

Chapter 4

Determinants of Tourist Destination Competitiveness in a Low-Carbon Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Low-carbon tourism represents a sustainable way to make tourist destinations more competitive and efficient. Therefore, tourist destination competitiveness has to consider natural resources preservation and environmentally sustainable development. Many cities have become more attractive through upgrading their quality of services, investing in low-carbon policies, and consequently, improving their competitiveness. In these contexts, innovation and technology were used to provide benefits to the tourist as well as to the resident like in the “smart city” model. Many tourist destinations are exposed to very high levels of competition, so it becomes really significant to change policy and strategy ameliorating environmental standards to maintain profit margins. The purpose of this chapter is to study the low-carbon tourists’ destination competitiveness. It intends to contribute to the literature analyzing this topic and explaining how low-carbon goods and services can determine the competitiveness of a tourist destination.

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INTRODUCTION

Carbon neutral tourism is a new branch of tourism appealing to those tourists seeking to minimize the carbon footprint of their travel.

Tourist destination could become not only a place for tourist to visit and stay, but also an interactive sensory experience and low carbon tourism will represent a new way to acquire higher value for tourists as well as more social, economic and environmental advantages.

Thus, a low carbon tourist destination could be improving competitiveness as well as travel experience for tourists. Traditional models of competitiveness (Porter, 1990) focused on the elements associated with rivalry among enterprises within a given Country and among different Countries in all parts of the world. For long time, to understand competitiveness, economists considered very important price perspectives as well as country-specific economic characteristics. Competitiveness delimited the analysis to pre-plan performance indicators such as market share, market growth, and gross domestic product. These are necessary signals for measuring levels of competitiveness, but they are not adequate in verifying the future direction of competitiveness. In the tourism sector, the multiplicity of industries involved in creating destinations requires the development of a competitiveness model that examines the size of cooperation needed for the future of tourist destination competitiveness (TDC).

TDC has to take into consideration natural resources preservation and environmental sustainable development. In this context, sustainability involves becoming dedicated to attain environmentally oriented travel consumers everywhere they are found in the world. Future development in the tourism will need to be leaded by a global view to maintain competitiveness in a saturated marketplace. A global perspective to understand key factors of market competitiveness is crucial for the tourism industry to sustain its growth and vitality.

Tourism has attracted attention with respect to greenhouse gas emissions (Gossling *et al.*, 2012). The main actors in tourism are the tourists themselves to exert an important market power. However, poor attention has been paid about how their travel impacts on tourist destinations. Therefore, it needs to better understand the meaning of living in crowded space, full of human, whether it has little advantage in this concept within the context of tourist destination competitiveness. In this regards, low carbon tourism should be a new model for tourist destination competitiveness.

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