THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON TOURISTS’ PREFERENCES IN SERBIA

УТИЦАЈ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ НА ПРЕФЕРЕНЦИЈЕ ТУРИСТА У СРБИЈИ

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Abstract: Globalization can simply be described as the movement of goods, ideas, values and people around the world. The globalization process has greatly affected all parts of the world economy, including tourism as an important and growing economic activity. Tourism development can be viewed in all dimensions of these processes: economic, social, cultural and even political. The great importance of tourism in the current global economy makes it a very popular research field, especially in the part of the economic dependency between tourism and globalization at the global or regional level. This paper shows how globalization influences tourists' individual decisions about 'buying' a destination. The analysis is based on an empirical study of Serbian tourists' preferences and activities. The paper points to the positive correlation of globalization and tourist preferences, to the correlation of tourist activity and socio-demographic characteristics and to what tourism trends are visible in the attitude of Serbian tourists.

Key words: globalization, tourism, tourists' preferences, tourists' activities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although a consistent theory of globalization, or at least a comprehensive description of it, has not been created, it is certain that globalization not only affects the economic, social and political systems or culture of the world, but also exerts a human-specific influence (Bauman, 2000; Golka, 1999). Of course, it would be difficult to identify all the relationships between globalization and the behavior and attitudes of individual people. Therefore, this paper tried to point out the impact of globalization on human behavior and attitudes in one area - tourism.

Tourism is one of the most important economic activities, because it involves movements of goods, services and people, which is actually one of the biggest impacts of globalization. Tourism, as a global force for economic and regional development and a major industry globally, is becoming one of the leading sectors in many economies. Tourism, as a globalization function, not only implies identification with the global industry, but also caused an exchange of economic and other influences between the local population and tourists.

The main problem of the research is the process of globalization, which has an impact on various industries and activities, including tourism, and in particular on the preferences and activities of tourists in Serbia. The aim of this paper is to show, on the basis of the conducted research, how
globalization has influenced the behavior and activities of tourists in Serbia and what are its effects.

From the aim of the paper, it can be pointed out that one of the signs of globalization is the increasing frequency of travel abroad, and therefore we have hypothesized: Globalization has an impact on the preferences, behaviors and activities of Serbian tourists.

The deductive method, descriptive method, statistical analysis method, survey method and synthesis method were used in the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

From its obscure origins in the mid-twentieth century, the concept of globalization has found its large and growing presence in today's print and virtual space (Held et al. 1999; Steger, 2013). It has been widely used to describe the various economic, social, political and cultural changes that have shaped the world, especially over the last 50 years (Guttal, 2007).

Although it can be defined from different perspectives, globalization is generally defined as a process (or set of processes) that involves the compression of space and time and the intensification of economic, social, political and cultural interdependence globally (Cohen, 2012; Cornelissen 2005; Dicken, 2011; Steger, 2005).

The process of globalization involves not only the geographical spread of high-level economic activity, but also the deep functional integration of economic activities at local and regional level (Dicken, 2011). Globalization emphasizes integration as well as the interdependence of economies (Fletcher and Westlake, 2006). From an economic perspective, globalization is manifested in international trade, international finance, and human mobility (Abel, Bernanke, & Croushore, 2008; McGrew, 2011; Stabler et al., 2010; Tribe, 2011). All three domains are deeply embedded in tourism activities. Although tourism is considered a major aspect in the process of globalization, globalization has given a significant impetus to global tourism growth (Azaryya, 2004; Cohen, 2012; Cornelissen, 2005).

Numerous benefits have been felt in tourism thanks to globalization which has contributed to its development and faster expansion. As globalization affects the "abolition of borders" between countries, the number of people engaging in tourism trips is increasing and all destinations in the world are becoming more accessible today. The process of globalization has advanced significantly through technological advances in the fields of transportation and communications, especially the Internet, computer reservation and global
distribution systems and e-commerce (Shaw & Williams, 2002). Buhalis & Law (2008) analyze the impact of modern technology from three aspects: technological innovations in general, the impact of new technologies on tourism demand, and their impact on tourism businesses.

Globalization has had an impact on the increase and advancement of tourism by stimulating investment in tourism infrastructure, especially in underdeveloped regions, thereby also improving their position in the international market (Brdar et al. 2015). Spasić (2012) points out that more intensive linking can be expected among tourism companies in order to ensure business growth. Thus, tourism has benefited from globalization by following global principles of socio-economic, ecological and cultural-sustainable development, which contributes to improving the world as a place to live and work (Reisinger, 2009).

Globalization also has negative effects on tourism. With the loss of borders, the market is expanding and this has a direct effect on increasing competition. Internationalization of business has led to a decrease in the number of national companies. Local cultures, which are very important for the attractiveness of destinations, are threatened by the creation of a global, homogeneous culture. Also, due to the abolition of borders between states, people from different countries are employed in tourism, which can further lead to difficult communication with tourists due to lack of knowledge of the language and culture (Reisinger, 2009). Tour operators and sales agents are also at risk, as tourists today are trained and experienced in using new information technologies.

Globalization is today intensifying market competition. Market struggles are accompanied by frequent and radical changes in technology, politics and demographics. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly monitor changes and analyze them. Business stability has disappeared and continuous adjustment has taken hold (Langović-Milićević et al., 2011).

Among the main indicators of globalization, we often find an ever-expanding spatial movement of people, the cause of which is both business and leisure, and travel for tourism purposes. With increasing frequency of travel, so does the spatial volume. The most important factor in this development is the advancement of telecommunications and transportation (Wahab & Cooper, 2001). The fall in airline prices (the emergence of low cost companies), the decrease in travel time, the shared access to information have led foreign travel to be increasingly viewed as an alternative to domestic travel. Historical factors (visa regime, wars, sanctions, poverty) have greatly affected Serbian tourists and limited the spatial scope of movement. Globalization has brought about significant changes in the intensity of the spatial volume of tourism.
In order to determine the attitudes of the population on globalization in tourism, the study also looked at the geographical aspect of “abolishing national borders”, that is, visa liberalization. At the end of 2009, the European Union abolished visas for citizens of the Republic of Serbia and the respondents agreed that this allowed them to travel more and more easily abroad, but also part of the respondents did not avoid other foreign destinations requiring a visa.

Low-cost airlines have undoubtedly stimulated the global tourism industry and positively impacted the revenue, employment and marketing visibility of tourist destinations. They have a very significant influence on the increase in the number of tourists and their easier decision making when going abroad.

Considering all the factors of globalization, it is assumed that Serbian tourists are increasingly choosing to travel abroad. With the improvement of air transport options, the frequency and spatial volume of tourist trips have increased. Different social groups have different opportunities to travel outside the country (especially to further destinations), as different skills are needed to overcome financial, administrative, legal and mental barriers (Holoviecka et al. 2011). Younger people, economically active and educated are the most active group in this field. Knowledge of foreign languages, modern technologies and information systems is common for such a group of people and they perceive travel to far destinations as normal, regardless of possible financial barriers.

Travel abroad can be seen not only as a product of globalization, but also as its factor. With migration of population, income, goods, and services travel to other parts of the world (Bauman, 2011), and there are individuals who disseminate and absorb new cultural models (Burns & Novelli, 2006; Hall & Lew, 2009).

Another phenomenon that globalization brings is the promotion of environmental awareness and the popularization of the concept of sustainable development (Hall & Lew, 1998). The range of "hostile" and irreversible changes that human activity causes in the environment is of concern worldwide. This requires looking for ways to strike a balance between human needs and the environment. The concept of sustainable development is also applied in the tourism industry, and awareness of the risks that can arise from the high flow of tourists strengthens the determination to provide a balance between the needs of tourists, the environment and local communities (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). This increasing environmental awareness is giving rise to new patterns of tourist behavior, as exemplified by alternative tourism as opposed to mass tourism. Its essence is a whole new approach to the
meaning of travel and how to spend your free time. As a result, new destinations are gaining in popularity. The trend is the additional polarization of individual needs and motivations to travel (Middleton et al., 2009). It can be said that globalization plays a crucial role in the growth of international tourism in the world market. The contribution of globalization in economic, political and cultural terms also influences the development of tourism in the context of increasing travel outside and within borders. Globalization, open borders, the growth of all modes of transport, especially air transport, the Internet and the increase in numbers of people who can rest and travel outside national borders have influenced the strengthening of international over domestic tourism (Nedeljković et al., 2013).

3. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The preferences and activities of tourists were explored through a questionnaire technique. Questionnaire surveys were conducted in several cities of different sizes. The sample is disproportionate and comprises 116 subjects. The purposeful random sample consisted of persons of different ages: high school youth (final year), students, working people and retired people. The questionnaire had a classic structure, which mainly included closed questions with a nominal scale and a modified Likert scale. The survey was conducted in August 2019.

Various scientific methods were used in the design of the paper. The influence of globalization on tourist preferences and activities in Serbia was analyzed by deductive method. The descriptive method was used to familiarize ourselves with the basic characteristics of globalization and the factors that influence tourism, that is, tourists' behavior. The compilation method was used to consolidate the collected data from domestic and foreign literature, articles and electronic sources. The results of the survey were analyzed and conclusions were drawn on the impact of globalization on the preferences and activities of Serbian tourists.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data on the preferences of Serbian tourists and their activities were collected through a survey method. The survey was conducted in two major cities (Belgrade and Nis) and in two smaller cities (Prokuplje and Blace). Intentional random sample includes persons of different ages (high school students, students, working people and retired people). 116 polls were completed in August 2019.
One of the main consequences of globalization is the increasing spatial mobility of the population. The physical distance of the destination is no longer a limiting factor for the travel of tourists.

Earlier research (Alejziak, 2009) shows that the use of tourism opportunities depend on factors such as age, education and income level.

This research has shown that the most frequently traveling abroad (55%) are working-age people in the age group of 19-60 years, high school students (22%) and students (17%). Outbound tourism was the least common among retirees, with only 6% traveling abroad (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Travel abroad by age of tourists, in percentage
The level of education is a very important factor affecting the activity of tourists, including the tendency of people to travel abroad. About 78% of respondents with higher education participated in outbound tourism. The rate of those with secondary education was 54% and only 8% of those with primary education (Chart 2).

In terms of duration and frequency of trips, short departures were most typical for students and the economically active group of 19-44 years (maximum three-day trips several times a year). That group also accounted for the highest number of short outbound trips at a low frequency (once every few years). For older age groups, the incidence of short departures was significantly lower. Longer foreign trips (more than 4 days) showed similar results. Again the young were the most active. The data collected also indicate the relationship between the financial status of tourists and their tourist activity. Almost every other person with an income exceeding 70,000 dinars a month participated in some outbound trips abroad. This percentage decreases with decreasing financial income (Chart 3).

During the research, the tourist destinations visited by the respondents were examined as well as those that they would like to visit in the future. The
answers were set according to 3 categories of countries: countries neighboring Serbia, European countries and non-European countries. Depending on all the factors mentioned above, the number of countries visited by respondents and their geographical locations were very different.

The most active travelers were people of younger age groups, because almost 80% of those who had already traveled abroad were high school students, students and economically active people up to 45 years. But the groups varied considerably in the distances they traveled. Compared to young people who visit countries near Serbia more frequently, older age groups had a higher percentage of visits to more distant destinations. The distance of the destinations is largely related to the income of tourists. Older age groups have a higher proportion of respondents who have never traveled abroad, and the proportion of respondents traveling to distant destinations has decreased with age (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Tourist destinations by age

In order to determine whether the globalization process affects the destinations that tourists would choose, respondents were asked to list the countries they would like to see in the future, which were classified according to the geographical criteria presented above (neighboring, European, non-European countries). The results showed that young, well-educated people, in a good financial situation, preferred the most distant destinations. The percentage of respondents who want to see more distant destinations than those they have already visited decreases significantly with older age. Research shows that previous travel experiences encourage people to see new destinations. This conclusion is valid for all age groups, but the proportion of people choosing more distant destinations is always higher in the youngest
age group and decreases with age. Young people do not see lack of experience as a major problem in their future tourism activity.

The last question was formulated using a Likert scale (1- absolutely disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral opinion, 4- agree, 5- absolutely agree), and its purpose is to determine the impact of certain globalization factors on preferences and activities of Serbian tourists.

Table 2. Impact of globalization factors on tourist preferences and activities

| Impact of globalization factors on tourist preferences and activities | Middle value | Standard deviation |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Visa liberalization has allowed me to travel more                   | 3,83        | 0,70               |
| The advent of low-cost airlines has allowed me to travel more       | 4,43        | 0,71               |
| Global reservation (Booking, Airbnb ...) systems have allowed me to travel more | 4,37        | 0,82               |

Source: Author's calculation

The appearance of low-cost airlines clearly had the biggest impact on outbound tourism, that is, on the activities of our tourists, a value of 4.43. A slightly lower impact rate, but not insignificant one again, is with global reservation systems (4.37) that connect tourism providers with customers. The lowest level of influence, probably because Serbian tourists have accepted it as "normal", has visa liberalization, 3.83. By examining the extent to which globalization factors have influenced the preferences and activities of Serbian tourists, significant findings have emerged regarding the correlations between individual claims. A coefficient score above 0.6 indicates a high degree of correlation between the variables, a score between 0.4 and 0.6 indicates a moderate correlation, and below 0.4 indicates a weak correlation. The correlations obtained determine the following:
1. Visa liberalization is moderately correlated with tourist activity (r = 0.43).
2. Global reservation systems are related, that is, in a relatively high correlation with tourists' preferences and activities (r = 0.64).
3. The appearance of low-cost airlines and the preferences and activities of tourists are highly correlated (r = 0.74).

For better insight into the research results, a cross-correlation between all issues related to the impact of globalization factors on tourists' preferences and activities was identified. A correlation is significant if the Pearson correlation value is greater than 0.01 and Sig. <0.05.
Table 3. Pearson correlation - influence of globalization factors on tourist preferences and activities

|                  | Visa liberalization | Low-cost airlines | Global reservation systems |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Visa liberalization | 1                   | 0,65              | 0,60                       |
| Low-cost airlines | 0,65                | 1                 | 0,77                       |
| Global reservation systems | 0,60               | 0,77              | 1                          |

Source: Author's calculation

A very high correlation is observed between low-cost airlines and the global reservation system (both influenced by globalization). The lowest degree of connectivity is observed between the global reservation system and visa liberalization. In accordance with the foregoing, it can be stated that the hypothesis confirmed, that is, globalization affects the preferences, behavior and activities of Serbian tourists.

The most obvious link between tourism and globalization lies precisely in the fact that globalization is responsible for the growth of the global tourism economy and mass tourism movements, since its contribution in economic, political and cultural terms directly reflected the increase in tourist trips (Nedeljković et al., 2013).

Modern times, with the development of technics and technology, also facilitate communication between people, and spatial distance is no longer an aggravating factor in business (Langović-Milićević, 2014).

5. CONCLUSION

Globalization, as a complex and dynamic process, directly or indirectly affects the development of tourism. Bringing economic, social, political and even cultural change, globalization forms a single global market and significantly facilitates the movement of capital, goods and people. Globalization also has its intangible aspect - by providing access to information and modern forms of communication and encouraging the spatial mobility of the population, it enables the free flow of ideas that influence the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. The tourist activity of Serbian tourists is influenced by external and internal factors, but people behave differently under these factors.

One of the main effects of globalization is the growth of increasing population mobility, and hence the development of outbound tourism.
Research has shown that our citizens are increasingly choosing to travel abroad. The trend is likely to continue in the future as young people are increasingly active in this area.

One of the characteristics of globalization is the increase in spatial mobility of people combined with the increase in the number of outbound trips (Burns, Novelli, 2008). Reasons why people travel abroad more often gradually increase integration and cooperation in the world economy and more frequent business contacts, but also their desire to find new destinations. The frequency of travel increases with distance traveled, mainly due to the development of telecommunications and transportation (Wahab & Cooper, 2001). In a world where airlines have cut service prices and shorter travel times, overseas travel is seen as an alternative to domestic travel.

According to the research, globalization has significant effects on the preferences and tourist activities that characterize certain social groups. The conclusion is that most new travel trends are reflected in young people, more educated and with higher financial incomes. Globalization has the least impact on the oldest population. This group rarely participates in outbound tourism and mainly selects neighboring or European countries. Lower financial income for older groups is an important factor that prevents them from participating in tourism activities. Globalization has a much greater impact on the tourism activities of economically active people (higher frequency of traveling abroad).

We can also conclude that the process of globalization, which has initiated changes in the fields of transport, communications, new technologies and the Internet, strongly influences the development of tourism. The impact can be seen in the steady increase in the number of tourists and travel, as well as in the steady increase in revenues in the tourism industry with a continuous decrease in costs, through the industries that accompany tourism (Cerovic et al., 2015).

It can be concluded that globalization processes that have caused changes in the global economy, especially in tourism-related industries, have seriously affected the development of tourism, mainly mass tourism.

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Received: 31 October, 2019
Accepted: 17 December, 2019
Rad je primljen: 31.10.2019.
Prihvaćen za objavljivanje: 17.12.2019.
