Indonesian Journal of Law and Economics Review

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ISSN (ONLINE) 2598 9928

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Website

INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF LAW AND ECONOMIC

UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SIDOARJO

PUBLISHED BY

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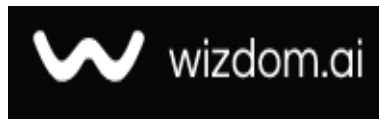How to submit to this journal (link)

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Some Approaches To The Assessment of Over tourism in Mature Tourist Destinations

Beberapa Pendekatan Untuk Kajian Over Tourism di Destinasi Wisatawan Matang

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to analyze approaches to assessing this phenomenon in mature tourist destinations. The article gives a detailed analysis of some publications. The authors focus on five types of problems associated with it: alienated local residents, a degraded tourist experience, overloaded infrastructure, damage to nature, and threat to culture and heritage. Diagnostics was developed which allows determining the level of risk of overcrowding by tourists in destinations. Some shortcomings of this methodology were pointed out in a study conducted by a number of authors (Peeters et al., 2018) for the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism. The study focuses on the main indicators of overtourism. For regions or destinations wishing to assess the risk of overtourism, a checklist has been proposed to evaluate it. The authors of the joint study by the Austrian Hotelier Association (ÖHV) and the Roland Berger global consultancy firm (2018) divided measures to combat overtourism into proactive measures (when destinations plan their activities) and reactive measures (when cities are already experiencing problems with overtourism). In addition, a four-step sustainable tourism development plan has been developed. All authors agree that the lack of reliable statistics makes it difficult to effectively identify the state of overtourism in destinations. Nevertheless, the planning and vigorous activity of all interested parties (business, government, society) will allow weakening the social, economic and environmental consequences of overtourism for mature tourist destinations.

Published date: 2020-05-14 00:00:00

Introduction

Globalization has embraced almost all spheres of modern life, including travel. Since the very beginning of its existence, tourism has been at the forefront of global trends. The industry became one of the forms of the process of turning the world into a single whole. Openness is one of the factors of rapid growth of the world tourism in recent decades. Experts believe that this process will continue.

Despite of the positive impact that the tourism industry has on economic activity, a significant increase in tourist flow is already the main cause of a number of problems in host destinations; the terms "overtourism" and "tourismphobia" are used to describe them.

The purpose of the article is to analyze approaches to assessing overtourism in mature tourist destinations. The tasks of the article:

1. To analyze studies of manifestations of overtourism;
2. To formulate some approaches to the assessment of overtourism in mature tourist destinations;
3. To summarize the recommendations of experts to reduce the negative impact of overtourism problems on host destinations.

Before starting to solve the set tasks, we will clarify the meaning of the terms "overtourism", "mature tourist destination", "approaches" and "assessment".

World Tourism Organization considers overtourism as «the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way» [UNWTO. 2018]. But due to the complexity and multiplicity of this phenomenon, it is difficult to formulate its only comprehensive definition. It is only possible to study its basic characteristics as fully as possible.

In the management of a tourist destination, the basic concept is the life cycle of a destination. According to this concept, the destination goes through certain stages in the process of its development. The main criteria for changing one stage to another are: changes in the tourist flow, the attitude of local residents to tourists, the state of the tourist infrastructure and the environment. The mature stage of development of the destination is characterized by a tourist boom – the number of visitors often exceeds the local population several times. The load on the environment, infrastructure, including tourism, reaches a maximum; the residents of the destination are dissatisfied with the deteriorating living conditions more often.

Assessment is the determination of the significance of something for the researcher. Besides the latter, evaluation includes the object, character (absolute or comparative assessment) and approach; if any of these components are missing, there is no assessment.

An approach is a set of basic methods used in the study of an object in order to generalize or deepen its understanding. Conclusions, forecasts, and proposals are formulated based on observed and measured data about the object.

Discussion

Today, world tourism is an increasing number of travelers annually. The forecast of 1.4 billion people by 2020 was already achieved in 2018 [UNWTO.2020]. Almost half of the tourists visited the most popular cities on the planet. In the Old World, their number exceeded the local population by 1.5 times in 2017. Now about half of the inhabitants of the globe live in cities. It is estimated that by 2050 this figure will increase to 68 per cent [United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2019].

The unprecedented growth rate of tourism in the world has begun to take on alarming proportions. The problems caused by this process, called overtourism, have become the subject of study and exchange of views of all stakeholders related to the field of travel (UNWTO & WTM Ministers' summit, 2017; ITB Berlin, 2018, 2019). They are being actively discussed in the media and scientific publications. The materials of these studies present a wide variety of views on the overtourism problem and outline some approaches to the assessment of this phenomenon. Of course, the distinction between these approaches is quite conditional due to the fact that in any study, different characteristics of overtourism may be present at the same time. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish those of them that are of the most significant importance.

Apparently, the regional approach is priority. It is based on a description of the situation in many destinations due to the excessive influx of tourists, for example, in Barcelona, Iceland, Venice, Park Güell [Aleksandrova, A.Yu. 2018]. Today many destinations suffer from overcrowding: Prague and Budapest, Amsterdam and Dublin, Sardinia and Santorini, castles Neuschwanstein (Germany) and Stonehenge (England), the Moscow Kremlin Museums, the Hermitage and Catherine Palace in St. Petersburg and several other popular tourist destinations. Harold Goodwin

states that overtourism is a situation in the destination where there are too many visitors. The tourists themselves feel a significant deterioration in their experience. Locals also understand that the excessive influx of visitors is a reason of declining in their quality of life [Goodwin, H. 2017].

Maximillian Benner focuses on the negative consequences of the growth of tourist traffic for destinations: significant damage to the natural or cultural heritage; real estate speculation; privatization of premises intended for public access; increasing the cost of living for the local population [Benner, M. 2020].

Albert Postma and Dirk Schmuecker note a negative impact of the overtourism on the population of the destinations. Much attention is paid to the conflicts between residents and tourists – in the city center, shops, bars and restaurants, transport, cultural and recreational areas, etc. [Postma, A. Schmuecker, D. 2017]. This view can be called a social approach to the assessment of overtourism. Ko Koens, Albert Postma and Bernadett Papp highlight the «excessive negative impact of tourism on host communities and the natural environment» [Koens, K.; Postma, A.; Papp, B. 2018]. Claudio Milano emphasizes expansion of tourism into urban areas and transformation of life [Milano, C. 2017]. Dalia Perkumiene and Rasa Pranskūniene indicate that the rights of the population are less protected than those of visitors [Perkumiene, D.; Pranskuniene, R. 2019].

There is another approach to the assessment of overtourism – the need to manage resources and technology [Capocchi, A.; Vallone, C.; Pierotti, M.; Amaduzzi, A. 2019]. Guillaume Avond et. al talk about the importance of collaboration among professionals, all stakeholders in managing this phenomenon [Avond, Guillaume & Bacari, Chaarani & Limea, Isabelle & Seraphin, Hugues & Gowreesunkar, Vanessa & Mhanna, Rami. 2019].

A quantitative approach to the assessment of overtourism can be called the using of such indicators as the tourism share of GDP and employment; density of tourism; growth of number of arrivals and bed-nights; airport closeness and air transport intensity; Airbnb's share in the offer of accommodation facilities and a number of other indicators (Table 1). These data were obtained in the study of three researches:

1. McKinsey&Company & World Travel & Tourism Council «Coping with success. Managing overcrowding in tourism destinations», 2017 (Further – «McKinsey») [McKinsey & Company & World Travel & Tourism Council. 2017];
2. Peeters, P. et. al. «Research for TRAN Committee – Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses», 2018 (Further – «Peeters») [Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, dkk. 2018];
3. ÖHV & Roland Berger «Protecting your city from overtourism. European city tourism study 2018», 2018 (Further – «ÖHV») [ÖHV & Roland Berger. 2018].

Indicator name	Unit	Source		
		McKinsey	Peeters	ÖHV
Tourism share of GDP and employment	%	X	X	
Growth of number of arrivals	%/year	X		
Growth of number of bed-nights	%/year		X	X
Visitor area density	number/km2	X		
Tourism density	bed-nights/km2		X	X
Visitors population density	number/resident	X		
Tourism density	bed-nights/resident		X	X
Share of negative TripAdvisor reviews	%	X		
Air transport seasonality 2016 (ratio between highest and lowest monthly arrivals by air transport)	-	X	X	
Share of reviews limited to top 5 attractions	%	X		
Annual mean PM10 concentration	µgram/m3	X		
Share of top 20 TripAdvisor attractions that are	%	X		

historic sites				
Growth of air transport (2016 over 2015)	%		X	
World heritage site closeness	number within 20 km		X	
Cruise harbour closeness	number within 15 km		X	
Airport closeness	number within 30 km		X	
Airbnb average shortest distance to booking.com addresses	km		X	
Airbnb share of booking.com plus Airbnb	%		X	
Air transport intensity	air passengers/bed-night		X	
Number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites	number		X	
Combined intensity growth score	-		X	
Value creation	RevPAR			X
Internationality (a measure of where tourists come from)	-	X		
Number of conferences	number	X		

Table 1. *Indicators for risk assessment of overture development*

compiled by author

A McKinsey study (McKinsey & Company & World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017), covering 68 cities, notes that the authors' proposed diagnosis, which includes specific indicators, although not measuring the exact level of overcrowding in tourist destinations, may nevertheless help the latter to assess the risks of overtourism.

A Peeters research (Peeters et al., 2018) indicates that above-stated experience is a good first attempt to make quantitative analysis of factors which affect the development of overtourism. However, it has some disadvantages:

1. the «McKinsey tool» is dedicated to cities only;
2. the list is limited to destinations with a perceived form of overtourism, which makes it impossible to compare these with destinations with no overtourism issues;
3. local statistics are often incomplete and difficult to compare;
4. the choice of indicators combining both causes of overtourism (e.g. visitor densities and growth) and the effects of overtourism (e.g. negative TripAdvisor reviews, low air quality) are not sufficiently significant (i.e. air transport seasonality).

The third study (ÖHV & Roland Berger, 2018) focuses on two criteria: tourism density and value creation. The first one is the number of overnight stays (per year) in relation to number of inhabitants. We can observe the importance of such indicator in previous research (Peeters et al., 2018). The second one is «revenue per available room» (RevPAR) indicator. It reflects the price level for a major area of tourism, namely the organized accommodation sector, and is comparable among cities as well as being internationally accepted. After the analysis of the 52 best European cities, authors have identified seven measures to tackle overtourism and divided these into proactive and reactive approaches.

The approach to assessing overtourism can be based on an analysis of the causes of this phenomenon. The study "Managing tourism growth in Europe" (Jordan et al., 2018) focuses on aspects such as:

1. the availability of travel;
2. the concentration of large groups of tourists in destinations whose policy is only promoting them;
3. the growth of international arrivals;
4. urbanization.

The authors of the McKinsey research, in general, agree with the above factors. Much attention is paid on tourist overcrowding and its reasons:

1. affluence. The Visa company projects that by 2025 more than 280 million households will be travelling internationally each year. India and China alone will create more than 900 million new members of the global middle and upper classes between 2015 and 2025;
2. demographic shifts. Today millennials (generation defined as those born between the early 1980s and the end of 1990s) are the majority of travelers in the world. They are more likely than previous generations to use social media and technology;
3. convenience and awareness. The use of online travel research and booking tools is opening new opportunities and destinations. Rating and review sites, destination rankings and other channels are creating and reinforcing interest in travel, particularly to top destinations and the most popular sites.

In all of the studies reviewed above, recommendations to overcome overtourism are made, which can be considered as another approach to its assessment (Table 2).

	Recommendation	Source
1	To make systematic research on the problem of overtourism (including rural, coastal destinations, islands, natural and cultural sites)	Peeters
2	To initiate data collection on the number of tourists and one-day visitors	Peeters; McKinsey
3	To support monitoring the moods of both tourists and inhabitants in order to have an early warning of the psychological and social forms of overtourism developing; to involve all stakeholders in tourism planning and development	Peeters; McKinsey
4	To establish a sustainable growth strategy; many aspects should be included, such as sustainability, environment, quality of life	McKinsey;ÖHV
5	To spread visitors across different sites	McKinsey;OHV
6	To smooth visitors over time	McKinsey
7	To adjust pricing to balance supply and demand	McKinsey
8	To limit access and activities	McKinsey:ÖHV
9	To regulate accommodation supply	McKinseyÖHV
10	To encourage creation of a cross-EU «Task Force on overtourism»	Peeters

Table 2. *Recommendations to overcome overtourism*

compiled by author

Overtourism is a global problem today. Experts believe that in the future it will only worsen. Therefore, further study of this phenomenon, and especially, development of optimal indicators for assessing it, is necessary.

Conclusions

1) In each study reviewed, there is the importance of the overtourism problem for popular tourist destinations and the need to develop methods for its assessment;

2) According to the results of the analysis of the considered publications, the author of this article offers the following classification of approaches to the assessment of overtourism in mature tourist destinations:

1. regional;
2. devastating;
3. social;

4. administrative;
5. quantitative.

3) Characterizing the causes of overtourism may also be considered as an approach to assessing this phenomenon.

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