in Crete Island and its Perspectives through a SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

This paper presents the important role of marketing science in the tourism sector and through an application of a SWOT analysis magnifies the perspectives of a tourism development in the island of Crete which plays a vital role in the tourism of Greece and contributes the most in the financial figures. The analysis stretches the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Crete and reaches the conclusion of upgrade the quality of the provided services in all sectors that constitute the tourist product and the maintenance of this quality through a totalistic modernization of the installations and hotel business of Crete

Introduction - Marketing Science in Tourism

As stated by Kotler in „...Marketing has been defined in many ways. Consider the following definitions:

Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct flow of goods and service from the producer to the consumer or user (American Marketing Association).

Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably (British institute of Marketing)

Marketing is human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes [1]

However, the most difficult part is to define marketing in the area of service offer, where its activities are multidimensional. Generally, however, tourist marketing deals with the business tourist activity, whose target is the viability of the hospitality business and its unique capabilities in the specific tourist market, where it is the most suitable for the better exploitation of its resources. In this definition we will attempt a small analysis:

- a) There are specific capabilities of a tourist business that can provide special emphasis in claiming the tourist market with regards to time and financial capability of the tourists-consumers.
- b) The definition of the targets should be specific; that is what the target group in the market is, because not all people are attracted by a tourist packet.
- c) The relation between the two aforementioned parameters should be adequate.

The Tourist Marketing that is applied by the Greek Tourist Organization, to achieve the objective targets that have already been

set by the National Tourism Planning must constitute a basic operation and tool of applied tourist policy. [2]

The term market place is also open for definition. Most scientists agree that the market place is equal to the consumers: the buying or buying-capable population. This market place is also apparent in tourism, with the tour operators as the intermediaries that find the end-users (consumers). However, the most important success condition for a tourist business is a constant support on marketing that is required to sustain a viable hosting business. This is why marketing, along with Financial Management-Revision, have the profound effect on the performance of any tourist business. [3]

This is the situation regardless if a clearly identified marketing department exists in a tourist business or not. A hosting business in Crete, in order not to alter itself, or stop functioning, should first of all check if it would use marketing a sales approach or as something more than that. Generally speaking, this can be utilized in three ways:

- a) For the description of an approach of a problem
- b) For the creation of a unique department that has a number of responsibilities and actions
- c) As just one part of the total works of a tourist business.

Marketing is of vital importance for the definition of the long-term future of a tourist business or area, especially in the distribution of the resources in certain operations. Marketing scientists and businessmen are interested in the study of the consequences of consumer dissatisfaction since the kind and intensity of these consequences have been studied with market feedback mechanisms in the foreign (Anglo-Saxon mostly) bibliography. [4]

Marketing acknowledges these needs so as to propose a series of actions that satisfy the choice of the most appropriate actions according to certain marketing factors [5]

According to the general aspect, marketing in the area of service offering is not a neglected financial technique. The intangible values that often regulate the selection of the tourist product was directly equalized to the intangibility of a service. [6]

However, as it is widely known, a service offering provides memories, while a product durability. However marketing is not considered a peripheral skill and posture but a modern financial technique. For example, "the stabilization of packet booking-sales to the extent we want to be full" of the unit for the viability of a tourist business, contributes in the decline of the temporal gain, targeting on the long-term profits that remain a basic notion.

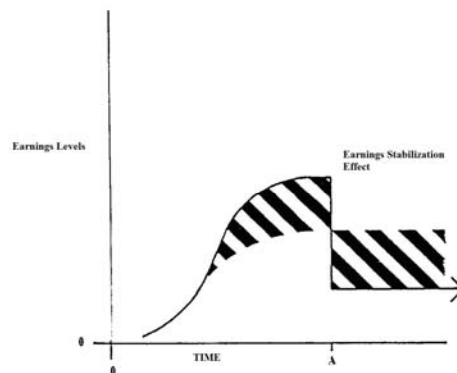


Figure 3. Stabilization of fullness in relation to the increase of booking [7]

The operation of the tourist marketing is applied either on areas or on distributed exploitation departments of a tourist business. According to the current data, the development of the tourist areas or businesses requires long-term marketing. For a sector that employs 290.000 people on prime season, there are no acceptable ignorance, omission, and delay thresholds ...we advertise tourism off-season using the same clichés [8]

Despite the fact that the infiltration operation of the tourist packets in the tourist market existed in the early years as well, a supplementary sector of this operation was initiated called marketing. For example, we can infiltrate it to the tourist market through the appropriate channels, after we first advertise it in an appropriate manner. Competition results in such situations that even if we create a very good tourist product, we will not be able to sell it without the appropriate advertisement [9]. However, the global promotion of Mykonos, Rhodes, Mallorca, Saint Trope, and especially Crete and the mass flow of tourists from other parts of the world in these areas, was not accomplished through complex and expensive tourist programmes, but was the outcome of tourist satisfaction from the offered service, resulting in a mouth-to-mouth advertisement. The Gothic cathedral of Milan is undoubtedly the most wanted tourist spot in the city, but the second element is Virgin in Italy through a balloon. This was how the company salesmen believed they would infiltrate in the market. [10]

Primary viewpoint registration search

The people working in tourism in Crete are again agonizing for the tourist season of 2007. The perspectives seem optimistic, yet a lot of people are troubled by the lack of infrastructure, the environment degradation and other familiar problems. Two years ago, everybody was referring to the flow deficit resulting from the decline in the arrivals in Crete, along with the 2.1b € for the installation costs and losses of around 450m € from the decline of tourism in Crete. The decline in the arrivals and overnight stays was less than 10% (4% and 8% respectively), but the earnings decline was around 20%-30% in a year that started with a number of problems. This deficit that became apparent in the local market, is the outcome of the decline in arrivals, in overnight stays and in imported tourist currency.

Our laboratory team considers Crete to be the most important tourist destination in Greece. It is the biggest island in size and population, depicting the longest coastline in Greece. One of the biggest congregations of archaeological, historical and religious monuments is located in Crete, with Knossos Minoan palace being the second in visitation in Greece, after Acropolis. The Heraklion Museum is the first Greek museum in visitors. The cultural and historical tradition of the island is special, while its contribution to the global history and culture with a rich folk tradition is great. In addition to that, Crete presents excellent tourist development perspectives, since it depicts numerous natural beauties, taking into consideration, however, that there should be a special planning and sensitization especially for the offer of high quality services and environmental respect. Last but not least, Crete has some of the most important natural monuments as the Samaria Canyon, with a great flora variety and some unique fauna specimen.

Crete also has an excellent, mild and tourism-favorable climate with the greatest climatic differentiations in Greece. It has two of the biggest international airports and ports of the country and a dense road network. The satisfaction and safety feelings of the tourists is observed at about 95%, while the most important satisfaction elements are the landscape, the natural environment, the sightseeing areas,

the clear water and sea, hospitality and people, the quality of the provided services and the hotels. This is why the tourists that visit the island more than once are a lot (41% of the tourists have visited the island around 3.3 times). 23% of the visitors consider Crete the best holiday place. 72% is favorable to Crete, when comparing it to their favorite holiday area.

Crete is not considered by tourists as a touristically satiated place, when compared to other Greek tourist destination as Rhodes or Corfu.

The tourist sector, as already mentioned above, is one of the basic areas of Crete's economy and concentrates 25% of the private tourist infrastructure of the country. Generally, it presents a satisfactory yield the last years, despite the fact that the provided services do not always have the same quality. Crete's tourist product still operates on high competition markets, with the difference that from 1/1/2006 the decision taken by the German market about certified products, turned the Cretan producers to sales promotion techniques of certified products and the initiation of e-marketing. Crete remains a traditional recreation destination offering, sun, sea, beaches and cultural monuments. The tourist packet demand, which is based on the aforementioned, continues to increase on low rates, while at the same time the consumers' demands are rapidly evolving, for destinations that offer high-quality services regarding lodging, nutrition, natural environment, and alternative entertainment solutions. Little benefits have been gained by tourism on the local communities; very few of the desired results have been produced, while a number of harmful consequences have been observed [11]. Crete is undoubtedly a tourist island. The fear that all Cretans would become servants of the foreign tourists, in reality, is nothing more than an indirect recognition that tourism is the most positive profit source of the country [12]. Let us state clearly then that tourism is one of the most important branches for the development of the local Economy. [13]

The tourist product sales prediction

The most complex methods of predicting the sales of the tourist products take into consideration the different variables to formulate financial models. This, however, surpasses the capabilities of most tourist enterprises that tend to limit themselves to a hypothetical prediction of their sales; in other words, in a prediction that is based on hypotheses of what the world thinks would happen.

The prediction is based on marketing research, yet this is future-oriented and implies expectations, decisions and prediction for the same tendencies implied by the diagnosis. The diagnosis undoubtedly represents a factual platform that defines the base of tourism planning on a strategic or tactical level. The prediction methods are easy to be included in the marketing programmes of small tourist enterprises, while the prediction of the tourist product demand can be formed only on the basis of its demand on a predefined time on a tourist market place and specifically either on a part of the tourist market place or on a certain geographical area.

Despite the fact that the prediction of tourist product sales should be made an o tri-level approach (tourist environment, tourist industry and tourist enterprise), yet almost all of the short and middle term predictions are based on the use of statistical techniques to conclude in the sales tendencies of the past. Thus, the analysis of time sequences that levels the effects of circular or cyclic changes in sales is used to project the tourist product sales. These sales can be conceived as a linear or exponential tendency,

where one expects to multiply them by a constant in order to acquire a stably increasing curve. [14]

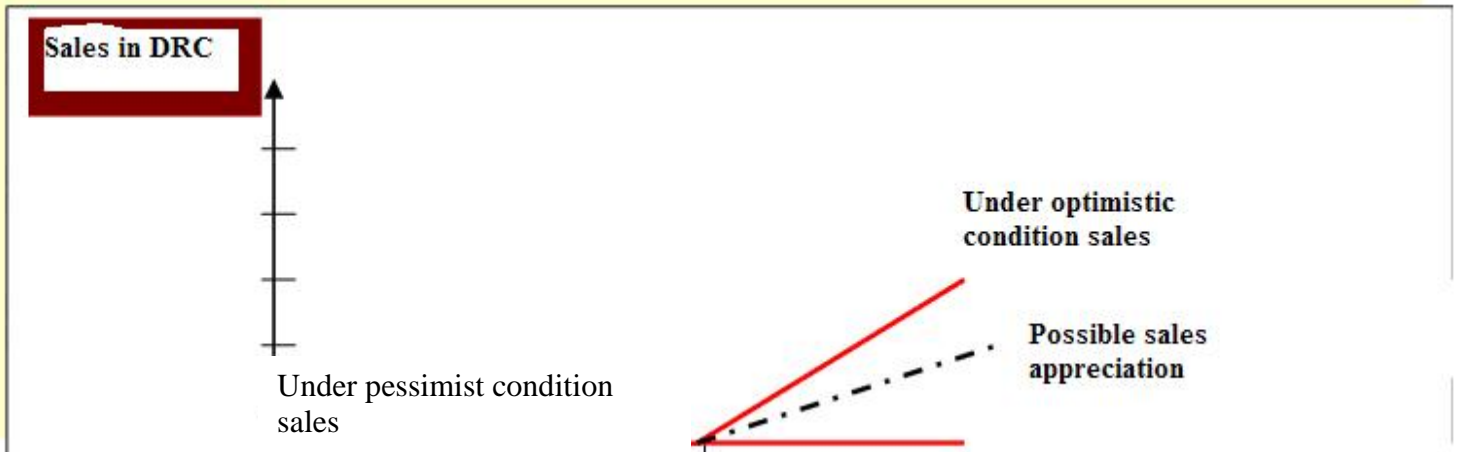


Figure 4. The prediction of a tourist product's sales [15]

The life-cycle model

One of the most controversial examples in the philosophy of developing a tourist destination as that of Crete, besides swot analysis, is the life-cycle model. The analyses of the life-cycle route are described when the evaluation of the current tourist situation has been included. The models tries to verify using large-scale time series, and the general conclusion is that the limitation imposed by the congregation process, limit the example of Crete life-cycle of Crete on a statistical framework, in the existence of not less than one statistical condition of the real tourist world.

Since 1980 when Butler wrote his first article for the development of tourism, the life-cycle model has been widely discussed, applied and has been accepted as a notional framework for the analysis of the historical evolution of the resorts and even tourist destinations through a wide variety of perspectives. The five stages are depicted on the following table. Few tourists, limited capabilities, unspoilt natural environment without masses of people on the local communities that are included in the stage of Research. On the next stage we have Participation, the local communities are bonded to tourism, the capabilities and infrastructure is built, the tourist conveyors are created, the tourist market place is defined, which later on increases the speed of tourism development. On Development stage, Crete as a tourist destination is defined correctly: the tourist attraction spots have been projected, the promotion campaigns have increased and the publicity of the area has been gradually raised, which is certified by the constant increase in the number of tourists' arrivals. In the stage of Stabilization, the number of tourists continues to rise, but to a smaller percentage than the past. Crete as a tourist destination is not easily sold and tourism is very important for the local economy, in an area identified as tourist. The last stage, Stability, Crete does not have the greatest number of tourists. It is outdated and it has obvious environmental protection problems, or even culture promotion and possible capabilities in the development of local industry structure. In this phase, the destination has two options: fall, or rebirth.

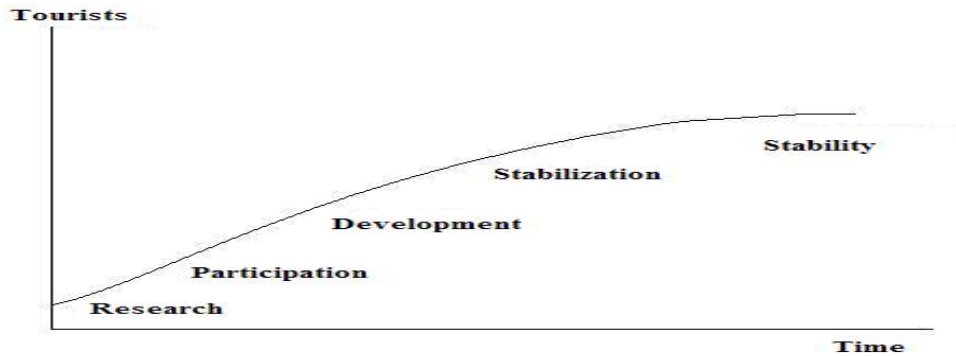


Figure 5. Butler's life-cycle

Through this philosophy, the test of the model has followed the path of element correlation from the case-work examples in the stages of the life-cycle curve. The general conclusion seems to be that the model is useful as a representation of Crete's development, but is rather descriptive than finite. However, a number of attempts have been made to check the model and describe the development in a different way than the theory. However, the model itself is still used as a descriptive framework, and under this background it is possible for one to explain the local characteristics that cause the deviation from theory.

In our study for the island of Crete, it is shown that international tour operators play an important role in the island's development. Generally speaking, it seems that the competition from other tourist destinations is a "shift factor" in the curve. As a result, different decisions between the tourist conveyors are important for the speed and form of the life-cycle process, but affect more as "subject variations" rather than general challenges. But it is a controversial point as to whether a model including the market place variations, the financial conditions, and the unspecified tourist product changes, can formulate the time route shown in the table, offering a "rich" theory for the development of the destination.

In our study for Crete, we present an example of an island that was not a mature destination in the 70s and has struggled for its rebirth since then. Generally, the descriptive sight of Crete's life-cycle is oriented on differentiation, with a concentration on the tourist product. The advantage of observing in the tourist offer is an implied challenge for the improvement of the product, especially if you are on the verge of the Stability stage. However, the number of tourists is the norm of the chronic route of Crete as destination, while also assisting the examination of the theoretical stages of the cycles from the tourist perspectives.

S.W.O.T. analysis

Having assured the necessary data through the process of diagnosing secondary sources of information and future tendencies through the process of prediction, as shown from the next figure, the next step is to assess the importance of tendencies in strategic and tactical planning of the marketing project. An efficient way to assess objectively, is to use S.W.O.T. analysis, following the four steps: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

S.W.O.T. analysis targets its interest on the elaborate work required to answer the question "Where are we now?". It is an efficient and sometimes laborious composition of the capabilities and weaknesses of

the tourist destination in relation to the competition, as well as the opportunities and threats. With SWOT analysis one checks:

- The Strengths, in relation to the competition that were deduced by the internal analysis and can be classified or assessed in order to declare and present their importance. [16]
- The weaknesses, in relation to the competition that were deduced by the internal analysis and can be classified or assessed in order to declare and present their importance.
- The Opportunities, that were deduced by the outer analysis of the situation and can be classified by a time-schedule aspect (direct, middle-term, long-term), by the aspect of the profit importance on the tourist destination and by the aspect of success possibility.
- The Threats, that were deduced by the outer analysis of the situation and can be classified by a time-schedule aspect (direct, middle-term, long-term), by the aspect of severity in the framework of importance of the negative effects on the tourist destination and by the aspect of occurrence possibility.

The same applies for the strategic marketing plan where the same question should be answered, and in the tactical marketing plan the points of vital importance are presented on a concise way (see next diagram)

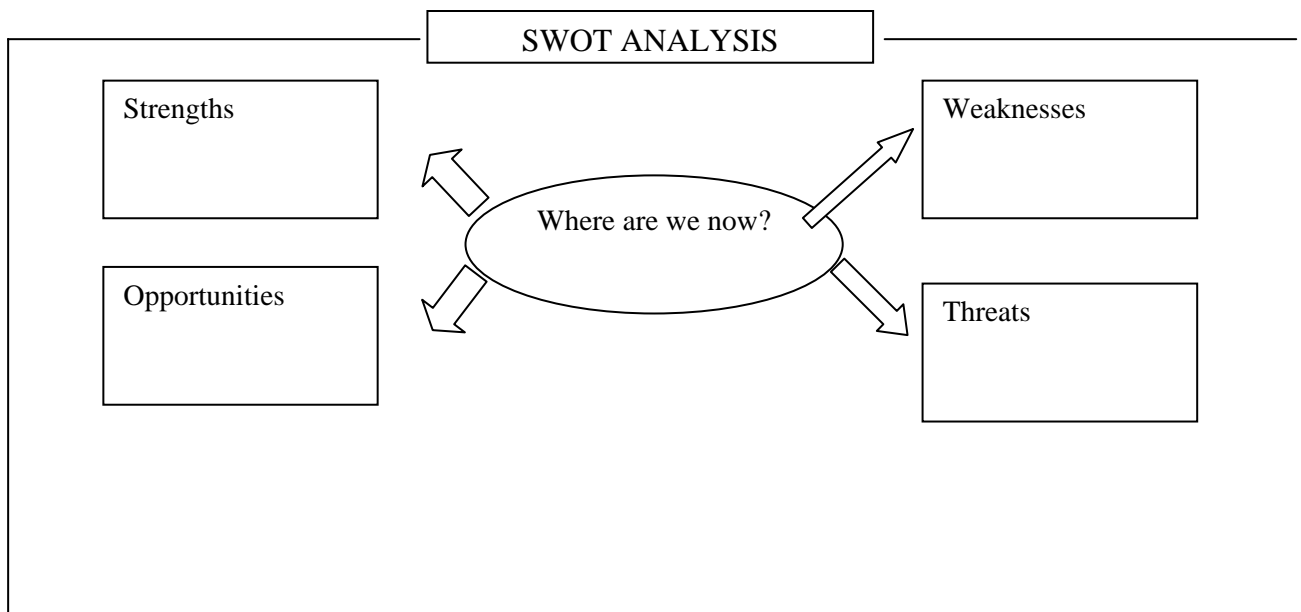


Diagram 1. SWOT analysis

The marketing plans are expressed in a certain form as the situation in which the destination would like to be after a specific time period, e.g. three or five or even ten years. Marketing aims usually target their interest on markets and products, which are produced after the SWOT analysis.

The annual aims of marketing result from the long-term strategic targets and must be compatible and express quantitative and qualitative goals, be countable and as specified as possible, so as to be time defined (weekly, monthly etc) and with an expiry date, so as to have a control mechanism, while also be realizable and efficient goals.

Marketing long-term strategic goals are related to:

- a) the numbers of arrivals in the destination, expressed in real or absolute or percentage values and rises in the current values
- b) the costs of the tourist visits on the destination, expressed in real or absolute or percentage values and rises in the current values
- c) the length of stay of the tourists-visitors on the destination, the costs of the tourist visits on the destination, expressed in real or absolute or percentage values and rises in the current values
- d) the possible extension of the tourist season for the tourist-visitors on the destination, expressed in real values and percentage increase of the current business in the months with lowered flow
- e) the intensification of the level of services and results of the tourist destination
- f) the increase of the number of suppliers in the tourist destination

The tactical (annual) goals of marketing are related to:

- a) the number of tourist visits that are defined as the annual specified target with a "from-to" increase (e.g. from 5.000 people to 7.000 people), separated in local and international visitors per important tourist department, according to the visitor's nationality, in new or old tourist businesses
- b) the numbers of costs defined as the annual specified target with a "from-to" increase (e.g. from 100.000 € to 300.000 €) separated in cost per person, per visit, per exploitation department, and according to tourist destination ingredients (stay, sightseeing etc).
- c) the time of stay that is divided in the basic part and according to stay and overnight stay data (hotels, pensions etc) and distributed by month or season
- d) the extension of season and tourist destination at the off-season months expressed by a "from-to" increase (e.g. from 2m people to 5m people or from 2m overnight stays to 5m overnight stays)
- e) the annual improvement presented in the measurements on the important exploitation departments (research results)
- f) the annual improvement presented by the destination from the measurement of satisfaction levels, according to the ingredients of the destination and according to important results (research results)

Weaknesses

The following have been observed as less strong elements of the Cretan Tourism:

- A great congregation of the tourist activity on the northern part of the island around the national road with an analogous congregation of transport means and hotel infrastructure.
- An especially large congregation of the tourist activity on the road connecting Heraklion to Agios Nikolaos, in the city of Rethymnon with an eastern direction and western from Chania.
- Disproportionate burden imposed on the Heraklion airport with the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total tourist arrivals.
- Little satisfaction from the road signs and information system for tourists
- Environmental care, with special complaints for the presence of rubbish in streets, public places and beaches

- Limited preservation, in comparison to the rest of Greece and southern Europe, of the traditional architectural character and urban/rural style or the development of a "post-traditional" style. [17] Tourism cataclysm, as extracted from statistical data (in year 2000, there were 12.457.367 overnight stays, while the hotel fullness was over 82% with increasing tendencies. [18]
- Increased seasonality of the offered tourist product, resulting in a great part of the workforce to stop working and going back to the farming employment.
- The development of tourism is unbalanced between the northern and southern coast with a high development rate on the north.
- The national infrastructure is not responding to the needs of the constantly raising visitor flow
- In order to achieve high bed coverage and raise in tourist flow, the offered prices are falling resulting in lower profit margins for the enterprises and therefore lack of investments and limitation of the ability of attracting high tourism
- The tourist product is based on foreign tourist businessmen and therefore the demand of novelty in the sector is declining
- Insufficient educational system and constant learning of the employees on tourism.
- The certification and quality control systems are inadequate
- No control in the rational housing development, resulting in an anarchic building and the alteration of the traditional image of the island.
- Lack of tourist marketing and market search as well as the application of e-commerce in the businesses.
- Non-existence in the peripheral structure of substantiation, research and planning of a complete strategy.
- A large addiction to foreign businessmen.
- Low average level of exploitation of the new technologies and inclusion of novelties that are connected the upgrade of the supplied services.
- Despite the great importance of tourism there is a lack of credible information or data for the tourist market, which results in the lack of strategic planning
- The anarchic building has imposed great burdens on the housing net and the nature, but also intense unbalance in peripheral structure economy, resulting in serious distortions that operate as anti-motive.

These contradictions are statistically presented, since during the last years Crete has fallen from the third to the fifth position of the per-head GNP.

So, another important issue directly related to the future and Crete's orientation, but also the plans that will present the pragmatic capabilities and will bring Crete in the first gear of the European regions and convert it to a strong developing pole in the S.E. Mediterranean.

Important opportunities

Crete has important opportunities of further tourist development in a series of axes. The first axis deals with the efficient exploitation of the important increase ratio. This is why the possibility of a third international airport should be considered, that would help relieve the congestion from Heraklion airport and serve the southern tourist destinations. In addition to that there should be an important improvement in the southern national road and the roads connecting northern national road with the southern national road.

The second axis deals with the more efficient exploitation of the current infrastructure, with the extension of tourist season and the improvement of the level of tourists. Seasonality, which characterizes Cretan tourism, can be faced with the development of conference, school, naturalist, internal, "motivated", special-need and eco tourism. The development of eco-tourism will be based on the rich flora and fauna that is offered by the island. In addition to that, another opportunity for Crete comes from the development of new packets of tourist products for the winter period as the medical, conference and sightseeing tourism. Opportunities, also, arise by the development and promotion of agricultural tourism, which nowadays constitutes 2% of the tourism today. The next opportunity arises from the demand of the consumers for destinations and areas offering high quality tourist product, with regards to the stay of the natural environment and the offering of differentiated tourist services. The last opportunity arises from important financing and capabilities offered by the third Community Support Framework 2000-2006, with the aim of upgrading the tourist enterprises.

Strengths

At the same time, the directions for the promotion of greek tourism, stressing out that "the critical current coincidence is a chance for us to become stronger". There is the need for Crete to react directly to any negative fact that occurs and deals with tourism: "It is obvious that the success of factor safety is an important advantage for the island and we should not let anyone who is irrelevant to create impressions by stating anything he/she likes. We should not let anything drop and respond quickly and effectively for everything negative that is heard for our country."

The strengths of Crete are first of all a mild climate for any kind of activities, the existence of historical and cultural monuments, a great number of hotels offering high quality services and the existence of well-organized tourist businesses, while also a satisfactory level of offered services as well as the hospitality feeling and service willingness which is an inherent part of the cultural character of Crete. In addition to that, there is an intense tendency of market attraction in the traditional tourist product of Crete, while it also serves as a traditional, tested destination for tourism. These are intensified by the good air and sea transportation.

Crete undoubtedly has a strategic geographical position for the international and local (Mediterranean) passenger and commercial transportation. It is close to the great marine transport axis connecting the Indian Ocean with the Atlantic, while it also constitutes a crossroad leading to the Black Sea, fact which gives it the capability of being called as one of the greatest transportation junctions of the area. It is also the South-Eastern gate of the European Union and the point where the seas of three continents (Africa, Asia, Europe). It is also known, that from this marine space (from and to the Black Sea) are transported about 200m tons of goods.

Threats

The threats of the tourism sector are the following:

- The demand of Crete's tourist product is based on a limited market (small number of different origin countries of tourists)
- High competition from other Mediterranean destinations
- Cooperation between foreign businessmen are initiated and achieve better promotion prices for the tourist products than the local businessmen

- There is no governmental strategic planning for the development of tourism in Crete
- Degradation of the environment and no development of the transportation and hotel infrastructure of the island with ratios that keep up with the natural improvement ratios of tourism, are presented as the greatest threats imposed on the development perspectives of the future cretan tourism.

The experience gained by Crete the last 30 years of intense development is important. It is obvious that this kind of development solves short-term problems, but mortgages a difficult future. The degradation of the environment, the anarchic building and the disdain of the spatial aesthetics undermine the qualitative initiatives that are struggled by non-viable choices. A viable and operating spatial plan is absolutely required. The short-scale industry, mostly in the area of nutrition, is required to complete the quality of the tourist product. Agricultural production should focus on alternative choices and cultivation variety in order to retrieve its lost competitiveness and surpass the stalemates connected with the subsidy policy. Cattle-breeding will become a viable choice, if it focuses on high quality in conjunction with environmental protection.

Earlier in the 60s, the theory of stage development for tourism was supported. The stages referred to were three. The first stage includes the discovery of the area by some local or foreign tourists or businessmen. The second stage includes the positive reaction of the population to the tourist development and the creation of the infrastructure for the reception of a great number of tourists, while on the third stage, there is the building of large tourist clusters offering standardized and high specification hospitality in organized-traveling tourists and the transform of the tourist-native relation to the customer-salesman relation.

In Crete, the transition from the first to the second stage was rapid, while from the second to the third we had mass tourism. This fact led us to create tables of some fundamental parameters of the island of Crete.

Table of advantages and disadvantages of Crete

Financial characteristics	Social Characteristics	Spatial Characteristics
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics of the local economy is balanced between two sectors (tourism and agriculture) • In the sector of tourism we have created congregation economies and high quality hotel infrastructure • Good quality and wide variety of local products • Existence of an intense educational and research network and possibilities of development and novelty infiltration • The position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important congregation of areas with remarkable natural environment elements. • Intense presence and spatial distribution with important historical and cultural elements • Capability of a total planning of an autonomous operating spatial unit due to the island character and great size

of the region in the SE Mediterranean

- The dynamic urban centers of Heraklion and Chania
- Its important place in the market
- The intense exporting orientation and dynamics on the primary sector and tourism

Weaknesses

- Intense addiction to mass tourism
- Low level of agricultural standardization and weak mechanisms of commerce and promotion
- Low productivity and small specialization level of the workforce
- Low level of cross-sector synergy

At the same time we present the current limitations that seek for a solution which are:

- ❖ The burden of the transportation cost due to the insular character of the region.
- ❖ Anarchic tourist congregation and strong connection with mass tourism
- ❖ Low level of secondary sector development
- ❖ Intense pressure on the environment by the overpopulation and the activities on the northern part of Crete
- ❖ Intense pressure and problems on the great urban areas (mostly in Heraklion)

Opportunities

- Stable quality, standardization and totalistic promotion policy of selected local products
- Enrichment and differentiation of

- Increased pointers of ageing and addiction when compared to the national average
- The educational level of the employees is worse than the national average
- Limited social infrastructure network
- Limited participation of women on the workforce and intense tendency of congregation of the female employment on the primary sector

- Difficulty in developing cooperation relations due to the insular character of the region
- Intense pressure on the environment by the overpopulation and the activities on the northern part of Crete
- Intense demands in infrastructure due to the diversity of the population on small scale settlements
- Increased demands for the protection of the natural and cultural environment

- Intensification of the multi-specialization of the workforce
- Finalization of the social infrastructure nexus especially on the

- Improvement of the spatial specialization
- Intensification of the interconnection of the developed financial centers and entrance gates.
- Promotion of the

the tourist product	civil security sector	local urban centers and ensuring of their business relation with the rural zones
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensification of enterprising and organizing of the units on a modern basis• The development of strong interconnections between research-technology and validated sectors of the local economy• The existence of a strong educational network and activity• The positive demographic evolution and small unemployment rate• The climate and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social exclusion opposition• Intensification of the cultural structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Totalistic administration intervention for the natural and cultural inheritance

Work plan

The team of our laboratory working on the applied research on the area of services proved that Crete's tourism is a positive factor not only for the financial development of the island but for its mental and social evolution, using the results of swot analysis. The belief shared by our laboratory team for Crete is that the island can take advantage of the situation if it first:

- Assures a number of employment positions for specialized and unspecialized workers or employees, with the aim to be the young people of the rural areas
- Opens new employment chances for newly-employed people around the region
- Finds a secure work alternative in the region, on areas of high restructural unemployment that comes from the shrinking of the primary sector and de-industrialization
- Develops small and medium sized tourist enterprises of part-time or seasonal employment, of individual or family character, which would not undertake a high risk
- Promotes directly and quickly the positive profits of the investments on an employment and income level
- Assists the entrance of women from the agricultural or rural areas into a variety of tourist employment positions, even high responsibility ones, since it is known that despite the fact that certain progress has been made, yet women nowadays are employed on low or medium work positions, while a very small percentage of them works in high responsibility places.
- Promotes the positive role of the Greek rural woman in small and medium sized of family businesses
- Creates the suitable financial and social conditions of demographic improvement of the country, so as to stop the population decline of the rural areas, and have a real increase on these populations
- Promotes all kinds of mild tourism (e.g. eco tourism, mountain-tourism, walkthroughs, traditional villages tourism, museum tourism, religious tourism, etc) so as to show both the natural and human-oriented environment

- Provides the appropriate education to most of those who are employed in tourism
- Corrects the lack of proper tourist program-planning that has led a great number of Cretan people among other natives to make wrong decisions that on a long-term manner will not help both the development of tourism and the local society.
- Increases both quantitatively and thematically the unemployment/employment specialization programmes on specific tourist sectors.
- Restructures the national tourist education, by modernizing and further specializing the programs of studies, as well as predicting new tourist jobs, and educating the workforce on a large scale [18]. Especially for Crete, its unrivalled in beauty and variety natural elements in conjunction with its unique in historical monuments culture, which are both globally known, can neutralize to a great extent the dissuasive for the tourist demand effect on the human-oriented part of the total quality of the tourist product and classify it in the most wanted tourist destinations on a global scale [19]
- Enables Crete to regain the lost time by converging gradually with its communal partners on the area of market research on tourism and information, despite the delays that still exist in tourism.
- Attempts, among others, a comparative evaluation of the tourist performance of the Crete areas, in which the achievements and tendencies will be shown, the strengths and weaknesses will be underlined and the tourist convergence route in the area of tourist market research by observation will be checked.
- Analyzes elements and pointers of tourist costs, arrivals, fullness, and per category of tourist enterprises in the areas of: Human workforce, creation of tourist knowledge, transmission and application of new tourist knowledge, tourist agents, and tourist markets.
- Makes attempts to reverse the tendency of delays or lacks in tourism, underlining that the tourist policy in Crete has been characterized by the Greek authorities as of crucial importance, while for the first time the authorities talk about the "Chart" of re-orientation of the Greek tourism with a perspective of 2020.
- Predicts for the following 5 years the alteration of Cretan tourism to a qualitative financial phenomenon so as to surpass the competition of the neighboring countries, and raise its demand in order to improve the levels of financial performance...

Conclusions

While the rules of the game that formulate the drastic changes in the outer environment are especially competitive, the basic composition of the tourist products in Crete is altered on very slow ratios. Tourism, as a modern socioeconomic activity, constitutes a post-industrial recreational society and it is foreseen that it can become the steamroller of the development and thus be used as an organic element for the planning of the peripheral tourist development. For that, it is required that the touristically developed regions that receive tourist flow to have the following conditions: natural, climatic, geographical, access, financial, living and cultural. But also in order to assure the stability of the peripheral development it is vital for the following elements to co-exist: numerous small enterprises with a local control, no superspecialization,

environmental protection, assurance of constant demand, and appropriate tourist policy. [20]

These rates can not assure the maintenance of the peripheral income from tourism and Crete's share on the tourist market, if no upgrade services and enriching of the tourist product actions are taken. To that direction, the strategy for the improvement of the competitiveness of Crete's tourism should be structured. Under this prism the proposals aim to: upgrade the quality of the provided services in all sectors that constitute the tourist product and the maintenance of this quality through a totalistic modernization of the installations and hotel business of Crete. The enrichment of the composition of the Cretan tourist product with the development of special infrastructure that can differentiate the development of new tourist products of higher added value that are based on the exploitation of novelties and technologies that have already been developed in the Region of Crete, with the aid of research institutes of Crete (medicinal tourism, aquatic parks, museum tourism etc), and with the creation of special lodging infrastructure (agricultural tourism lodging etc)

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