

Chapter 14

Italian Tourism Sector as an Example of Entrepreneurship and Growth for Companies

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector constitutes a part of “tourism, leisure and communication” macro-sector. The companies that belong to this sector run their activity in various areas, however, the present contribution refers only to some of them, that is to hospitality and catering, travel agencies and entertainment. In this context, current research has therefore two objectives: 1) assessment if the tourism sector can be considered as an example of entrepreneurship and growth for Italian companies; 2) identification of key drivers within the tourism consumption trend. Thanks to a qualitative and quantitative method, it emerged that the tourism sector can be considered as an example of entrepreneurship and growth for Italian companies. It is justified by the features characterizing a certain region, such as climate, nature, culture and tradition that are in harmony with the companies’ heritage. In addition, the sub-systems introduced in the present research have big influence on the inputs which in the same time impact the companies operating in the tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

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In this context, current research has therefore two objectives: i) assessment if the tourism sector can be considered as an example of entrepreneurship and growth for Italian companies; ii) identification of key drivers within the tourism consumption trend.

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Present contribution is motivated by the question of sustainability of investments in tourism sector, which is characterized by high competitiveness of big foreign hotel chains. However, during the last 20 years there is observed a significant change in tourism consumption as a result of some political, economic and social interventions. Moreover, appearance of the big groups have influenced in a positive way the turnover of tourism sector. It is due to various investment for which the smaller companies could not afford. That is why the phenomenon of the touristic sector performance and its tendencies are so interesting to investigate.

Our framework is represented by Giacosa and Giovando's research (2015), in which we started to consider the role of the tourism sector in the Italian economy. After some years of consumption crisis, it would be interesting to verify the trend in the tourism sector and identify the drivers into the above trends.

The chapter is structured in the following way. The second paragraph is related to theoretical background of the phenomenon, while the third one introduces issues, controversies and problems of the research. In the fourth paragraph a proposal of future development is outlined and at the end, the conclusions obtained are presented.

BACKGROUND

Tourism sector has been widely discussed in literature as in many countries it constitutes one of the most important economic sectors (Aiello, 1996; Buhalis, 1998; Santarelli, 1997; Sciarelli and Rossi, 2007; Tribe, 2011). Some researchers have also focused on its development (Murphy, 2013).

In the current research, the relationships between wine and food sector and territory where the company operates have been taken into consideration (Vrontis et al., 2016). It was an important assumption as it enables identification of a set of traditional and cultural values which the companies operating in certain region have to respect to obtain quality certifications (Santini and Cavicchi, 2011; Sidali et al., 2011). Analysis of the link between wine and food tourism sector enables verification of their impact on regional competitiveness, lets to outline its main drivers (Bresciani and Ferraris, 2014; Contò et al., 2014; Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006; Sidali et al., 2011; Viassone, 2009; Vrontis and Viassone, 2013; Vrontis et al., 2011a; Zanni, 2004) and to analyse the customers loyalty to the regional brands (Contò et al., 2011; Orth et al., 2012).

Wine and food tourism phenomenon has attract attention in wine and food sector what has stimulated the competitiveness among companies operating in the same region (Hall and Macionis, 1998; Hall et al., 2000; Rossi et al., 2014) and has a positive impact on its drivers (Cambourne et al., 2000; Contò et al., 2014). Moreover, it has a positive impact on products authenticity and promotion of new opportunities in traditional food and wine sector (Sidali et al., 2011; Woodside and Martin, 2008).

The connection between the wine/food and territory (Ciasullo and Festa, 2012; Festa and Mainolfi, 2013; Festa et al., 2015) constitutes relevant factor in wine and food tourism (Vrontis and Viassone, 2013; Vrontis and Thrassou, 2014). Nowadays, consumers pay attention to traditions and culture characteristic for the certain region (Bessiere, 1998; Harrington, 2006; Sheridan et al., 2009 and therefore it is important to find a balance between the wine and food sector, the company's production processes and a local heritage of the region (Cavicchi et al., 2007; Poncini, 2007; Rossi et al., 2012; Van Ittersum et al., 2003; Vrontis and Thrassou, 2011). Company's attitude to such values (Constantinou, 2004; González-Centeno et al., 2013; Vrontis and Paliwoda, 2008; Vrontis and Thrassou, 2014; Vrontis et al., 2011b) can prevail over the customers' choice of the regional brand (Gilinsky et al., 2008; Rossi et al.,

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