

The Specialized Product of the Experiences in the Tour Guide Services

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The present research aims to study and analyze the theoretical concepts and characteristics of recreational urban tourism experiences, realized by tour guide. Such research supports the development of management of tourism destinations in Bulgaria. They contribute to the improvement of the internal and external management of the destination, carried out by the Organizations for Management of Tourist Areas. The objective of the study is the tour guide activity carried out by the tour operator's representative during the travel and the stay in the tourism destination, specialized in its product offering and branded as such. The subject of analysis is the quality of the specialized product offered by the tour operator and the tourism destination providing experiences to the tourists during their stay and traveling in the tourism place. The aim of the scientific research is to prove the place and role of the tour guide through participating in the tourism process of formatting experiences for the tourists, also for the promotion of the region, as well as for its functions in the development and management of tourism areas in Bulgaria, as a participant in the internal and external management of the destination/Organizations for Management of Tourist Areas established in Bulgaria.

Keywords: *tourism destinations, tour guide services, tour operator, specialized products, experiences, organizations for management of tourist areas*

Introduction

The relevance of the topic is determined by the fact that there is no distinct term that comprehensively covers all intermediaries whose function is to take care, guide, inform and explain to tourism groups. Nor can they convincingly link these functions to a particular sector of the industry, it is for these and other arguments that this kind of activity is associated with the profession of the tour guiding. Some of these intermediaries are representatives of tour operators, others work independently by promoting tourists' experiences during a stay in a tourism destination or during a tourism tour or provide their services to unrelated companies (Ianeva 2014).

In an industry where the importance of the individual is becoming more personalised, companies are growing, and tourism products are increasingly homogeneous, the role of the person who is the representative of the tourism site or represents the tour operator is constantly growing. In different types of tourism products, the tourism professionals find their specific place and have different roles in the tourism service. Such a specific place of the representative of the tour operator or of the site offering products of the experiences can predetermine to a

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significant extent the satisfaction of the tourists in terms of meeting their requirements and expectations. In some types of tourism programs, this may be the only part of the package that differentiates one product from another. Very often the role of the tour guide, animator and tourism specialist is underestimated by some tourism companies, usually due to cost cutting.

Tour Guide Leader as a Represented of Tour Operator during Packed Tours

The differentiation of the tourism product through the experiences offered by the representative are one of the tools of the enterprises to differentiate and distinguish their product compared to the one of the competitors, even when offering an identical product of experiences, the same quantitative and similar qualitative standards in the accommodation, the same means of transport and identical places to eat. Quite often in different tourism programs, the quality of the guide service helps to promote the product of a destination or a specific tourism site through word-of-mouth information from actual customers who have used the product.

The above motives are the reason why the research should address the issues related to the development of scientific knowledge in this field. In its context, new configurations in tourism are sought, the psychological needs of man to integrate into different cultural environments are clarified, the emergence and development of tour guiding is traced, and ways of overcoming discomfort through the representatives of tour operators are sought.

Particular attention should be paid to the organisation of this type of activity depending on the specifics of the respective tour operator, tourism service provider or others in the field of tourism whose functioning affects the guides in tourism programs. Particular attention is given to the World Federation of Associated Tour Guides, as its influence is leading in this field (Yaneva 2011).

In order to have a targeted impact on consumers to attract them, the tour guide product must be offered professionally to the target segment. Therefore, there is a need to analyze the tour guide product based on certain metrics through SERVQUAL model (Ryan and Cliff 1997) and conflict technique. Then, the actual improvement of the tour guide product is proceeded through the Customer Care program. The achieved level of tourism product offering through the guide service attracts more tourists, which leads to an increase in tourism revenue.

Of a great interest are the issues of tourism related to intercultural relations and the cultural mediation of tour guides in order to integrate the cultural heritage of people through different forms of experiences during a visit to a specific destination, as well as the promotion of Bulgaria as a tourist destination.

When analyzing the activities of the tour guides, it is necessary to pay attention to the themes, and the lectures that they prepare and presents on the occasion of conducting tourism tours for different purposes, with priority given to the topics, related to the economy of the experiences, which in the recent years have been gaining interest among consumer demand and the choice of this type of destinations or specific locations or tourism areas.

Pine and Gilmore (2005) published a study that pointed the changes occurring in the economy and society. In short, the economy was once based on trade in raw materials and then these were gradually replaced by standardised goods. During the 20th century, the share of services grew until, at the end of the century, the service sector accounted for 80% of all activities, and tourism enterprises discovered a new value in society – the need for experiences, feelings, emotions. It seems that this is already a natural trend in the development of today's society, which is also taken into account in the structuring of tourism programs and is advocated in their implementation by the guide of tourists in destinations. All the people living and working in enclosed environments in the last two years from 2020 to 2022 need something different and the industry is offering exactly what the consumers need. According to many authors, this change is mainly due to technological advances and the application of digital technology. Travel and entertainment are classified as an experience industry and are expected to regain their place in the modern global economy after their decline in the last two years. Experiences are now represented, introduced, integrated and pervasive in all aspects of consumption and existence (Yaneva and Gaidarov 2017).

In recent years, urban leisure tourism (Ianeva et al. 2021) has found its place in the economy as a new and specialised product related to tourists' experiences. The modern tourist is not only looking for recreation through accommodation, meals and standard cultural attractions presented to him/her by the tour guide during the tourist program, which are easily tangible in the digital environment, but seeks to remember the trip (holiday) through entertainment opportunities and experiences offered to him/her on spot. Such can be wine tours, national and regional menu tastings, and other sensory experiences to focus on. These can also be excursions to areas with rose plantations and lavender typical of the tourism area of the Rose Valley, as well as available in other tourism areas in Bulgaria. The tour guide for incoming tourism programs should also prepare on such tours.

In order to reposition the image of Bulgaria as a mass tourism destination, it is necessary to develop and promote such specialized tourism products. We believe that one of them could be the urban tourism of the experiences. All this helps to position the specific tourism place correctly on the market, presented to tourists by the tour guide during the tour, focusing on certain target groups and presenting it as attractive enough for them in order to create experiences. In this way, it supports the development of both accommodation and catering facilities and the accompanying business in the tourism destination and the inflow of funds undoubtedly also contributes to further developing, renovating and making the destination more and more attractive to visitors. Although all tourism destinations compete for a share of the global tourism market, competition between some specific destinations is much more intense, depending on a number of criteria, due to common issue markets, similar products and experiences, similar target market segments, roughly equal distance from key markets, similar economic growth and similar peak tourism seasons (Ianeva and Portarska 2019).

The "economics of the experiences" (also called the economics of emotions, the economics of feelings, etc. in different countries and by different authors) is also considered as the economics of entertainment by some authors, since the

essence of both "economies" is hidden in the question - how the tour guide during a tourism program can offer feelings and emotions to consumers. This question is of particular importance for all industries and therefore all companies are trying to find a way to survive in the context of fierce competition in the era of the "new" economy.

The tour guide representing the destination to the tourists implements the management policy of both the destination and the tourism enterprise. In this regard, destination management and promotion are also linked to the regulations in the respective country in order to synchronise the activities of all stakeholders in the process. In Bulgaria, as a tourism destination, according to the provisions of the Tourism Act, the management and promotion of destinations is regulated through tourism zoning. It covers the entire territory of the country and there are 9 tourism regions (Concept of Tourist Regionalization 2016) which are large enough to be clearly identifiable on the tourism map and small enough to be managed effectively. The concept places geographical names on the regions. Within the territorial scope of the areas, Tourism Area Management Organizations (TAMOs) have now been established, which in the tourism marketing literature, as well as in the practice of developed tourism countries, are known as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). Each tourism region has a main and an extended specialization. The main specialization is a combination of two types of tourism that combine to define the uniqueness of the regions. The extended specialisation includes other complementary types of tourism in addition to the main ones (Ianeva 2020). This specialization differentiates the different areas in terms of product, thus not only certain types of tourism are offered, but also the guides during the tour can draw the attention of the tourists to which type of tourism the tourism destination is popular for.

Each tourism area can be identified and branded with a package of thematic products to make it recognisable among its potential consumers, as well as to be identified by tour guides during their domestic or inbound tours. In this way, the destination's recognisability will be unified at different levels of promotion, both by the marketing managers of the destinations and by the tour operators represented by the tour guide during the implementation of tourism programs. In relation to this, themed sites in destinations are becoming more and more numerous, with some being for entertainment only and others offering a mix of culture and history. Tangible memories of a unique, personal experience are important (Gierstberg and Vroege 2008).

In the year-round tourism destinations, mainly related to business tourism, (Ianeva and Georgieva 2020) cultural and sightseeing tourism, in order to seek new niche markets, tour operators and the suppliers (hotels and other accommodation properties) also integrate other components into their product, such as spa, gaming services and other entertainment elements, and tour guides immerse tourists in them during their stay or on an excursion there.

With regards to the destination management, in terms of the internal and external activities carried out by Destination Management Organisations, the tour guide is part of the stakeholders for this development. In this regard, it is emphasized that when conducting a tour in the destination, it is necessary to pay attention not only to the natural features, but also to the environment and cultural features of the

tourism area. Interesting tips and initiatives should be included in the program to diversify the guest's trip. The information shall be supported by brochures (Hodgson 1991) issued by the municipalities or by the tourism organisations, which shall be issued in large quantities and distributed to the clients. In order to establish an image of the destination for the tourists, some important aspects are highlighted:

Different countries, different customs. The best way to get to know a foreign country is to understand the people or the folk psychology for that particular tourism area. The tour guide should in an intriguing way pay attention to the clothing that is in accordance not only with the climate, but also with the traditions of the hosting country. National or regional cuisine is also an important destination-specific highlight, especially at a time when digitalisation is replacing the need for direct contact with cultural sites, and at a time of health constraints. In this regard, in Bulgaria, the policy of the executive authority in the last two years has been focused on the creation of national and regional menus that contribute to the identity of the regions as well as helping to bring tourists back to the destination¹. From this point of view, it is necessary for the tour operator's representative to include such dining and entertainment venues in the tour, as well as being familiar with gastronomic tourism.

Care for nature: the tour guide has an influence on whether the "last virgin natural places" should be explored during the excursion. On a safari or excursion, the observation of nature from an appropriate distance must be conducted safely for the travellers and nature. Bulgaria as a tourism destination is popular for its tourism region of the Rose Valley, where the rose plantations are of interest, as well as the lavender ones. To bring tourists back to the destinations, the so-called sensory marketing can also be applied, where the tourist guide draws attention to the scents during the visit to such destinations, as well as reinforces the impact of the memory on the scent, associating it with the specific destination. In this regard, tourists are encouraged to purchase souvenirs, cosmetics and other accessories that will remind them of the specific tourist spot when they return home. Certainly in terms of caring for nature, it is necessary to pay attention to them not to injure, tear, throw away and ruin the relevant plantations. With regard to the internal activities carried out by marketing managers in such tourism areas, it can be added that for the development of sensory marketing, similar scents, recognizable and typical of the destination, can be used in individual tourist accommodations, associating the site with the image of the destination.

Attitude to the water resources: clean water is important for life, but in many tourism areas it is a deficit. The guide can encourage the tourists to be as sparing as possible with water and to help keep it clean. For example, to apply sun cream only after bathing in the pool, lake or sea. It also helps to use towels repeatedly to reduce the use of water and detergents.

Souvenirs: The skyrocketing worldwide trade in live or dead plants and animals, their parts or products poses a direct threat to many species. Particularly threatening in today's time of mass and inbound tourism is the development of the souvenir trade. The purchase of gifts and souvenirs that are produced in the visited

¹<https://www.travelnews.bg/bg/news/16232500938629/natsionalnoto-menyu-na-balgariya-veche-e-v-sila>.

country and that do not result in damage to its plant and animal life should be recommended here. The tour guide should note that some plants and animals may be subject to a species protection convention. It may happen that the acquired items may be confiscated when leaving the country and a fine may be imposed.

In order to prove the place and role of the tour guide through his/her participation in the tourism process and to promote the tourism area, it is important to note the participation in the conduct of information tours in Bulgaria, in which the experiences offered to tour operators, journalists and influencers will encourage them to actively promote and advertise the different tourism areas. In this connection, it is necessary to highlight the main characteristics of such events.

Tour guides in info tours are guides of specialised groups, representatives of the tour operator organising the tour, and can also be representatives of the destination itself, which they want to promote and sell. Info tours can be organised for tour operators, journalists and influencers to advertise and promote a tourist area. The cost of such a form of promotion is only justified if the participants can be offered something truly exceptional as an experience. Working with the media is crucial and a strategy needs to be developed for this. It is important to identify which journalists write about tourism in the relevant media. Also send them regular information about what is happening in the area, especially when there are special events and happenings. Before contacting foreign journalists, it is necessary to thoroughly study foreign publications in tourism. If possible, journalists should be invited on an info tour. When inviting foreign journalists, free air tickets can be arranged through some tour operators. It is best to pair the familiarization /often used only as fam/ trip with an impressive event. Special arrangements for guided tours are required when organising info tours. Instructions in organising guided tours are made up of rules that apply to journalists, others to tour operators and others are general. The duration of the tour should be organised within a maximum of 4-5 days, and it should take into account the peak employment periods of the tour companies. The tour operators shall be invited individually to be part of the group if the possibilities allow; if not, groups of 4-5 operators working in similar tourism areas shall be organised. For journalists and influencers, the optimum is in the range of 10-14 people. The tour guide, leading the group, indicates the times of the individual visits, as well as the departure/return to the hotels. The tour guide should try to keep to the advertised times, especially at the end of the 'working day'. If there is still a delay in the program, the participants should be warned and the reason for the delay explained.

The tour guide must adhere to the announced duration of the individual visits. Signs of boredom should be watched for and if they become apparent, simply cut short the visit.

Lunches – it is not recommended to be long. (This applies for the English. Italians, for example, like to have longer lunches.)

Dinners – it is a good idea for the guide to invite local people to join the group for dinner. These do not have to be people directly connected with tourism.

Breakfasts – participants may prefer to have breakfast separately, as and when convenient for each, or together with the guide. Therefore, the breakfast times should be stated and it should be communicated when he/she will be there as well.

It is a good idea to take the participants out of the bus at least once a day and include short outdoor outings (1-2 hours) in the program.

It is necessary to include as much information as possible in the preliminary program. Include the names and positions of the people to be met. If there is a subsequent change, let participants know who the new persons are.

Announce the places to be visited, together with a brief description, so that the participants know exactly why these places are included in the program.

A list of participants is attached to the program. It is sent out as soon as everyone has confirmed their participation. The English like to know in advance who they will be travelling with.

Be sure to mention at the end who is sponsoring the tour; if there are free lunches or dinners, mention the names of the hosts.

Participants should know in advance what they are getting for free and what they have to pay for. Usually the organisers cover the cost of accommodation, meals and transport, and extra things like phone calls, bar bills, newspapers are the responsibility of the participants. It is best to have this specified in advance, and in writing, before departure and have the guide communicate it.

The group should be informed in advance about the climate and what clothes should be brought (e.g., extra sweater or swimsuit, is formal wear necessary for dinner or can only a jacket be brought, etc.), as well as other details such as whether any vaccinations are required, how the local currency and money exchange is handled (carry cash, not travellers cheques).

Various promotional and informational materials are sent with the program, but packages are also prepared and handed out at the welcome by the tour guide. Packages must include a map clearly indicating the places to visit. Placing "Welcome" signs and the hotel's business card in the rooms is a gesture that will be appreciated. Direct quotations with prices can also be prepared for tour operators on the rooms. Members of the press are not interested in looking at hotels, whereas for tour operators this is a must. They need to see 2-3 rooms, the dining venues, the bar as well as the leisure facilities offered (saunas, swimming pools, fitness rooms etc.). It is good if the owners/managers to welcome them personally and within a few minutes to introduce them to their hotel. Finally, tour operators should get promotional material and net prices for the different periods.

Some journalists bring their own cameras, but most prefer to use professional photos. It is best if the local/regional organisation can offer a good selection from their own collection. Otherwise the photographs may be selected and sent later.

The implemented marketing management of a tourism region through one of its external activities, as it is evident, can also be carried out through info tours for tour operators, journalists and influencers. The costs of such a form of promotion are only justified if the tour participants can be offered an attractive way of experiencing the destination by the tour guide, presenting it, when testing the products in the tourism places. In the conditions of crisis in the tourism market, the Ministry of Tourism in Bulgaria will intensify this type of familiarization programs by conducting tours for journalists and influencers from the respective countries to come and write about Bulgaria². It is possible to include in such info tours

²<https://bit.ly/3UsmL0b>.

destinations for health tourism, offering experiences for returning back the tourists as well as for the combined satisfaction of two consumer motives. An example of this is the organisation of hot air ballooning sessions in the town of Sandanski, a popular Bulgarian spa destination also visited by many Greek tourists³.

Working with the media is crucial and a strategy needs to be developed for this. It is important to identify which journalists write about tourism in the relevant central and local media. They should be regularly sent information about what is happening in Bulgaria, especially when there are special events and happenings.

External destination management is also associated with activities forming customer loyalty to the tourism location or site and with the identification of a brand, its enforcement and promotion by the tour operator and tour guide during the tourism program. Brand loyalty means a consumer preference to consume the products of a particular brand in a particular destination, which occurs when the tourist feels that these themed products offer them the right features, images and/or quality level at the 'right price'. This perception becomes the basis for forming buying habits. Brand loyalty implies both repeated consumption of the specialised product from the tourism area and a lowered price sensitivity of the buyer and lowered sensitivity to similar competing themed destinations. Loyalty is the result of an ongoing experience that creates a lasting relationship between the buyer and the respective brand. In today's competitive environment, increasing loyalty to a tourism destination allows it to establish and maintain a comfortable and lasting position in the market. Branding is one of the most important factors in the success or failure of a themed product, especially one related to experiences, and has a major influence on how the MODs is perceived by potential and actual tourists.

Thus, the above specifics regarding the place and role of the tour guides and their participation in the implementation of tourism programs, prove their importance in the process of promoting the tourism area, as well as the relationship with other actors in the tourism supply for the development and management of tourism areas in Bulgaria, as a participant in the internal and external management of the destination/Organizations for Management of Tourism Areas/.

In this regard, tour operators are one of the main players on the market for the supply of specialised products offered by different tourism areas.

Methodology

In the current research and in proving the thesis will be applied a number of common scientific methods, such as observation, analysis, synthesis, analogy and comparison. In essence, they are tools of the dialectical, historical, inductive-deductive and systemic approach, as well as of comparative analysis.

The following research methods will be used to achieve the objectives of the research project:

³<https://bit.ly/3S5MRnu>.

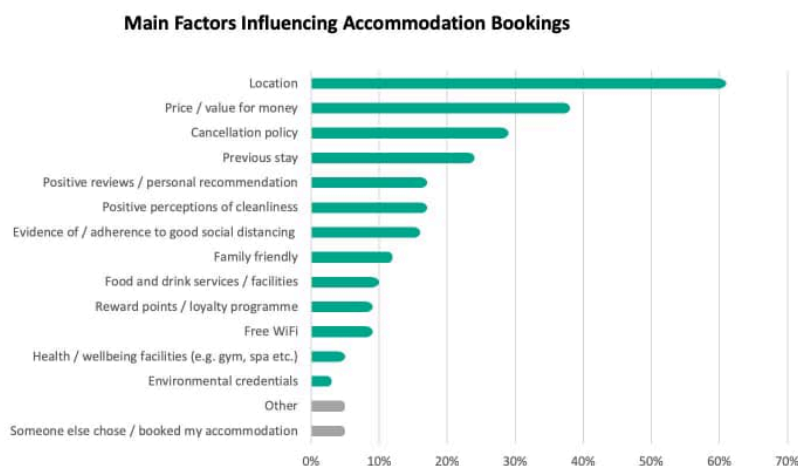
- Review of the theoretical scientific developments of Bulgarian and internationally renowned authors.
- Overview of materials of international and European organizations in the field of tourism.
- Overview of company research in the field of tourism management and specialized products of tour operators.
- Research of the information, published in the website of Ministry of Tourism.

Consumer choice is not a simple sequence of actions and deeds in the marketplace, but a combination of needs, motives, individual experiences, requirements and financial capabilities. The purchase and subsequent evaluation of a tourism product is accompanied by certain feelings and emotions – joy, disappointment, satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the overall perception of the product.

Consumer requirements (Ianeva 2004) in evaluating innovative specialised tourism products implemented by the tour guide during the tourism program in the destination are complex. The main criteria that measure the product, in terms of the provided quality of the tourism program, according to the consumer requirements are the following:

- Reliability of the destination and the specialised products
- Content
- Health and safety (Donaldson 1993)
- Accessibility
- Opportunities for using specialised products
- Duration
- Price
- Price-satisfaction
- Staff remuneration (Lyons 1996)
- Staff qualifications
- Satisfaction from the experienced
- Providing individual needs
- Service level

Criteria that measure the product in terms of quality provided to customers, according to a survey by STR (<https://str.com/>), the most important factors influencing tourists to choose and book certain properties in the destinations are hotel location; price and value for money and cancellation terms. It is the guide of the tourist group that helps in their satisfaction in terms of price-quality ratio. To a large extent, these are also the most important factors to choose before the pandemic of early 2020 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Main Factors, Influencing the Accommodation Bookings*

Source: <https://str.com/data-insights-blog/covid-19-impact-forward-hotel-bookings-key-european-markets>.

As it is evident the main theories from marketing in terms of measurement criteria correspond with the research of different authors nowadays. In the applied research, the authors derive the more important criteria and evaluation indicators on the basis of which the supply is evaluated in specific sites and tourism areas in Bulgaria.

The reliability that the tour guide creates is an important criterion for evaluating customer service: if the service is excellent but not reliable the customer will not return to the tourism area again even if it provides them with a specialized product for which they had chosen the destination. *The content* is similar to reliability as it is a way of measuring whether the customer always receives the same level of service. This criterion is linked to the control functions of the group leader, who monitors the quantity and quality of the services offered by the suppliers according to his/her contracts with them and according to the tourism program. The difference is that if you expect the service in the bus, during the transfer of the tourists to be reliable, you expect it to depart and arrive according to the given timetable, but if you expect the same service to be meaningful, then you expect the same level of pleasant service during the return transfer from the destination as you received from different staff during the transfer on arrival at the destination.

Most *health and safety standards* are established through laws, including the health protocols. Therefore, their failure to comply during the tour program can not only result in the loss of customers, but also in claims against the organization. Here again the tourism leader needs to control the provided protocols and standards.

Is the *accessibility* in the tourism infrastructure accessible to people who want to use it? For example, do wheelchairs have accessibility or if not is there a lift?

During the program the guide should consider if there are tourists with similar needs that they are catered for.

Availability and timing, i.e. are the opening hours of the tourism sites suitable for people who want to use them? For example, are the opening hours at the spa facilities tailored to the specific needs of tourists as well as their other activities, so that they can use them for example after a business event or an experience-related excursion, so that they can then relax in the spa pools. In this respect, the group leader needs to tailor the activities to the specifics of the accommodation.

Prices are an important criterion for assessing the quality of customer service. If the customer feels that the attraction was not "worth the money" the reason is that they did not achieve the same satisfaction as they received when spending the same amount of money in another similar destination. If something is a "good deal" it doesn't necessarily mean it has to be cheap. A customer may consider that 50 BGN a day at an amusement park is a "good deal", while a 10 BGN admission to a non-representative exhibition may be considered expensive.

Staff remuneration - tourism destinations and their constituent businesses are known to be labour-absorbing i.e., staff costs make up the largest proportion of total expenditure. In this regard, tour operators' package programs choose whether the escorting of the group by a guide should be full or partial i.e. only at the destination. The main reason for this is that some programs are much more expensive than others, often not in offering more services, but in hiring more staff so that the customer can receive better service. When assessing *staff qualifications*, a minimum level of quality must be measured. For example, if the most capable appropriate tour leader for the destination is ill and another one has to be hired, who knows very little about the destination, the fact that he/she is a substitute will not matter to customers who will still expect the same level of service, especially with tourists returning to the destination having purchased a product from the same travel agency.

It is impossible to guarantee that every customer will be *satisfied with the experience* of visiting a certain destination. Satisfaction can often be affected by circumstances over which Destination Management Organisations and tour group leaders have no control, for example if the weather is bad or tourists have problems with their companions. However, the representative should always be focused on how to achieve the best to make sure that tourists are satisfied with the quality of the experience throughout the trip and accompaniment.

In order to *ensure the individual needs* during an organised guided tour, the only way is for the management to be flexible. The requirements of users in evaluating the tourism product in the destination and the program are complex.

As is evident from the results obtained in the study of tourists during a tour in a destination, accompanied by a representative of the tour operator, a particular type of specialized tourism product are associated with the chain of need - desires - interests - ability to pay, which is fundamental for any other type of product. The market research conducted on this basis is tailored to the relevant market segment concerning a certain level of product quality. The need for consumer rating system studies arises in order for DMOs and the companies offering products to answer the question of what the product is and what is a quality for the defined group of

consumers - for example, health, business or experience product consumers. The answer to this question is one of the factors that allows the individual supply-side market players to maintain and consolidate their market positions in the dynamically changing market conjuncture and is also a determining factor in the implementation of the internal activities regarding the marketing management of the tourism regions of the DMOs in Bulgaria.

The purpose of studying the requirements of consumers of specific tourism regions in Bulgaria and the specifics of the offered specialized products is to obtain reliable and comprehensive information necessary to assess the impact of the product in the destination on them. In line with this objective, it is necessary to study the requirements for analysing data from existing national databases, such as those on the specificity of business tourism.

Results and Discussion

In the context of the derived results regarding the marketing formulations on tourism demand in this study a (survey) research is conducted. It is aimed at the identification of consumer requirements in inbound and outbound tourism regarding the possibilities of offering innovative specialized tourism products in business tourism combined with leisure tourism experiences. It also analyses the possibilities of developing destinations for health tourism – a priority especially in the context of a health crisis, in which different programs can also be offered for sensory experiences to be promoted by the representatives of the tour operators for diversifying the stay and increasing satisfaction in a specific destination specialized in a particular type of tourism.

In this direction, the regulatory frameworks of the legal framework in Bulgaria are assessed and specific recommendations are made to the legislative and executive authorities regarding the development of tourism areas.

The analyses focus on the consumer requirements of Bulgarian tourists (domestic tourism) for business tourism products with a combination of leisure programs during the stay aimed at identifying their expectations with opportunities for innovation applications. The authors' idea is to promote the development and recovery of domestic tourism in Bulgaria in its business tourism part. The authors' arguments are from the point of view of the cardinaly changed conjuncture of the tourism market worldwide as a result of the health and economic crisis in the last year. It has been shown that business tourism has a priority share over other specialised types of tourism in terms of revenue generated from it. With terms of the available resources, namely the available established specialised superstructure in Bulgaria connected to the five-star accommodation (hotels), congress and conference centres, which are visible in the national tourism register⁴, is our next argument regarding the analysis of consumer requirements in this direction. Aimed at creating innovative business tourism products with a focus on offering additional components related to experiences during the stay in the destination. Directed by the

⁴<https://bit.ly/3Usn7E3>.

authors to the marketing managers of specific organizations for the management of tourism areas, which products to be advocated in the regions Sofia, North Black Sea and Thracian Tourism Region.

Based on the existing national tourism register in Bulgaria⁵, a selection of accommodation places, which meet the requirements of the regulation concerning the needed business tourism facilities. The Law on Tourism does not offer a definition and component specification concerning business tourism. The document summarises all business tours as "congress tourism", without providing a specification and division of individual activities and subtypes, as well as outlining parameters determining the formation and conduct of business events. The authors' recommendation is to create a general framework for the management of business tourism as a separate segment of tourism, which would offer definitions, scope and profile of the potential users, directing enterprises specialized in this type of tourism to programs for the creation and management of innovative business products.

According to the Bulgarian legal regulation concerning hotels – the 'Regulation on the requirements for categorised accommodation and catering establishments, also on the procedure for determining the category and the conditions and procedure for registering guest rooms and guest apartments'⁶, the term used is properties for accommodation. In the register of properties for accommodation, there is a subdivision for business hotels, which are categorised as four and five stars. The Ordinance sets out specific requirements that distinguish business hotels from other types, such as a business centre with components available for the purposes of business travellers (computers, photocopiers, printers, etc.), a conference centre, a meeting room, a place to serve coffee and drinks in the hotel and other elements.

According to the regulations in Bulgaria concerning health tourism a number of recommendations for improvement can be made as a result of the following findings. After analyzing the national registers and regulations, we find certain inconsistencies and shortcomings, among which are the lack of a selection for health tourism or spa and wellness tourism in the Regulation on the requirements for accommodation and catering establishments and the procedure for determining the category, refusal, downgrading, suspension and termination of the category; the absence of selections by type of tourism in the Register for accommodation properties⁷, as well as the lack of coherence between the Accommodation Register and the Balneo Register already cited. There are also a number of inconsistencies and impediments to business in Ordinance No 2 / Ordinance No 04-14. Differences are also found in the classifications and definitions of the types of health tourism referred to in the Concept and the centres subject to certification in the Ordinance and the Tourism Act. By studying in detail the regulations related to health tourism, we could conclude that they contradict the current trends of tourism development, with the possibility that establishments offer to combine the satisfaction of several consumer motives in several types of tourism, such as business with health, recreational with health, mountain with health, sea with health, religious and cultural with health.

⁵<https://ntr.tourism.government.bg/>.

⁶<https://bit.ly/3Dtsxs2>.

⁷<https://ntr.tourism.government.bg/CategoryzationAll.nsf/mn.xsp>.

When examining the formulations in the regulations related to urban leisure tourism, there is a lack of detailed definition or systematization of this type of product, known in the literature as products related to the economics of experiences and entertainment.

From this point of view, the tourism areas in Bulgaria, as well as the accommodation and catering facilities, and the attractions⁸ related to the destination cannot be promoted as complex, which is an obstacle in their development and offering to consumers of specialized tourism product, who, according to the recent trends, are looking for complex satisfaction of their needs when choosing a destination for their holidays. As a consequence, it is important to intensify the activities related to the marketing management of the different tourism areas in Bulgaria at meso- and macro-level, in order to develop the priority types of tourism, set out in the registered activities at their creation.

Conclusions

The results of the research shows the place and role of the tour guides through their participation in the tourism process, both through their activities of ensuring the quality of the experience during the tour and stay in the destination, and in terms of the control functions they performs for the tour operator in relation to the services offered by the suppliers in the destination, agreed upon according to quantity and quality. Its role in creating experiences for the tourists by promoting additional excursions and events in the destination also promote the tourism area. The tour guide's involvement in conducting informational tours in the destination also supports the activities of the Tourism Management Organizations in Bulgaria. Finally, as a result, we can point the guide's participation in the surveys, given to the tourists during the tourism tour, for identifying their consumer requirements regarding the possibilities of offering innovative specialized tourism products.

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⁸<https://bit.ly/3BsDUhA>.

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