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EXPORT COMPETENCIES OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS BRANDING

The article defines the role of tourism as a promising sphere of stabilization and development of the Ukrainian economy. On the basis of a thorough analysis the problems of tourism sphere functioning on the national market of services are revealed, the main tasks that need immediate solution at the state level have been formed. The competitiveness of the tourism sector of Ukraine by the main indicators and subindicators is given to identify the deficiencies in its functioning and to formulate priority directions for the development of the Ukrainian tourism brand in the international market of services. As a result of the conducted researches, the main strategic goals of further development of the tourism sphere were determined. Promising direction of promoting the international competitiveness of tourism in Ukraine is the development of export competencies of branding tourist destinations.

Keywords: *tourism, tourism brand, export competencies, competitiveness, branding of tourist destinations.*

Relevance of the research topic. In the context of popularization of the national brand and entering new markets, a promising direction of promoting Ukraine's international competitiveness is the development of export competences of Ukrainian business, including the tourism sector.

The export brand will help buyers all over the world to become more aware of Ukrainian products. Export promotion will help to combine different products and services (including tourist products) in a single visual concept and style. Which, in turn, will promote trade and better competitiveness of Ukrainian goods and services in world markets.

Export growth is of strategic importance for the Ukrainian economy. Today, exporters account for 47,9% of Ukraine's GDP and foreign exchange earnings. Over the 6 months of 2018, Ukrainian exports grew by 2,8 billion dollars compared to the same period in 2017 [14]. According to statistics of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the export of goods of Ukraine for 2017 amounted to

43,3 billion dollars (19% more than the previous year). In turn, exports of services (including tourist services) amounted to 52,3 billion dollars over the same period (16% more than in 2016) [13].

The export brand is based on the national brand Ukraine Now, which is in line with the state policy to create a stable emotional and visual connection between different industries and sectors. Country brand and export brand have a common theme, but different practical tasks. Ukraine Now brand is a general brand of the country that shapes the perception of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the world. In its turn, Ukraine's export brand presents it as a profitable trading partner selling quality, authentic, innovative and creative products [13].

Thus, the definition of export competencies of branding of tourist destinations of Ukraine is relevant for the further perspective future of the whole tourism sector as a whole.

Formulation of the problem. In the current conditions of doing business in the tourist market, this area becomes a significant lever for the formation and development of international economic relations, in particular by attracting foreign investors on the basis of high levels of profitability and speed of return.

However, according to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, there are practically no projects in the sphere of tourism that meet international standards. Thus, it should motivate all interested legal and natural persons related to the hospitality industry, tourist activity and economic entities involved in these economic sectors of Ukraine to study, analyze, develop and offer real, investment-oriented investment projects. This applies to both initiators and contractors of investment projects and contractors who can represent a sufficiently wide range of state, regional, local structures, entrepreneurs, representatives of civil society, etc. [3].

According to the analysis of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reporting, the reasons for the depopulation of tourism in the Ukrainian services market are the following:

- 1) inappropriate evaluation of international tourism development experience;
- 2) lack of clear sequence of actions in conducting public policy in the field;
- 3) lack of proper conditions for tourism development, tax and financial stimulation by the state of export of tourist services and domestic tour operators;
- 4) unsatisfactory work of the Government on the formation and strengthening of the tourism image of Ukraine, development and promotion of the national tourism brand in the international and domestic markets.

On the basis of the above, it is advisable to investigate the issues and substantiate the results obtained in determining the export competences of branding tourist destinations of Ukraine for further competition in the international market of services.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many works of domestic and foreign scientists are devoted to the research of questions concerning the basic aspects of branding formation and development. In particular, the development of theoretical and methodological foundations of branding is devoted to the work of O. G. Avdan, S. V. Melnichenko [8], I. V. Bezugly [2], A. A. Mazaraki, T. I. Tkachenko [6], Y. I. Masyuk [7], T. L. Nagornyak [10], D. Khan [12]; issues of economic evaluation of tourism brand are covered in the works of O. V. Muzychenko-Kozlovskaya [9], M. V. Osipchuk [11]; L. V. Balabanova, Y. V. Prykhodchenko [1], N. O. Kotova [5] carry out research of the basic aspects of formation and development of brand management of enterprises in terms of marketing orientation; the formation of an international tourism brand on the European market is covered in the works of V. V. Jury, O.Y. Burn it [4]. At the same time, the issue of determining the export competences of branding tourist destinations in Ukraine remains poorly understood, which made the writing of this article relevant.

Setting objectives. The main tasks to be solved while writing the article are:

1) to carry out a thorough analysis of the development of tourism in the national and international markets of services;

2) to formulate the main tasks and strategic goals of tourism development in order to popularize Ukraine in the world and to shape its image as a country attractive for tourism;

3) to substantiate the definition of the development of export competencies of branding of tourist destinations as a promising direction of promoting the international competitiveness of Ukraine;

4) to identify promising directions and advantages of promoting the export of tourism brand to enhance the competitiveness of Ukrainian business.

Presenting main material. In today's globalized world, the world's leading powers have given due weight to the benefits of developing the tourism industry. Tourism promotes employment and economic diversification.

The sphere of tourism and resorts is becoming one of the main industries affecting the general condition and trends of the world economy. Tourism promotes preservation and development of cultural potential, leads to harmonization of relations between different countries and peoples, preservation of environmentally safe environment. In addition, tourism is one of the factors of realization of the foreign policy of the state.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the share of tourism in the world GDP is about 10 % (in our country, this figure is 1,5% of GDP), and the share of international tourism accounts for 6 % of total world exports and about 30 % of world exports services, every 11 jobs in the world are in the tourism industry. According to expert estimates, by 2030 the number of international tourist visits will increase to 1,8 billion tourists. According to the UNWTO, 609 million tourists traveled to Europe in 2015, with costs of 509 billion dollars [12].

Ukraine, as a country in the center of Europe, has all the prerequisites for proper economic development through tourism. However, our country loses significantly in competition, lagging behind the leading countries in the world in terms of the development of tourist infrastructure and quality of tourist services. The continuing financial and economic crisis in recent years, events related to the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the conduct of an anti-terrorist operation in the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, have negatively affected the inbound tourist flow, tourism structure and tourist opportunities of the country as in the domestic and the foreign tourist market.

Ukraine is losing its popularity as a tourist destination, because the imagination of potential tourists is the impression of a full-scale war, and the country is perceived solely as a hot spot. At the same time, in 2018, the flow of foreign tourists to Ukraine increased by 40% compared to 2017 [14]. This indicates a gradual decline of the country's status as «dangerous» for tourists and the revival of the popularity of the tourism brand of Ukraine as a whole.

Overcoming the existing negative trends, creating systemic and complex prerequisites for the development of tourism and resorts in the country should become one of the priority directions of accelerating the economic growth of the country.

Based on a thorough analysis of the Strategy development of tourism and resorts for the period up to 2026 and taking into account all the above mentioned problems of functioning of the tourism sphere, it is advisable to formulate the main tasks that need immediate solution at the state level:

1) implementation of a set of measures to support the development of the tourism industry, in particular the creation of an attractive investment climate in tourism and resorts;

2) ensuring the proper level of inter-sectoral coordination and inter-regional cooperation, which will promote the rational use of tourist resources and will allow to optimize the expenditures from the state and local budgets for the implementation of measures in the sphere of tourism and resorts;

3) uniting efforts of public authorities and local self-government bodies, representatives of tourism business, other sectors of economy and civil society institutions to promote Ukraine in the world and to shape Ukraine's image as a country attractive for tourism;

4) harmonization of national legislation with the European legislation, adherence to the goals and principles proclaimed by the strategic documents of the state development [15].

According to the global competitiveness rating of the World Economic Forum in 2019, Ukraine ranked 78th among 140 countries. In the period from 2014–2019 our country had rather unstable positions in the rating and, at the same time, compared to the previous year, it rose in the rating by 5 positions.

The analysis of the main indicators and subindicators of assessing the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Ukraine has allowed to determine the lowest indicators of the following indicators: infrastructure (3,4 points), in particular due to the imperfect functioning of transport support; natural and cultural resources (2,1 points) – first and foremost, by reducing the sub-index of cultural resources in 2019 and making business trips up to 1,9 points. At the same time, the sub-index of international openness has fallen the most – from 4,9 points in 2017 to 3,7 points in 2019. This indicates that the global community is not sufficiently aware of the powerful potential of the tourism brand of Ukraine, as well as the imperfect approaches to its development. in the international arena of tourist services by our country.

Based on the above analysis, the above results of the research on the competitiveness of Ukraine's tourism sector and its potential for popularization in the international market of services, and taking into account the key provisions of the Strategy for the development of tourism and resorts to 2026, identified the following main strategic goals for further development:

1) creation of a competitive national tourism product on the basis of systematic marketing activities aimed at the clear positioning of different types of tourism products, adapted to the requirements and expectations of consumers;

2) ensuring efficient and integrated (economic, social, environmental and innovative) use of existing tourist and resort-recreational potential by solving the problem of recreational use and protection of the natural environment and improving the territorial structure of tourism and resorts with a view to developing tourist territories, branding territories;

3) systematic improvement of the quality of infrastructure of resorts and recreational areas through the implementation of a comprehensive program of gradual improvement of the material and technical base with the use of cluster models, public-private partnerships and social procurement;

4) improvement of information infrastructure of recreational and tourist services through the establishment of tourist information centers and promotion of tourist products during the fair, festival and exhibition activities;

5) ensuring the conformity of the price and quality of tourism products by creating conditions for optimizing the organizational and economic structure of activities of small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector and developing national standards for the provision of tourism services in accordance with international standards;

6) organization of the system of qualitative preparation, retraining and advanced training of specialists of tourist support and service, other professions of tourism and resorts [15].

In 2018, China hosted an international export exhibition of the world – China International Import EXPO 2018, where Ukraine presented its export opportunities

and achievements for the first time. The export offer of Ukraine was represented by the spheres of food industry, information and communication technologies, creative directions, mechanical engineering, aerospace and aviation and tourism sector.

In connection with the above, it is advisable to form the export competencies of branding tourist destinations for further development and cooperation in the international environment (Fig. 1):



Fig. 2. The export competencies of branding tourist destinations

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of [12, 13].

Thus, the export competencies of branding tourist destinations include:

1) passing the test for readiness of the tourist sphere for export. You can check your business readiness for export of services on the official website of the Ukrainian Export Promotion Office online. By performing step-by-step testing on an online platform, you can get real results and evaluate the potential of each individual tourism enterprise to further promote services in the international market and thus minimize the likely risks of activity;

2) search and check the reliability of foreign partners, which include: conducting thorough market research studies, selecting a country to enter the foreign market and potential partner companies, planning personal visits to the selected countries and defining clear goals of the visits, analysis of the results of the meetings and selecting the ideal partner for further cooperation, checking the selected potential partner for reliability (check on public systems whether there is such a registered company; know and this company in the databases of taxpayers, see lists of members of the Chamber of Commerce, associations, etc.);

3) the main directions for choosing a specific market for promoting the export of Ukraine's tourism brand are: 1) electing to start export activities of neighboring countries (lower transport costs, no or minimal cultural differences); 2) monitoring the relevance of the proposed tourism product in the selected market, the required level of quality of services provided, the likely prices for the proposed product (service) and profit, availability of the necessary production capacity to meet demand in the selected market, etc .;

4) identification of potential consumer of tourist services, foresees, first of all, determination of the type of sale for the tourist product being exported: B2B or B2C segment;

5) the development of an export strategy for entering a new market involves calculations of probable costs in relation to potential profits;

6) development of marketing plan and plan of tourist sales. To do this, first, consult with local experts; secondly, to gather a focus group with the involvement of representatives of the selected consumer segment; third, to launch a pilot project and analyze its success on the basis of the results obtained;

7) financial planning of export of tourist services and calculation of ROI, which involve involvement of a specialist to calculate the probable risks and stability of the financial condition of the tourist enterprise in case of export, as well as to check the financial stability of the tourist company of a potential business partner.

Conclusion. Thus, the development and formulation of export competencies for the branding of tourist destinations is a modern tool for providing conditions for accelerated development of tourism and resorts, transforming it into a highly efficient and integrated into the world market.

The expected results of the implementation of the proposed export competences of tourism branding are:

1) increasing the competitiveness of the national tourism brand;

2) improving the quality of life of the population by ensuring economic growth and environmental security, consolidating society, providing full-scale access to tourism and resort services;

3) creation of a modern tourist information infrastructure, as well as ensuring the dissemination of information on Ukraine's tourism resources in the world information space;

4) unique visual branding of Ukrainian tourist exporters at international expo and specialized exhibitions;

5) systematic information on the opportunities and competitive advantages of export-oriented spheres of Ukraine (tourism is one of the spheres that integrates more than 50 other spheres and types of economic activity).

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