

THE COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS THROUGH THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT: In this study, the analysis is approached within the framework of the importance of competitiveness in the tourism sector, the contributions of the activities of the restaurant industry to the effectiveness of tourist destinations, as well as, if this supply by itself can promote the capacity to revitalize the economy of the place, thereby, producing benefits and resources. In order to focus on the discussion, it is necessary to know what types of elements, not only strategic or varied typologies, but also normative and administrative support (the current competitiveness plans), the restaurant industry sector counts in order to confront the challenges that entails the attainment of competitiveness advantages and meeting the demands of the market. On the other hand, to undertake this work, it is necessary to deal with the aspects of planning as that of the competitiveness or tourist destinations, which will facilitate knowledge on tourism products, sustained partly by gastronomical tourism, taken from the point of view of a differential value that causes the attractiveness of a destination, making it more competitive, not only to increase demand, but also to increase tourists' spending and length stay. **Key words:** Tourist Competitiveness, Tourist Destinations, competitiveness strategies, competitiveness advantages, restaurant industry, revitalization.

INTRODUCTION

Lately, the world moves in a faster speed. Society, abstracted by new technologies and new habits, works and organizes itself in a way that is different from the past; facing previously unfamiliar challenges.

The tourism sector is not far behind in this revolution of circumstances and habits. It feels obliged to break into the lines of action that has been developing, to a large extent that what it has been doing until now is no longer valid. It has to be more demanding. It has to come up with other means in order to obtain favorable results. These means should lead to successful strate-

gies, to the dynamism of the environment by promoting the competitiveness of the destination through competitive advantages.

Tourism is one of the factors of change and expression, being the most evident transformation in this global process. Indications that express these changes are significant and have reached all the sectorial and regional areas, such as the globalization of the tourism economy, reducing distances, new ways to communicate and manage information and tourism promotion, environmental sustainability and of course, the competitiveness of destinations. It is therefore necessary that in the scope of tourist destinations is determined by a definition of new challenges and planning tools.

Tourism in Spain is a motor of economic growth for its contribution to the national GDP (currently at 10%), and for its ability to generate income and employment¹.

The restaurant industry subsector does not fall outside the scope of these results as it has contributed the same on its own, being one of the pillars of tourism; constituting the economic motor of the country. It should be noted that one out of every ten tourists who arrived in 2009 chose Spain for its gastronomy, ahead of accommodation, hospitality, infrastructure and security².

The restaurant industry does not neglect the reality of technological advances and competitive markets. On the contrary, it didn't want to be left behind. After making important efforts, it has achieved in upgrading itself and modernizing its facilities, applying new technologies, introducing new techniques and culinary repertoire, improving quality, changing styles, and innovating typologies and products, and most especially, it has improved trainings of its employees. And all this without forgetting that it has had to deal with the effects of an economic crisis affecting consumers, of new consumption cultures outside restaurant establishments, and of medical and safety insurance policies

¹ ALBERCA, M^a Pilar, PARTE, Laura, SUCH DEVESA, M^a Jesús (2011): Art. Performance evaluation of hotel companies with efficiency measures and productivity: nonparametric frontier analysis. Tourism in Spain Monograph. Editorial Foundation Savings Bank.

² Data facilitated at the 1st European Conference on Tourism and Gastronomy in Madrid on May 24, 2010.

which promote an unfavorable activity that affects the presence of clients in restaurant establishments.

The results are encouraging. Spain, from its gastronomic tourism alone, has managed to attract 6 million tourists. However, there are still issues to be done.

Undoubtedly, restaurant establishments and gastronomy share a common link. Just like Siamese twins, the relationship cannot be separated. If the supply of different culinary products serve as a “hook” to attract customers to attract customers, it is no less true that aesthetics, organization and service provision don’t only attract clients but also gain the loyalty of these customers.

In addition to this, clients, users or visitors must be protected by a set of rules and regulations that will ensure adequate services without abuse and must never encounter fraud in order to boost and encourage clients to keep patronizing these local restaurant establishments. Also, there should exist standards to protect the rights of establishment owners in order to avoid damages in certain grave security situations and a harmonious co-existence with the rest of the customers.

Tourist destinations should make every effort to offer its customers potential products and different tourism services, that are of better quality, more attractive, and suitable to customers expectations and tourist services. Thus, competitiveness is one of the fundamental objectives, and what the restaurant industry can offer is an important element to promote attain the strengthening and improvement of the competitive position of tourist destinations.

HYPOTHESIS

This study attempts to analyze whether the tourism supply of the restaurant industry can promote itself on its own or as a complementary. It will also analyze the competitiveness of a tourist destination, and whether the above subsector can respond to various aspects of both strategic and organizational levels, not only to meet demand, but also to win customer’s loyalty.

OBJECTIVES

Responding to whether the restaurant industry, through its different modalities and strategies to the requirements of demand, can reach tourist destination competitiveness. This will be necessary to dissect various elements, both productive and normative, the current situation factors, building and planning, in order to analyze various circumstances that characterize the abovementioned subsector.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this qualitative study taking into account a series of direct sources, through five research projects in which I participated as the main researcher. In the last four years, four studies were carried out through the Agreement between the the Camilo José Cela University and the Town Hall of Villanueva de la Cañada, signed on February 18, 2004 concerning the following:

- Study of tourism demand in Villanueva de la Cañada, tourism establishments customer profile, unique characteristics of restaurant establishments(June 2008).
- Demand of college students from the range of products (restaurant industry)(June 2009).
- Study of the current user habits of the hotel industry, and the answer of these business to beverage consumption outside these tourism establishments (June 2010) and
- The impact of anti-smoking law on the Hospitality Industry of Villanueva de la Cañada (June 2011).
- And some indirect sources referring to bibliographical materials and those frequently consulted online sites.

The other study was carried out through another Agreement between the Camilo Jose Cela University and the Ministry of Tourism's State Tourism Secretariat, November 18, 2004: Research study on food and the wine club, definition and framework implementation strategy for 2010.

This work is consists of three parts, one referring to the review of the conceptualization of terms, competitiveness, innovation,

tourism and business destination. The other part focuses on the analysis on an element that is a fundamental part of this study, the restaurant industry from the perspective of its concept and its covered activities; classifications, modalities and typologies; gastronomy and cuisine as key elements in achieving its objectives; business strategy against adverse factors and positioning in the market. The third part is on the competitiveness of tourist destinations through strategic planning and carrying out activities of the restaurant industry.

TERMS OF COMPETITIVENESS, TOURIST DESTINATIONS AND TOURISM BUSINESS IN REVIEW

To achieve this work on the contribution of the restaurant industry to perk up tourist destinations, it is understood that there is a need to first examine different concepts such as competitiveness, tourist destinations and tourism businesses in order to clarify with a more objective analysis of the main subject, providing values and characters that contemplate efficiently towards its development.

2.1 The competitiveness of tourist destinations. Concept

The concept of competitiveness is a complex concept, as it contains a large amount of subjectivity and it also has a multidimensional character.

Competitiveness from the macroeconomic point of view can be conceived as producing more and better quality goods and services that are marketed triumphantly to consumers, both domestic and international (Newall 1992).

It can also be conceptualized as a set of factors and policies that determine the level of productivity of a country, so much so that competitiveness equals productivity¹.

Although the concept of competitiveness has been used mainly in research studies of the industrial sector, there have been seve-

¹ Xavier Salas. Prof. Dr. University of Columbia (USA). Economist. Camilo José Cela University Conference (10/04/2011)

ral authors who have shown that there is no obstacle to applying this theory of competitiveness in the service sector (see, among others, Richardson (1987), Riddle (1986) and Gray (1989)) .

In the field of tourism research, the competitiveness of tourist destinations can be defined as "the ability of a destination to create and integrate value-added products that would sustain local resources and preserve its market position from its competitors" (Hassan, 2000).

When it comes to analyzing the competitiveness of services and, more specifically, tourist destinations (tourism being one of the important subsectors in the service sector in many countries), Crouch and Ritchie (1999) introduced the theory of comparative advantage and competitive advantage, an issue that we will later touch, but its worth mentioning that these two authors state that comparative advantage takes reference to the factors that the tourist destination is equipped of, factors including both natural and man-made. Meanwhile, competitive advantage refers to the ability of a tourist destination to use its resources efficiently in the medium and long term. Thus, a tourist destination can have a wide range of resources and yet not as competitive as the other destination that has few tourist facilities, but use them more efficiently.

Tourism activity requires competitiveness and therefore, the restaurant industry should work on this premise, and can affirm that it is necessary to create a more competitive environment.

2.2 Tourist destinations. Concept

To define tourist destination, one must take into account a number of features that shape it. First is a homogeneous geographical space, with common features, it should be able to withstand planning of objectives. From a stricter perspective, it has come to identify the tourist destination with a town (Scaramuzzi, 1993) or with a tourism core, a municipality, a region or any geographical area.

The second common feature of a tourist destination is that it must acquire centrality, which means, it must be an area that travelers take aim to visit. Thus, the intention to travel from one place to another is a key element of an tourism experience (Sancho 1998).

The third common characteristic is that, from the attractions and available resources, placing value on the product, the tourist destination has to present a structured offer at the service of a determined customer satisfaction. In this sense, it can be conceived as an integrated system in which resources, attractions and businesses are offered in conjunction with the tourists (Ejarque, 2003), or as a series of facilities and services that have been designed for their satisfaction that will allow each visitor to experience according to their likings, and try combinations according to their preferences (Scaramuzzi, 1993).

The fourth characteristic of a tourist destination is that, it must have a brand to represent itself in a form of an attractive image that will symbolize all its products, in order to facilitate its recognition in the market and create an interaction of emotions and feelings.

The fifth characteristic is that, it must establish a joint marketing function.

Given the theory of Professor Jafari¹, it should be noted that it associates the tourist destination only with those areas that are in an advanced stage of development.

Among the tangible components of a tourist destination, it must include all those physical elements that are present in it, such as existing natural or man-made attractions as well as structures, infrastructures and equipments such as accommodations and restaurants, among others. Also, within these tangible components, it has to include the teams and food products, handicrafts, etc..

Tourist destinations are competing in a market with a growing presence of competitors with general products, specialized or diversified, with distinct involvement of private agents and public administrations; products that are jealously protected or open to international investment.

A company can only outperform its rivals if it can make a difference that it can maintain. It should offer greater value to its clients, or a value equal to lower cost, or both.

¹ Jafar Jafari. Professor of Tourism at the University of Wisconsin and editor of the *Annals of Tourism Research*

The concept of "greater profitability" (Porter 2003) can't be translated in the tourism sector as "a simple arithmetic of the most profitable" price or cost, but also, it is the global result, or long term, with economic profitability, social productivity the environmental effectiveness, with its strict development code which are never separated. To get that value is essential in developing a strategic tourism planning

2.3 Tourism Companies

The expansion of new technologies, with the internet in the lead, facilitates and simplifies communications and this is where business opportunities lie. In the global zone, these opportunities should be realized within a single or international market.

The new competitiveness should be achieved within the business community. However, it is always helped indirectly by the government. State intervention is limited to infrastructures and equipments necessary to enhance such competitiveness: airports, high-speed trains, urban policy, supplies, etc.. Also, it must assert that public support is necessary to promote entrepreneurial activity in destinations where expansion is difficult or doomed to disappear. The case of tourism supported by a government intervention has shown that this has perked up the development of localities that have no industry, no agriculture and a population census in decline and on the verge of vanishing.

Given the current challenges, companies need to re-orient their policies and transform their structures, in order for its organization and results will ensure the success of the tourism destination. It should be borne in mind:

- The activity of the company should be directed primarily to achieve total customer and staff satisfaction. The products and services must be customized to fit the needs and desires of consumers. But the tourism company should also be able to renew through the use of new production processes and instruments for marketing use. Due to the rapid obsolescence of services, it is necessary to use a good dose of imagination during this renewal process.
- Training plays a fundamental value. The team should be more professional and specialized, particularly in the tourism sector, which

success results depend largely on the personalized attention of company personnel in order to get the greatest satisfaction from the customer and thus, a fundamental factor for the business success. The New Economy requires functional and geographical mobility.

- The hierarchical organizations that rely on the control unit must reinvent itself to suit the latest situation. They should be less pyramidal and more even to be able to respond quickly to fast-changing situations. The new organization must be based on human factor whose main weapon for the proper operation of the business plan is motivation, and as previously mentioned, human factor is the basic exponent in tourism companies.

- The trend towards corporate concentration is not incompatible with specialization. Large corporations benefit from economies of scale and distribution channels that allow them to place their product anywhere in the world, but its structure is subdivided into business units or quasi-corporations which specialize in different market segments. Corporate concentration should exploit the synergies produced by different companies that are part of it. It is a way of ensuring its influence on the market.

- Tourist destinations should pose competitive challenges through policies based on the strengths and dynamism of the supply, such as the restaurant industry activity. And this will result in success, provided that it goes with competitive planning strategies.

In recent years, companies began a thorough rethinking of the organizational and strategic model enabling them to differentiate their product and compete with greater guarantees in various markets. However, we are in a changing context, needing several different aspects such as organizational and strategic in order to push greater entrepreneurial dynamism.

THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

3.1. What do we mean by Restaurant Industry? Modalities and categories

When referring to the work of the restaurant industry, sometimes it can raise doubts as to what kind of companies we are referring to, seeing that there are different modalities. It is therefore neces-

sary to specify its variety and standards for qualification in order to respond whether this enhances its activity or the opposite effect.

This so-called sector, the Restaurant Industry in Spain¹ is considered to be composed of restaurant activities, cafés, bars and the like (pubs and discos, etc.) and take-away establishments.

Various legislations of Autonomous Communities still provide most categories for restaurants ("Lujo", 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th stand for five, four, three, two, and one fork) and cafés ("Lujo", 1st and 2nd stand for three, two and a cup), with hardly any variation in the number category.

Regarding this type of regulation, we understand that this is no longer applicable, it should be noted that it doesn't promote the revitalization and possible strategies for action by the companies in this subsector. It does not provide objectivity regarding the information that it tries to give to the consumer. On the contrary, this is confusing the consumer. Choosing an establishment now is not carried out because of its official classification, based largely on subjective and personal assessments, even the employer may choose to request a lower classification than it deserves. The truth is, the choice that is made by the user is based on the type, brand, price, quality, service, location, etc...

Therefore, in view of the aforementioned, it is deemed necessary to rescind such regulations, as well as what Catalonia and the Canary Islands have set, or rather, they come out with other different classification formulas that serve as accurate information to their customers. This will lead to empower companies with the restaurant industries, to better position themselves and be more competitive, bringing more dynamism and to enable the success of the tourist destination.

¹ Law 1 Article 33/1999, 12 of March, Tourism Management of the Community of Madrid: "restaurant industry activity is considered as establishments are open to the public and engaged professionally and customarily, permanent or temporary, for a fee, meals &/ or beverages, preferably for consumption on the premises." On the other hand, Canary Islands, in its Decree 90/2010, 22 of July, regulates tourism activities of the restaurant industry in Article 5 paragraph 2 a), adding that in restaurants, they can provide take away services of food and beverage.

3.2 Types of catering establishments: the commercial restaurant industry

The restaurant sector has been dynamic, it has expanded and diversified, comprising various types of businesses, promoting the revitalization of the supply to be more responsive to the demand.

There are two types of categories: social or collective and for commercial use. The latter is what we need for our study because the social or collective ones correspond to a common contingent, being out of the tourism regulation. Also, it details various types of commercial restaurant establishments, in order to know accurately their different products including affirmation of positioning strategies, updating and dynamism, aspects that make protectors of the restaurant industry sub-sector act with strength and self-improvement, adding to the attractiveness of the tourist destination.

3.2.1. Commercial Restaurant Business

Commercial restaurant business is carried out in different places open to the public: restaurants, eateries, taverns, inns, hotels, pizzerias, etc.. In the field of commercial restaurant business, it speaks of the units of the restaurant industry referring to those establishments that can be grouped according to the type of products that they offer. They can be classified as:

- A. Family Type: affordable meals and served by members of the family.
- B. Single product type: grill, pizzeria, crêperie, tortilleries, theme-restaurants, cybercafé, etc.
- C. Neo-restaurant business type: It is identified among the new trends: Catering, Banqueting, Vending, Take Away, and Fast food.

In view of the above, we can assert that the restaurant industry sector has been offering new products which are more competitive to respond to the new demand requirements. The professionalization of these companies has been instrumental for its revival and growth as it also has focused on the usual tourist approach, new direction techniques management organization.

3.3 The momentum of the restaurant industry through gastronomy and cuisine

Despite the impressive number of tourists visiting Spain (five million average) in 2009 with the motivation of not only to try the most popular dish paella, but to also try a very diverse gastronomic heritage, the perception of quality of Spain's tourism supply is uneven and could improve in some respects. For this reason, it needs to focus on: quality, innovation and research, promotion and marketing gastronomic tourism.

According to the data mentioned above, the five and a half million tourists who visited Spain for its gastronomy shows that the gastronomic product is on the rise being a clear denominator for the choice of destination, a fundamental pillar of restaurants as their gateway and for marketing.

Gastronomy seeks sensory pleasure, nice and has an increasing demand to know and taste various recipes with results that permeate the palates with new sensations.

At present, Spanish cuisine is at the peak of success. Ferran Adria, the late Santamaría, Roncero, Gallego, Arzak, among others, affixed their signatures to promote and reclaim it in favor of the tourist destinations, attracting more visitors and favorable impact on the economy, employment and local heritage, and thus, to the contribution of an improved general perception of the tourist destination.

The success of Spanish cuisine is introduced with greater force through internationalization. Ever seeking for it, more visitors want to experience the exquisiteness and innovations of our delicacies, a cuisine with more stars and known internationally. Thus, this pushes to strengthen tourism that generates significant revenues for our economy and promoting the tourism sector with the highest identity, at the same time fortifies the country's image.

Gastronomic tourism wants to discover little by little its supply, whose interest is to search for new sensations and emotions. This is what savoring and sensing through food straight from the stoves of restaurants kitchens is all about. This serves as a union between restaurants and gastronomy as a distinctive shaft of the tourist destination.

3.4 Business strategies for destination competitiveness

In the midst of the crisis that we are facing now, new ways of attracting customers in the restaurant industry sector are being studied. Promos pop out, and bars and restaurants do not hesitate to reduce the price of the menus or offer half portions, or free desserts, giving more value to the house wine by lowering the cost compared to other wines¹, etc..

We are in a period of economic crisis and other adverse factors². Normally, it is estimated that in times of recession, consumers are eating out 20% less than in times of economic stability and also more reluctant to spend as they did before³.

Economic cycles are always going to end with an impact on the progress of the restaurant industry activities. Therefore, "entrepreneurs in this subsector can't turn their back to the trends of key economic variables"⁴. Restaurant establishments have chosen to take actions and have begun offering deals and to devise different strategies to encourage consumers.

Another option is to juggle the production process to offer lower prices and therefore, more competitive in the face of the public. Thereby possibly earning something less, because the volume of customers is maintained based on the given lower price. But one can do this without diminishing the benefits of the company.

Other factors in a strategic level can correspond to technology, which has had the most number of changes introduced in recent years in the world of restaurant business. The arrival of

¹ For more information please see: compañía.com www.gastronomía New ways of attracting customers in the restaurant industry sector www.alimentacion-cocina-gastronomia.euroresidentes.com How to overcome the economic crisis. 14/01/2009.

² Apart from economic factors, other factors that will adversely affect the activity of the establishments of the restaurant industry are also the social environment (the "botellón" or drinking binge phenomenon) and legal (alcohol tests for drivers and Anti-tobacco Law).

³ Merche Bermudez. The impact of economic crisis on the Spanish restaurant industry. www.gestionrestaurantes.com The magazine of professionals of the restaurant industry and of foodsunce. 24/07/2008

⁴ Ricardo Ortiz. The factors of "Macro-environment" affecting Restaurants. www.gestionrestaurantes.com The professional journal of the restaurant industry and of foodsunce. 02/07/2009.

the new systems of production, conservation and regeneration has varied work processes and has reduced human-dependency and has increased service capacity.

Restaurant companies take positions and promote solutions. Some are more successful while others are less successful. But they look for strategies to alleviate this economic crisis economic by surviving it, although for others this will be an opportunity. Do not forget that this economy is not equal to that of the nineties, not even the seventies nor the eighties.

The restaurant industry in Spain has prompted a needed change to achieve greater effectiveness in its objectives to be positioned against a range of competitive challenges.

This has provided an adequate supply in the context of the new reality, which required a variety of products that are more attractive and well-proportioned, supported by innovations and different values in order to address a number of factors that have been particularly significant in the habits of the Spanish society.

Restaurant businesses, over time, with great effort and ingenuity, have evolved with new typologies, putting in the market new and modern establishments that are appropriate to the requirements of demand, and projecting the competitiveness of the tourist destinations with its revitalized activities.

Spanish restaurant industry, the engine of economic growth has driven a change needed to achieve greater efficiency in its objectives, in order to be positioned against a range of challenges facing new strategies to become more competitive.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY SUPPLY AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE VALUE OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION

4.1. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning determines "to which direction should a company go to achieve its possible long-term goals "(Martin and others, 1997) given that processes and systems, along with other elements, end up determining the success or failure of the destination.

On the other hand, competitiveness must offer "the ability to obtain benefits and to keep up with changing circumstances," as pointed out by the Tourism General Secretariat in 1998. This conceptualization should still be applicable to the present, given the situation of a uncertain general context caused by a global economic crisis and uncertain an ambiguous duration.

Tourism Strategic planning must be associated to something "encoded" within which shall include identification of markets, the rationale for decision-making, setting operational objectives, the capacity to undertake actions and achieve control instruments precision "(Tocqueville and Zins, 1987). Thus, the requirements for complying with the strategic plan of a destination must contain several key elements like the identification of clear market opportunities, the ability to satisfy these identified needs more than the other destinations, the presence of public and private agents who are willing to reach a consensus, identification of clear market opportunities, and a definition of strategic issues.

Planning is no more than a fundamental tool which could analyzed results, evaluate performances, correct and reconsider when new indicators exist.

Through a strategic plan, it helps clarify what we want and how we intend to achieve.

Competitiveness Plans, which replaced the previous so-called revitalization and excellence, were approved in November 2008 by the Bureau of General Directors and ratified by the Sectorial Conference held in the month of December. The new strategic strategies are differentiation and specialization.

There are two types:

- Competitiveness Plan in areas or regions of high tourism potential.
- Competitiveness Plan for tourist destinations with international projection.

As for the other type of plan, with an international projection of tourist destination, some of its main features are:

- The orientation of actions to strengthen international competitiveness of tourist destinations and to increase the flow of international demand.
- The integration of actions in product and marketing/marketing of action program.
- Enhanced public-private actions and the strengthening of the destination management model.

Strategic planning should include three phases, which correspond to large impulses of destination management: strategic analysis of the situation, strategic decision-making, and strategy implementation.

Remember that the Strategic Touristic Plan Tourism 2020 is the Strategic Plan of Spanish Tourism Council, whose goal is the future development of tourism in Spain, to settle on the basis of competitiveness and environmental sustainability, social and economic, with broad participation process, communicating the value of tourism to the society.

On the other hand, the Spanish Tourism Plan Horizon 2020 provides all the "critical improvement areas" that Spanish tourism should address to, based on the consensus of public agencies, the private sector and the society in general, in order to enhance and improve the position of our tourism sector in 2020.

4.2. Competitiveness of the restaurant industry supply adding value to the destination

4.2.1. Competitiveness of companies

The competitiveness of a company can come from sources of its own company or the sector itself, and therefore these said sources can substantially affect the competitiveness of the company as a consequence to the tourist destination. Tourist destinations should pose competitive challenges through policies based on the strengths and dynamism of the supply, such as the activities of the restaurant industry, because this will lead to its success, provided it is wrapped by competitive planning strategies.

Until just over a decade, Spanish tourism companies had been characterized by lack of explicit strategies to mark a competitive path

in the tourism sector. It seemed that those were unnecessary actions, such that the demand was less permanent, and allow continuity with minimal actions. Such as reducing the cost without encouraging co-operation that would improve its position and dominance in the market. This company profile could be effective in a tourist market surrounded by overcrowded demands and without high requirements where alternative destinations had cost disadvantages.

But the general context has changed, not only for the existence of new emerging markets, but by a series of adverse factors, which have to cope well in an increasingly tough competition, with a demolishing goal of going to "hunt" for demand. Sometimes, supply is presented as nothing beneficial and does not even cover the expenses.

After a period of operation of the tourism system clothed with the vagaries of the market itself, based on a clear standardization of the product, it presents itself a new cycle where the demands on suppliers and operators of tourist destinations, will force new approaches and to study the concept of competitiveness.

The maturity of the markets, global competition, both emerging destinations and the regeneration and improvement of traditional areas and new information technologies in particular that are revolutionizing the systems, are forming an unknown stage, guided by new parameters, resulting in a strategic design in order to achieve competitiveness that is essential for the maintenance and development of the tourism sector.

It is apparent that it will come back to unravel the necessary capacity of the ones who offers the services to deal with the changes as a result of the alteration of variables in the demand and in the market, in general.

It should celebrate the contributions to the theory of competitiveness by Michael E. Porter, which have been widely proven in the different sectors of the economy, especially in tourism. Porter underscores the idea that "national prosperity is created, not inherited", which implies his vision of a constant innovation and continuous capacity improvement building in order for the nation become competitive.

This emphasis on innovation capacity, as a source of competitiveness of nations, the author relates this to the existence of an extremely changing context, which requires the assimilation of nations to these new stages. Even Porter acknowledges the inherent difficulty to innovate, requiring a willingness to produce synergies necessary to confront and overcome the adversities that an innovative process contains.

This determination must be enough to allow the maintenance of competitive advantages, which are the sources of competitiveness of the nation (destination), sector or company.

Companies create, organize and manage, creating strong trends, which can provide synergies to the competitiveness of the destination. The convergence of styles and the steering modes that are prevailing in it, will largely determine competitiveness of a particular sector such as tourism, and within the activity of the restaurant industry.

The objectives and attitudes that are emanated by the managers in the companies can condition destination competitiveness. Therefore, the motivation to achieve development of work, constant training and effort by the members of the organization, to develop skills and abilities, will no doubt influence the competitive success that the destination may have.

Business success can be a driving force, just as in the activity of the restaurant industry, important groups of resources and economic revitalization in the destination, giving way to the sub-sector can lead and give prestige to its image based initially on the admiration of the its own residents.

Porter, states that, regarding various factors affecting the competitiveness of countries, there are aspects that destabilize or influence in a determining way in a course where the economy of a country and its companies can take. Among them, he refers to the role of the government. it understands that it has to make the rules, reserving the corporate action without intervening or participating directly in the process, except for cases in which political structures are underdeveloped.

Public-private relationship is essential, especially to revitalize tourist destinations, with contributions from various kinds to join efforts

that will result in providing supply according to the required demand, as well as the aspects of differentiation and added value, since with this, it will be promoting the competitiveness of the destination.

4.2.2. Competitiveness in the activity of the restaurant industry

It cannot be ignored that in the conceptual model of Crouch and Ritchie (1999), which is simply an explanatory model, it includes within the main resources and attractions the activity of the restaurant industry as a component that motivates the visit to the destination. Meaning, those attractions that make visitors prefer a particular destination over other alternative destinations.

It should be recalled that competitiveness is achieved through quality, which in turn is not measured only by its products but in the manner that they are provided. It should be noted as a key element in the restaurant industry, human resources, of which must be adequately prepared and trained, they are the foundations of quality and competitiveness and an added value that distinguishes us from competitors.

If an innovative supply of the restaurant industry is obtained, diverse, specialized, experiential, based on the fundamentals of high quality, excellent service, price adequate quality, is recovered not only the facilities, but also will strengthen the competitiveness of the destination, serving as such offer like an attractive driving force throughout the year.

Aside from the abovementioned, it should be noted that tourists choose a destination also because of the feelings and emotions raised by a product and the way in which it is being promoted and marketed. It is therefore necessary to move towards experiential marketing, choosing the right combination from the five ways to create experiences: perception, feeling, thought, action and relationship.

4.2.3. The touristic demand of the destination

Regarding the nature of demand, it should be noted that the more it is demanding and "refined", more pressure will be exerted on companies with regards to innovation and improvement. The emergence of new demands and needs in the aggregate demand

forces the company to a permanent adaptation, overcoming these obstacles and challenges consumers create. This is understood as a powerful factor in competitiveness, against clients or situations that do not test the capacity of the business.

This condition of demand, based on a high requirement level may have very interesting effects to the destination and the businesses in the area.

Moreover, it is remarkable how tourism demand affects destination competitiveness, to the extent that the motivations are identified by the managers of that place and tourism organizations, and there exist the capacity and willingness to adapt supply to these specific characteristics. This dynamic process requires a constant dynamism, due to the relative frequency with which the motivations are disrupted, among other reasons, by pressures from global supply through the media.

4.2.4. Comparative advantages and competitive advantages

Tourist destinations have competed comparatively in the course of its evolution but not in a conscious manner. Instead, they have carried out an implicit strategy in its development, such as the price factor, depending on the emergence of competitors and the flexibility shown by the demand.

As for competitive advantage, it should be noted that this will encourage the destination to incorporate tourism aspects in order to differentiate their product so they can compete

The current tourism scenario, with the emergence of competitors with very similar products, in an interchangeable in practice requires these types of policies adapted by these destinations that want to guarantee a sustainable position.

V. M. Monfort (1999), stated that the competitive advantage "encompasses differential characteristics of a destination that make it stand out among potential competitors, which in turn will provide this destination a value acknowledged by its customers."

Today one could speak about competitive advantages in tourism destinations when they have

Incorporate several innovative elements, such as a range of quality services composed of different establishments of the restaurant industry, friendliness, image, training, etc., which ultimately represent a decisive added value to maintain or retain or even increase their market share.

Do not forget that innovation resulting from satisfying new demands or updated old demands¹, it may be capital, finding a market opportunity hidden from competitors or disposed of by them, which can be used with another approach or different skills.

This innovation can bring profitability through the emergence of success factors for the destination or the company.

The concepts of comparative and competitive advantage provide the theoretical basis needed to develop a tourist destination competitiveness model.

4.2.5. Sustainability and competitiveness

It is necessary to highlight a very important factor for the revitalization of destinations, such as sustainability. There is unanimity in linking the concepts of sustainability and competitiveness, to the extent that the application of first aid to the development of the second, a third key element appears, since quality, acknowledged as a competitive factor and on it turns the future of Tourism in the twenty-first century.

On the other hand, it is true that in reference to tourist destinations, no fully accepted doctrinal position fully can quantify the significance of what should be sustainability and competitiveness. Both terms do not have an implicit definition that allow to assert that a touristic destination is more competitive than the other.

4.2.6. Restaurant industry supply adding value to the destination

It is important for a destination not only to have a main supply, but also a complementary sector to match. Any destination that seeks to be competitive must enhance some support sectors related

¹ Xavier Salas. Prof. Dr. University of Columbia (USA). Economist. Camilo José Cela University Conference (10/04/2011)

to clear a symphony with the basic tourism product of the said area, looking for coherence with the needs of each group of customers.

On the other hand, some areas, driven by business pressures, suffer increases in the additional supply in an undetermined manner, without any connection with the expectations of a user, causing the weakening of the destination and loses gradually its personality without having defined a position in the market.

When differentiating the areas of high-level complementary services, it should consider which will be the basics for the operation of the destination that will enable it to improve its service. While others will also be necessary for the current tourist seeking an active participation in his leisure time.

It should be noted that the presence of these sectors will ensure the competitiveness of the area, because it requires an adjustment to the type of target customer, both in quantity and quality apart from managing it to ensure the maintenance and improvement of these companies, in relation to the competitive strategy that marks the destination.

To be an attractive destination for the demand, it is not enough to provide a solid base of resources, but also, it requires to provide establishments that lend services as that of the restaurant industry in all of its modalities, covering all forms that the demand requires so that this destination enjoys the desired success. Thus, it seems logical that over these establishments, both from the restaurant industry and accommodation, falls the big part of responsibility to drive the tourism competitiveness of a destination.

Regarding the number of establishments in the destination, we understand that it must be analyzed from the quantitative point of view, if not, it would have to be subjected to a study will determine its strategic design, organizational structures and the degree of rivalry that exists in this subsector, which can make it more competitive, taking advantage of even the very synergies that are generated within it.

In the current tourism scenario, difficult and hostile, restaurant industry companies, same as any other tourism company, should

consider its performance in the sector around a design of strategies to address the strengths and weaknesses of the company. From there, they can formulate objectives and related actions. This process includes control mechanisms and feedback, so that a strategy adapts to the variations in the environment and the company itself. Strategies can be based on different business criteria, depending on the culture of the company, or type of destination, with ultimately basic formulation of these strategies according to the conditions and characteristics that the company has at that time, and of course, competition.

The companies that exist in the subsector of the restaurant industry can be distinguished into two types of structures: those formed by chains and those that do not depend on a matrix, conducting independent management. The composition of the subsector of the restaurant industry for a particular destination, according to the two types mentioned above, will notably influence, in their competitive level, considering that independent companies - usually belonging to individual owners - drag important disadvantages when competing with respect to those belonging to chains, which seem more conducive to promote attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

It is found that, to the extent that there exist the presence of restaurant chains reputed in a particular destination, it generates an increasing motivation among independent owners and drive them to their consolidation and improvement in order to be more competitive; thus, becoming rivals of the former. This presence also supports and facilitates arrival in the destination elements of high technology and qualified staff, which can be utilized in any type of business located in the tourist destination with the transfer or flow of these elements between the companies.

Also note that there may exist establishments that do not belong to any chain type, but for its professional projection, based on the brand and the like (haute cuisine with a renowned chef) has garnered a recognized competitive position, both locally, nationally and internationally. They can set imitable guidelines in designing

objectives and strategies of other companies; thus, increasing the rivalry and the overall competitiveness of the destination area.

Finally, we should note that destination competitiveness also influences the socio-economic prosperity in the sense that such competition is, in itself, an intermediate target to another more important goal, as is the socioeconomic well-being of the residents.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The restaurant industry tourism, in recent times has evolved technically and competitively in the market, increasing quality, changing styles, and innovating types and products. Moreover, restaurant establishments and gastronomy are rallying points to attract and gain the loyalty of customers.
2. The current success of Spanish cuisine should be utilized as a driving force to obtain greater tourist returns that strengthen the brand of the tourist destination.
3. It should enhance the gastronomic destination of Spain through actions or focused qualities in the specialization of products and services offered and the differentiation of the segments of the tourist demand. Tourists not only choose the destination in terms of price/quality, but also because of their experiences.
4. The professionalization of the restaurant industry has been the key to its revival and growth, as it has joined the usual tourist approach, with new management techniques and business organization, giving real answers to the necessities of the demand.
5. To propel a necessary change, the restaurant industry has provided an appropriate supply in the context of a new reality, which required a variety of attractive and integrated products, based on innovation and different values in order to address a number of factors that have had special significance in the habits of the Spanish society.
6. The adverse factors, the emerging markets and an increasingly aggressive competition, cause the introduction of supplies in the restaurant industry which sometimes are nothing profitable.
7. The profitability in the tourism sector is the overall result of economic, social and environmental yields, being indispensable for the development of the tourism strategic planning.
8. Tourist destinations should pose competitive challenges through policies based on the strengths and dynamism of the supply, such

in the case of the activities in the restaurant industry, which must be supported by competitive planning strategies

9. To compete in the world of tourism, a destination must not only have comparative advantages, but also it needs more competitive advantages. Which means that it is not only necessary to have a more or less extensive variety of products and tourism resources, but also, it must be managed efficiently in the medium and long term.

10. Private and public cooperation is essential to leverage competitive advantages and join alliances. A tourist activity supported by the intervention of the public government, has shown that it has served in the revitalization towards the development of places without industrial resources, or agriculture and a declining population and in a state of extinction. Therefore, public-private relationship is necessary and fundamental for the development and dynamism of tourist destinations, as both fields can combine efforts that will result in achieving a competitive supply according to the needs of the demand. Thereby giving a competitive response to the destination.

11. The business success of the restaurant industry can drive important groups of resources and economic revitalization in the destination, giving chance to the said subsector to lead and gain prestige based initially on the admiration of its own residents.

12. An innovative restaurant industry supply, diverse, specialized, experiential, resting on the foundations of a high quality, excellent service, the right price quality, strengthens the competitiveness of the destination, serving such product as an attractive driving force throughout the year.

13. The activity of the restaurant industry is a component that motivates a visit to the destination. Being the main attraction, it makes visitors prefer a given destination over alternative destinations. It should be pointed out that such establishments of the said activity, bear a large part of responsibility to boost the competitiveness of the tourist destination.

14. Tourism demand affects the competitiveness of the destination to the extent that the motivations can be identified by the site managers and tourism organizations, and there exist the ability and willingness to adapt the supply to these specific characteristics.

15. There is conformity in linking the concepts of sustainability and competitiveness to the extent that the application of first aid

to the development of the second, at the same time a third key element appears, since quality, recognized as a competitiveness factor and on it turns the future of tourism in the XXI century. 16. The competitiveness of the destination also affects the socio-economic prosperity and socio-economic well-being of residents. In the current context of touristic globalization, local destinations through its range of services, acquire a transcendent value because it is an area where one can join economic revitalization with the people living in the destination, as they can also take advantage of their products, providing cultural authenticity and local identity.

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