Performance of Environmental Resources of a Tourist Destination: Concept and Application

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Abstract

Despite the apparent importance of destinations' environmental resources, there appears to be little theoretical and applied research explicitly focusing on destination environmental supply. This research attempts to address this gap in the literature. First, it reviews and evaluates the body of research in tourism environmental resources and proposes a conceptual model to test their performance. The model combines tourism supply–demand view with importance–performance gaps and was used to survey tourism in Slovenia. The results show that the studied destination uses its environmental resources too extensively and that Slovenian environmental tourism experience does not meet visitors' expectations. This finding challenges Slovenian policy makers, who position Slovenia as a green destination. The proposed model can form the basis for further conceptual and empirical research into the tourism contributions of environmental resources. In its present form, it can be used to examine environmental performance and to suggest policy implications for any destination.

Keywords

destination competitiveness, environmental tourism resources, tourism-created resources, visitor satisfaction, importance–performance analysis (IPA), tourism policy, Slovenia

Introduction

The tourism sustainability debate has drawn increased attention to the environmental factors of destinations. However, the role and importance of environmental resources had been embedded in tourism research long before this environmental debate began (Mariotti 1938; Planina 1966). Many tourism researchers have studied environmental resources' tourism potential and how they trigger tourism demand and bring value to a destination. Initially, the researchers' interests in the issue was merely academic; however, given the increasing environmental awareness in society and the fact that tourism may cause the deterioration of environmental resources and force mass tourism destinations into economic decline, researchers have become interested in this issue for policy relevance reasons. For destinations, environmental issues are now more important than ever before and are now an integral part of their sustainable development strategies. The “new tourists,” defined by Poon (1989) more than a decade ago, are ecologically aware; they demand more environmental resource–based experiences and are becoming sensitive to the actual environmental quality of destinations, which increasingly influences their price–quality ratio judgments. For example, research on the Balearic Islands (Aguiló, Alegre, and Sard 2005) has shown that tourists

have become increasingly demanding in regard to the natural surroundings and their quality. Indeed, in the late twentieth century, it became evident that environmental tourist attractions must be maintained and offered to visitors in the quantity and quality that they demand together with the price they are willing to pay.

Environmental resources have become an integral part of modern destination development and competitiveness models. In one destination competitiveness study, Crouch (2011) suggests that experts judge the destination's physiography and climate, both of which are naturally endowed, as the most important competitiveness determinant. In another tourism competitiveness meta-study, Tsai, Song, and Wong (2009) listed 16 models that have substantially contributed to the tourism destination competitiveness debate. Of the 16, six considered environment as one of the major determinants of tourism destination competitiveness (Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto 2005; Heath 2003; Kozak and Rimmington 1999;

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Ritchie and Crouch 1993, 2000; Enright and Newton 2005; Dwyer and Kim 2003).

However, in these models, environmental resources represent only one factor, subfactor, or group of factors. There is a need for knowledge of how and to what degree environmental resources as a group contribute to destination competitiveness and performance. According to some tourism competitiveness researchers, there is a need to intensify research on the competitiveness potential of a single group of resources, and the “environmental dimension of destination, performance, and competitiveness is slowly but surely growing in importance” (Ritchie and Crouch 2003, p. 6).

Therefore, this article focuses on environmental resources and their role in a destination from the aspect of their performance. In addition, this article also focuses on tourism-created resources, such as accommodations and other tourism infrastructures, as environmental resources require them in order to enter the tourism process and market. However, our research and discussion orientation is on the role of environmental resources alone.

The article explains how destination environmental resources are seen in tourism literature. Because of the interdependency of environmental and tourism-created resources, the latter are also presented. A conceptual model for studying the tourism economic potential of environmental resources and importance–performance gaps between the expected and received environmental resource–based tourism experience is being proposed. Derived from the proposed model, three sets of research questions were approached: (1) Do tourists distinguish between environmental and tourism-created resources? (2) If they do, does a destination’s environmental resource–based experience meet the visitors’ demand? (3) Do environmental and tourism-created resources have different impacts on destination performance? These research questions have been explored for the case of Slovenia, a small tourism destination in Europe.

Destination and Environmental Resources

Tourism destination supply encompasses a multidimensional concept that includes not only tourism economic goods, such as overnight stays and entertainment, but also environmental attractors that serve as a resource base for tourism development and, in many cases, are a primary attraction for potential tourism demand. These primary destination environmental supply features include climate, nature, culture, and traditional architecture. When researching the role of environmental resources, Tisdell observed the following:

A good deal of tourism relies upon resources or assets that cannot be reproduced or cannot be easily reproduced. . . . This is true of much tourism dependent on the natural environment as well as tourism dependent on historical-cultural objects. (Tisdell 1991, p. 181)

Termed man-made or tourism-created elements, secondary destination supply features comprise developments specifically introduced for tourists, for example, accommodation, food, transport, and entertainment. Indeed, the two main elements (environmental and tourism-created) of tourism supply “make an extensive contribution to the attractiveness of destinations” (Bahar and Kozak 2007, p. 61). Recognizing the existence of the two main elements, as well as their possible connections, this paper focuses on the role of environmental resources in tourism destination.

Environmental Resources in Tourism Literature

Long before the world became aware of environmental resources and their exploitation and use, and before the general environmental debate became a debate about sustainability, Mariotti (1938) detailed the importance of natural resources for tourism demand and supply. He divided tourism supply into spontaneous attractors, that is, natural resources that attract tourist visitation, and derived attractors that a destination develops to enable visitation and economic tourism activity. Later, other tourism researchers attempted to understand tourism environmental resources in order to provide a well-rounded model of tourism supply–demand economic interactions and to study the supply and competitiveness potential of tourism destinations (Tisdell 1991; Planina 1966; Kaspar 1991; De Keyser and Vanhove 1994; Ritchie and Crouch 2000; Dwyer and Kim 2003). Different theoretical foundations have been used—from simple tourism economic supply–demand market models to complex destination competitiveness models. A great deal of the tourism environmental debate has been conducted in a framework of sustainable development. However, different tourism researchers have used different nominations and theories to explain the elements, kinds, and concepts of environmental resources. The evolution of these different nominations and classifications is presented in Table 1.

Planina (1966) studied the effect of environmental resources on tourism and observed them as primary tourism supply. He expanded Mariotti’s understanding of natural tourism attractors by adding cultural attractions (Figure 1). According to him, primary tourism attractions consist of natural goods (not man-made) and cultural goods from the past (man-made, yet nonreproducible).

Thus, the debate started with only the role of natural attractions (Mariotti 1938), and soon cultural goods were added to describe the attractiveness of destinations (Planina 1966). At the time, authors conceptualized “primary tourism supply” that we now understand as environmental resources (e.g., natural and cultural) (Planina 1966; Kaspar 1991; Tisdell 1991). Kaspar (1991) extended the concept of primary tourism supply of a destination to include its general infrastructure. It is a fair argument that (existing) general infrastructure can be a potential factor in tourism development and, thus, a potential tourism supply. However, there

Table 1. Tourism Environmental Resources and Their Nominations in Tourism Literature and Research.

Source	Nominations and Kinds	Variations
Mariotti (1938) Planina (1966)	Attractions: (1) natural goods Primary attractors: (1) natural goods; (2) cultural goods (anthropogenic goods, heritage)	Mariotti uses the term “spontaneous attractions.” Planina uses the term “primary tourism supply” (not man-made and natural or man-made nonreproducible cultural goods from the past)
Kaspar (1991)	Primary attractors: (1) natural attributes; (2) sociocultural characteristics; (3) general infrastructure	Kaspar uses the term “primary, original, or pristine tourism supply.” General infrastructure is seen as a given environment of tourism destination. In his earlier work, Kaspar defines tourism ecology as only referring to natural environment tourism (narrower meaning) (Kaspar 1973). Later, the meaning has been broadened by sociocultural environment (Mihalič and Kaspar 1996).
Tisdell (1991)	Environment: (1) natural environment; (2) historical-cultural objects	Tisdell also uses the term “Ricardian-type attractions” (natural or nonreproducible).
Vanhove (De Keyser and Vanhove 1994; Vanhove 2005)	Attractions: (1) natural; (2) cultural	Attraction sector also encompasses theme parks, museums, national parks, wildlife parks, gardens, heritage sites, entertainment, and events. Model has been applied to Caribbean countries (De Keyser and Vanhove 1994) and to Slovenia (Mihalič and Sirše 1999; Vanhove 1999).
Ritchie and Crouch (1993, 2000, 2003)	Resources/attractors: (1) physiography and climate; (2) culture and history	Environmental resources form destination appeal (1993) or core attractors (2000). Note that core resources refer to inherited and other resources. Hospitality and infrastructure belong to supporting resources.
Dwyer, Kim, and Livaic (Dwyer and Kim 2003; Dwyer, Livaic, and Mellor 2003)	Endowed resources: (1) natural; (2) heritage	Note that hospitality is considered a supporting resource, not given or inherited. Model has been applied to Korea and Australia (Dwyer, Livaic, and Mellor 2003), Slovenia (Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič 2008), Serbia (Armenski et al. 2012), and southeast Serbia (Mihalič, Milutinović, and Prašnikar 2011).
Enright and Newton (2004, 2005)	Visual appeal, climate, different culture, notable history	Mentioned elements are portions of items derived from core resources. Group also includes special events, notable festivals, and cuisine. The model has been applied to urban destinations (Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok).
Kozak and Rimmington (1999)	Destination attractiveness: (1) cultural; (2) natural attractiveness	The model has been applied to Turkey, to supply side (tourism practitioners), and to demand side (visitors).
Stabler, Papatheodorou, and Sinclair (2010)	(1) natural attractions, (2) man-made attractions (cultural, traditional, event-related)	Environmental attractions are normally regarded as public goods (focus on externalities).
Sustainable tourism development concept (UNWTO 2004)	Two of three pillars: (1) natural resources (also called environmental resources); (2) social and cultural	The third of three pillars is economic environment. In addition, the model recognizes the importance of customer satisfaction (along with environmental awareness and politics) (UNWTO 2004; Ritchie and Crouch 2003).

Note: Please note that the references point to the last publications by the referred authors and do not necessarily correspond to the time period when the debate/concept started to evolve.

Sources: Mariotti 1938; Planina 1966; Kaspar 1991; Vanhove 2005; Stabler, Papatheodorou, and Sinclair 2010; De Keyser and Vanhove 1994; Ritchie and Crouch 2000, 1993; Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič 2008; Enright and Newton 2004; Kozak and Rimmington 1999; Ritchie and Crouch 2003; UNWTO 2004; Enright and Newton 2005; Mihalič, Milutinović, and Prašnikar 2011; Kaspar 1973; Dwyer and Kim 2003; Dwyer, Livaic, and Mellor 2003; Armenski et al. 2012.

are many destinations that lack general infrastructure and must develop it to enable tourism development and competitiveness (Khadaroo and Seetanah 2008; Prideaux 2000). There are several such cases: from the Albanian coastline, with the most beautiful beaches in the area but little tourism and poor general infrastructure (Pavesi 2011), to new destinations in remote locations of Ethiopia's Omo tribe (Hambisa

2012). The question of who should pay for general infrastructure (e.g., roads, airports, electricity) to support tourism remains one of the most problematic issues in tourism development (Sakai 2006).

Another variation of primary tourism supply refers to man-made attractions. Some authors include purpose-built attractions, such as theme parks, events, or spas, in the

Figure 1. Primary and secondary tourism supply: criteria and elements.

category of primary attractions that play the same role as environmental resources in attracting tourists (Vanhove 2005). In this case, purpose-built attractions partly fail to meet the criteria of nonreproducibility. The problem in operationalizing such an understanding is that we cannot draw a line between purposely created enablers of tourism supply (e.g., accommodation) and purposely created tourist attractions. For example, a spa hotel or a hotel in Disney World may count as an attractor and an enabler of tourism demand. This argument can be further extended to real cases where some tourism-built resources (of strong architectural quality) become attractors of tourism demand themselves, such as Hundertwasser's spa resort Rogner Bad Blumau in Austria or the impressive Wright's "Tower of the Arabs" Hotel (Burj Al Arab) in Dubai.

The Calgary model (Ritchie and Crouch 2003) considers cultural, historical, and certain social resources (i.e., hospitality) as factors that can attract tourism demand if properly managed. Although the model recognizes the role of environmental resources, such as physiography and climate, culture and history, and hospitality, these do not constitute a homogenous and independent group. The majority of environmental resources are grouped under the "core resources" pillar, along with market ties and super-structure. Notably, hospitality belongs to another pillar. This type of grouping has been criticized by Dwyer and Kim (2003), who proposed a model that contains many of the determinants of the Calgary model but with different groupings. Dwyer and Kim's Integrated Destination Competitiveness Model distinguishes between inherited/endowed and created resources and links them to the destination's supply side. The

understanding of inherited and created resources is similar to the original understanding of primary and secondary tourism supply.

Table 1 (see column 3) also presents some understandings of environmental resources in tourism applied research. For example, Enright and Newton (2004) found that environmental resources ranked relatively low in the case of urban tourist destinations. In contrast, two studies in a more rural destination Serbia showed that destination's position is strong in inherited resources (Mihalič, Milutinović, and Prašnikar 2011; Armenski et al. 2012). Such contrasting findings in different destinations raise the question of differing levels of importance of environmental resources in different types of destinations.

In addition, the extracted importance of environmental resources might be sensitive to the type of data collected. This can be supported by Kozak and Rimmington's research (1999) on the importance of environmental resources as perceived by a destination's stakeholders and visitors, which found significant differences in the opinions of the two groups regarding the importance of environmental resources. Such differences are similarly observed in the cross-comparison of different tourism studies in Slovenia, as presented in one of the subsequent sections.

In summary, destination environmental resources remain an evolving concept, and a full understanding of their various types and their meaning has not been reached yet:

- Some researchers only identify environmental resources with natural resources, which was particularly true in the early tourism environmental

Table 2. Destination Environmental and Tourism-Created Resources.

Tourism Environmental Resources (TENV)		Tourism-Created Resources (TCRE)	
Natural	Cultural and Social	Tourism Infrastructure	Tourism Super-structure
General topography	Music	Accommodation facilities	Accommodation services
Scenery and nature	Traditions	F&B facilities	F&B services
Flora, fauna, and biodiversity	Gastronomy	Recreational facilities	Entertainment (nightlife, bars, discos, and dance clubs)
Beaches	Traditional arts and handwork	Sport facilities	Other entertainment (theaters, galleries, and cinemas)
Mountains	History	Amusement/theme parks	Recreational services
Rivers, lakes, sea, oceans, and waterfalls	Architectural attractions	Health resorts, spas	Health services for visitors
Climate	Clothing	Casinos	Wellness and thermal spa offer
Sun, snow, and wind	Language	Other built tourism infrastructures	Events
Cleanliness/sanitation	Hospitality	Etc.	Shopping
Space	Friendliness		Tourist guidance, information, and programs for visitors
Etc.	Openness		Other tourist services
	Religion		Etc.
	Safety		
	Etc.		

Sources: Mihalić and Kaspar 1996; Ritchie and Crouch 2000, 2003; UNWTO 2004; Inskeep 1991; Dwyer and Kim 2003.

debate during which environmental resources were often limited to natural environments or occasionally to natural and built physical (man-made) environments (Mariotti 1938; Kaspar 1973).

- Later, as this concept became too narrow, social and cultural attractions entered the tourism environmental debate. Thus, in many works, the term “environmental resources” refers to natural and cultural or sociocultural resources (UNWTO 2004; Planina 1997; Kaspar 1991; Mihalić and Kaspar 1996; Tisdell 1991; Ritchie and Crouch 2000).
- However, the term “environmental” is still occasionally used as a synonym for natural (Ritchie and Crouch 2000). In this context, one of the three UNWTO pillars of sustainability is known as environmental (meaning natural only) and is separate from the sociocultural and economic pillar (UNWTO 2004).
- Further, the term “environmental” is occasionally replaced by the term “ecological” (Ritchie and Crouch 2003; Mihalić and Kaspar 1996) or “tourism ecology” (Kaspar 1973). Again, the terms “tourism ecology” or “ecological resources” can be used in their narrower or broader meanings, referring only to natural, or to natural and sociocultural aspects of tourism (Mihalić and Kaspar 1996).
- Further, the term “environment” can be even more broadly used, as other environments, apart from natural and sociocultural, may be relevant. For example, the economic, political, or technological environment may also help shape the development and competitiveness of tourism destinations (Ritchie and Crouch 2000).

- In addition to the aforementioned variations in the understanding of environmental resources, different authors have used different terms in an attempt to capture their existence and tourism relevance. For example, they have used terms such as “primary tourism supply and attractions” (Mihalić and Kaspar 1996; Planina 1966), “original or pristine tourism supply” (Kaspar 1991; Tschurtschenthaler 1986), “Ricardian-type attractions” (Tisdell 1991), “inherited or endowed resources” (Dwyer and Kim 2003; Ritchie and Crouch 2003), “inherited assets, core resources, and attractors” (Ritchie and Crouch 2000; Dwyer and Kim 2003), “given resources” (Dwyer and Kim 2003), and “comparative advantage resources” (Heath 2003). Unfortunately, different authors use the above terms differently. For example, primary resources may refer to only natural resources (Mariotti 1938), to natural and cultural environmental resources (Planina 1966), or to all kinds of primary attractions that also include purposely built tourist attractions (Vanhove 2005). For some authors, inherited resources may only refer to a given natural and inherited cultural resource (Dwyer and Kim 2003). Others may also see general infrastructure as an inherited or given element on which the destination builds its tourism supply (Kaspar 1991).

For pragmatic reasons, and because of the problematic use of the terms “environment” and “environmental,” unless otherwise specified, this paper uses the term “tourism environmental resources” to mean natural and sociocultural tourism attractions (Table 2, Figure 1). This is because terms

like “environmental tourism competitiveness” or “environmental quality” have already been established in tourism literature (Ritchie and Crouch 2003; Mihalič 2000) and because such a meaning is in line with the concept of tourism sustainability, which also distinguishes between natural and sociocultural resources (UNWTO 2004).

Although our primary focus in this paper is on environmental resources, tourism-created resources also need closer attention, as they are seen as enablers of tourism valorization of environmental resources (Planina 1997; Ritchie and Crouch 2000). Some authors expand the understanding of this relationship and speak about the complementarity of environmental and created resources (Krippendorff 1971; Mihalič and Kaspar 1996; Fisher 1985), which implies that one group of resources does not exist without the other and that they are interdependent. More specifically, “destinations cannot rely on their natural beauty alone” (Croes 2011).

The secondary or tourism-created resources encompass reproducible man-made goods, relying on labor and capital for their provision, and consist of tourism infrastructure and super-structure (see Figure 1). Transformation of tourism attractions into primary tourism supply is only possible through tourism processes that involve secondary tourism supply (e.g., accommodation, tourism services).

Again, tourism literature offers a wide range of terms to describe these resources, such as “secondary supply,” “derived attractions or resources,” “created, built, and economic resources,” and “tourism infrastructure and super-structure” (Mariotti 1938; Ritchie and Crouch 2003; Bahar and Kozak 2007; Planina 1997; Dwyer and Kim 2003). As in the case of environmental resources, the exact meaning of the terms listed above is not agreed upon in the academic tourism community. For example, the category of built resources may also refer to resources built in the past, which also fall under the category of cultural environmental resources (see Figure 1). By inherited resources, some authors refer to only inherited cultural and natural resources (thus, environmental), while others refer to inherited general infrastructure. For these reasons, we grouped different elements that constitute tourism destination supply and are not seen as environmental tourism attractors under “tourism-created resources.” The elements of this group are divided into two subgroups. The first is tourism infrastructure, which encompasses the different tourism buildings and structures that enable the production of tourism services, such as hotels, casinos, marinas, sport facilities, and national parks. The second is tourism super-structure, which encompasses tourism services, such as half board, casino entertainment, marina mooring, golfing, and visiting national parks, all of which are enabled by the tourism infrastructure (Planina and Mihalič 2002). These different groups of resources are presented in Table 2.

In addition, it should be noted that components of general infrastructure, such as roads, airports, electricity generation and transmission systems, and plumbing, have been studied by many authors as important elements of a destination’s

Figure 2. Tourism environmental resources in tourism supply-demand model.

supply and competitiveness (Ritchie and Crouch 2003). However, in our model, the corresponding services are not considered to be direct tourism supply, as they have not been purposely built for tourism use alone and, thus, are not tourism-built resources (Planina 1997).

Environmental Resources in Tourism Supply–Demand Model

The extent to which environmental resources can be effective attractors depends on tourism-created resources, which enable visits to and stays in a destination. Thus, environmental tourism resources do not exist without tourism-created resources; there exist only potential tourist attractions that may or may not become real tourist resources.

The contribution of environmental resources to tourism performance is growing in importance; however, thus far, research on the degree to which they alone contribute to tourism economic value is almost nonexistent. It is not simple to capture their contribution because of their dependency on tourism-created resources and their indirect involvement in economic processes; Figure 2 illustrates a supply–demand tourism model that attempts to capture these connections. In Figure 2, environmental resources trigger tourism demand (see direction *a*, Figure 2), while created resources play a dual role, as they enable environmental resources for visitation (see direction *b*, Figure 2) and also attract and enable tourism demand (see direction *c*, Figure 2). Direct tourism market exchange occurs along direction *c* when overnight stays, transportation, and events are sold and paid for by tourists. However, added value or producer surplus on account of tourism environmental resources is enabled and created along directions *b* and *a*, which are also the lines of indirect market valuation of environmental resources.

The Hypothesized Model

Different concepts have been used to capture the difference between the ideal and real tourism supply of environmental and tourism-created resources that simultaneously incorporates

Figure 3. The Hypothesized model.

visitors' expectations and real experiences. On the one hand, for an ideal tourist destination, the importance placed by visitors on environmental destination elements is of relevance. On the other hand, for a real destination, performance is important and is related to the quality of the delivered/received elements as perceived by the real visitors. The model studies both environmental and tourism-created resources and shows gaps between the ideal and real performance of resources (Figure 3).

The understanding of created and environmental resources in the proposed model (Figure 3) follows the meaning and the suggested theoretical structure of tourism-created and environmental resources as already presented in Table 2. In this regard, the term environmental resources is used in its broader meaning and encompasses natural and sociocultural attractions. Tourism-created resources correspond to the group of tourism-relevant infrastructure (tourism buildings and structures) and super-structure (tourism services). The presented *a*, *b*, and *c* relationships are derived from the analysis of tourism supply as presented in Figure 2, and demonstrate the dependency of environmental resources that can only enter the tourism market with the help of tourism-created resources. The arrows in Figure 2 point from independent to dependent variables. Environmental resources are thus both a dependent and an independent variable; their access to the market depends on the quality and quantity of tourism-created resources; on the other hand, they also act as an independent variable in the environmental resources–tourism demand relationship as tourism demand depends on the quality and quantity of a destination's environmental resources.

Ideal Destination: Importance of Environmental Resources

The model is based on the assumption that potential tourism demand distinguishes between environmental and tourism-created resources and their subgroups (Table 2), and that this division is meaningful and important for a potential destination's visitors and consequently for suppliers. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1a: Tourism demand (visitors) classifies environmental and tourism-created resources into two separate groups.

Hypothesis 1b: Tourism demand (visitors) classifies environmental resources into two subgroups: natural and sociocultural resources.

Hypothesis 1c: Tourism demand (visitors) classifies tourism-created resources into two subgroups: infrastructure and super structure.

Real Destination: Performance of Environmental Resources

Customer satisfaction in our proposed model (Figure 3) is directly linked to tourism demand and is a key indicator of a destination's real performance and competitiveness. Compared to tangible financial performance indicators, the intangible indicators of customer satisfaction are becoming a popular tourism performance measure, perhaps, because they are more in line with the intangible character of the service-oriented tourism sector (Sigala et al. 2004; Huang,

Chu, and Wang 2007; Kozak 2001a). In this regard, customer satisfaction reflects the destination's performance, and improvement in customer satisfaction leads to higher competitiveness (Huang and Sarigöllü 2008; Oh and Parks 1997; Alegre and Garau 2011).

Our model suggests that environmental and tourism-created resources are two different groups of resources that play a role in customer satisfaction. The model connections (Figure 3) labeled a, b, and c, which have been theoretically grounded in this paper, have been tested with the hypothesis. In addition, a hypothesis on the relative higher impact of environmental resources, based on theoretical assumptions of their primary role and necessary condition, as well as on the orientation of the "new tourist" toward the environment, has also been proposed. Therefore, we posit the following:

Hypothesis 2a: Tourism environmental resources are positively related to visitors' satisfaction (destination's performance).

Hypothesis 2b: Tourism environmental resources are positively related to tourism-created resources.

Hypothesis 2c: Tourism-created resources are positively related to visitors' satisfaction (destination's performance).

Hypothesis 2d: The positive relationship between tourism environmental resources and visitor satisfaction is stronger than that between tourism-created resources and visitor satisfaction.

Importance–performance Gaps in Environmental Resources

Previous empirical research has demonstrated that customer satisfaction is a function of both expectations related to certain resources and judgments of performance of those resources' (Tribe and Snaith 1998; Martilla and James 1977). The corresponding gap is often measured by an importance–performance analysis (IPA), a widely used analysis tool in tourism research (Enright and Newton 2004; Tribe and Snaith 1998; Scott, Schewl, and Frederick 1978; Tourism Canada 1988; Ryan and Huimin 2007; Crompton and Love 1995; Coghlan 2012; Deng 2007). A standard IPA is based on a two-dimensional matrix with importance on the *x*-axis and performance on the *y*-axis. The mean of performance and importance divides the matrix into four quadrants that represent different improvement opportunities (i.e., "possible overkill," "keep up the good work," "low priority," "concentrate here"). Such a mean value matrix is applied often but many tourism studies have also applied a modified IPA (Deng 2007; Coghlan 2012; Mikulić and Prebežac 2012). This article is interested only in exploring the importance category for understanding the ideal destination supply of environmental resources and exploring the performance category for understanding the real performance of destination. It is also interested in calculating importance and performance gaps in environmental resources.

Figure 4. Location map of Slovenia.
Source: ETC, 2012.

Here, we again refer to our previous discussion on the growing importance of environmental resources and argue that for many potential visitors, environmental resources are more important than their enablers, that is, tourism-created resources. However, a real tourism destination may not fulfill visitors' perception of the importance of the resources in question. Thus, a significant gap may exist between the expected and real performance of a destination's environmental resources. Therefore, we test the following:

Hypothesis 3a: The importance of environmental resources is statistically different from the importance of created resources.

Hypothesis 3b: The importance of environmental resources is statistically different from the performance of environmental resources.

Destination: Slovenia

This article uses the traditional economic- geography-based destination approach, which allows us to define a destination as a geographical area of one country (Saraniemi and Kylanen 2011). Being a relatively new country in Central Europe, Slovenia was established in 1991 with its proclamation of independence from the former socialist Yugoslavia. This member state of the European Union shares a border with Italy, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, and the Adriatic coast (Figure 4). Slovenia spans Alpine, continental, and Mediterranean climate zones, and its tourism includes mountain, sea, city, spa, gambling, and farm destinations. According to SURS (2010) data, the majority of tourism nights is spent in Slovenian spa destinations (34%), followed by mountain (23%) and seaside destinations (22%). The share of Slovenian's capital city Ljubljana is 8%.

Slovenian tourism has a long history. The Rogaška spa and Postojna cave are approximately 200 years old. Tourism on the Adriatic coast in Portorož has existed for more than 100 years, and the first gambling license was granted to the Portorož Casino in 1913 by the Austrian crown.

Table 3. Sample Structure.

Country of Origin	Population Structure (Visitors) in %	Sample Structure in %	Coverage in %
Italy	13.71	15.81	86.71
Austria	6.71	9.00	74.57
Germany	6.47	12.03	53.75
United Kingdom	2.28	5.59	40.74
Croatia	3.43	3.13	109.60
Netherlands	1.96	2.65	73.98

In previous decades, Slovenia was a transit country for European tourists moving to and from the Adriatic coast. Presently, the country includes approximately 118,000 tourist beds, 40,000 of which are in the hotel sector (SURS 2010). In 2010, tourists (62% of whom are foreign) stayed for a total of 8.9 million nights (SURS 2010). Inbound visitor numbers totaled three million in 2010 (SURS 2010). Foreign tourism earnings were 1.9 billion euros, representing 42% of the total export of services (BS 2012). Despite its small size in absolute terms, tourism is an important economic activity for this country of 2 million that is half the size of Switzerland. It is estimated that in 2010, Slovenian tourism contributed approximately 12% to the Slovenian GDP and approximately 13% to total employment (WTTC 2011).

Notably, the country is marked by its forests. Approximately 60% of its land mass is covered by wooded areas, and the country is marketed as a green area of Europe through such slogans as “Slovenia is green,” “Slovenia goes green,” and “Slovenia promotes green” (ITEF 2011). Indeed, inherited natural and sociocultural bases are observed as important competitive advantages for Slovenian tourism, and the country is currently focusing on sustainable development issues (Dwyer et al. 2012).

In 1999, Sirše and Mihalič (1999) and Vanhove (1999) conducted a competitiveness study using the De Keyser-Vanhove model. The research was supply-side based and concluded that Slovenian tourism was stronger in its environmental attractiveness than in its tourism-created infrastructure and super-structure and management’s capability to add value.

Then, in 2004, researchers applied the methodology from the Integrated Competitiveness Destination Model to Slovenia (Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič 2008). The results were similar to the results of the above-mentioned study based on the De Keyser-Vanhove model. Tourism managers once again graded the competitiveness potential of natural and cultural attractions higher than created resources and management.

Thus far, no studies have captured Slovenian environmental tourism performance and competitiveness from the perspective of visitors. The next section discusses the approach we took in addressing this limitation in the literature.

Method

Data Collection

Data were collected from 1,054 tourists in Slovenia by means of personal interviews in four Slovenian destinations. Data were collected by a professional market research agency during the period May to July. The agency’s interviewers have conducted a computer-assisted personal interviewing of a destination’s visitors on the basis of a structured questionnaire. Only those visitors who had been at the destination for more than one day were included in the survey in order to ensure more relevant and reliable data on perceptions of that destination (Kozak 2001b).

The first draft of the questionnaire was tested with personal interviews of 25 randomly selected visitors. With minor changes based on the results of the pretest, the final version of the questionnaire was developed and used in four Slovenian tourism destinations: a city, a seaside resort, a recreational resort and a spa resort. The questionnaire was designed in the Slovenian language and then translated into the English, German, and Italian languages.

There were 52% female and 58% male interviewees. In terms of age, the sample distribution is as follows: 15-29 years (25%), 30-39 years (24%), 40-50 years (31%), and 60 years and up (20%). The sample framework follows a representative visitation structure by country of origin. The sample representation is shown in Table 3.

Measures

Correspondents evaluated tourism supply elements on two different aspects. First, they evaluated the importance of a given item for a destination (How important is this element? 1 = *completely unimportant* to 5 = *very important*). Second, they evaluated the destination’s performance for a given element (At this destination, this element is exceptional. 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*). A list of these statements is included in the appendix (Table A1).

Further, data on visitor’s satisfaction was also gathered by asking the respondents on whether they agree with the statement “I am pleased that I decided to visit this tourist destination” (1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*).

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix for a Factor Model of Destination Resources (Ideal Destination).

Item	Four-Factor Model				Two-Factor Model	
	Factor 1 Infrastr	Factor 2 Superstr	Factor 3 Nature	Factor 4 SocCult	Factor 1 TCRE	Factor 2 TENV
Wellness offer	.894	.068	.104	-.083	.818	.083
Thermal spa offer	.886	.157	.023	-.003	.775	.117
Quality of accommodations	.614	.079	.256	.389	.551	.477
Nightlife and entertainment	.007	.877	-.094	.072	.503	-.167
Sport facilities and recreational activities	.228	.651	.360	-.247	.560	.072
Possibilities for shopping	.430	.556	-.075	.421	.669	.138
Unspoiled nature	-.044	-.031	.815	.170	-.050	.750
Overall cleanliness of the destination	.320	.057	.734	.119	.300	.680
Diversity of cultural/historical attractions	.001	-.019	.134	.769	-.011	.548
Friendliness of the local people	.034	.044	.435	.503	.054	.632
Total variance		67.68			46.08	

Note: TCRE = tourism-created resources; TENV = tourism environmental resources; Infrastr = tourism infrastructure; Superstr = tourism super-structure; Nature = natural resources; SocCult = social and cultural resources.

Research Findings: Slovenian Destinations

Grouping Tourism Environmental Resources as a Part of Ideal Destination Supply

To study the first set of hypothesis—if potential tourists distinguish between environmental and tourism-created resources and their elements—a factor analysis using the principal component method with Varimax rotation was implemented. Based on the data on the importance of a single destination's resources to the potential visitor, the factor analysis reveals four important factors, representing 67.68% of the total variance (Table 4, columns 2-5). The first factor, tourism infrastructure, includes tourism-created supplies directly linked to accommodation, including spa and wellness facilities. The second factor, tourism super-structure, includes a variety of vacation entertainment, including sports and shopping activities. The third factor, natural resources, includes two variables: unspoiled nature and overall cleanliness of the destination. The fourth factor, sociocultural attractions, includes the diversity of cultural and historical attractions and the friendliness of the local population.

The first two factors in columns 2 and 3 represent tourism-created resources, and the second two in columns 4 and 5 represent tourism environmental resources. A grouped two-factor model has also been tested and explains 47% of the total variance (Table 2, columns 6 and 7). The coefficient of reliability is higher for created resources (0.74) and is poor (0.59), yet acceptable, for environmental resources. Thus, our first set of hypotheses—that visitors (tourism demand) distinguish between environmental and tourism-created resources, between tourism infrastructures and super-structures, and between the nature and sociocultural resources—is supported, suggesting that it is meaningful to group

destination resources into these groups to perform the analysis.

Testing Real Destination Performance of Environmental Resources

For the second set of hypotheses on customer satisfaction (destination's performance) and environmental resources, the data are analyzed using a structural equation model (SEM). The model shows a good fit of the data: the measure of fit, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), is less than 0.05, and the comparative fit index (CFI) is close to 1 (0.988). The percentage of explanatory variance for environmental resources' impact on satisfaction is 26%. The sample size, other descriptive statistics, and covariance matrix are presented in the appendix (Tables A2 and A3).

The first three hypotheses (2a, 2b, and 2c) on connections as predicted by our conceptual model and hypothesis can be supported by our SEM. As presented in Figure 5, the arrows also correspond to theoretically predicted connection directions: tourism-created resources have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction (0.33) and environmental resources (0.37), and environmental resources have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction (0.29). Environmental resources are determined by the quality and quantity of tourism-created resources and influence satisfaction in a scope determined by tourism-created resources.

Then, in regard to our next hypothesis (2d), we expected a higher potential for environmental resources, but the model shows quite the contrary. Tourism-created resources have a stronger impact on satisfaction than environmental resources (standardized coefficient beta 0.33 for tourism-created and 0.29 for environmental). Thus, hypothesis 3d cannot be supported.

Another interesting finding of the model, according to the subfactor-level loadings, is that sociocultural subfactors

Figure 5. Tourism structural equation model for Slovenia (standardized effects).

(loadings = 0.85) are represented more in the model structure than are natural subfactors (loadings = 0.57). This finding is not in line with the expectation that Slovenia has a competitive advantage in its green and unspoiled nature. In reality, sociocultural attractiveness potential is better utilized and, thus, has a stronger impact on competitiveness than natural attractiveness. Yet, this result could be due to the lack of use or poor access to the natural environment, with or without the support of created tourism supply, or the strong focus of the tourism sector on offering tourism infrastructure instead of more nature-based tourism services.

Testing the Importance–Performance Gaps in Environmental Resources

In line with hypothesis 3a that potential visitors rate the importance of environmental resources higher than that of created resources, our analysis shows the gap in the importance of the two categories (0.69, calculated from the importance mean values in Table 5). As this importance gap is statistically significant (see Table A4 in the appendix), our hypothesis is supported.

The results based on the visitors' opinion also show that Slovenia as a real destination is performing well in terms of tourism-created resources and underperforming in terms of environmental resources. This finding is demonstrated by the negative importance–performance gaps for environmental resources and its subgroups (Table 5, and Table A4 in the appendix), suggesting that visitors do not experience nature and sociocultural environments in the quality and, likely, quantity that they expected. Therefore, hypothesis 3b on the gap between the importance and performance of environmental resources is supported.

Table 5. Importance–Performance Gaps for Slovenia (Differences between Ideal and Real Destinations).

Resources	Importance	Performance	IPA GAP
TCRE	3.58	3.92	0.34*
Infrastr	3.50	4.05	0.55*
Superstr	3.67	3.86	0.19
TENV	4.27	4.18	–0.09*
Nature	4.37	4.22	–0.15*
SocCult	4.17	4.13	–0.04*

Note: TCRE = tourism-created resources; TENV = tourism environmental resources; Infrastr = tourism infrastructure; Superstr = tourism super-structure; Nature = natural resources; SocCult = social and cultural resources; IPA GAP = importance–performance gap (gap between customer perception of importance and performance in resources).

*Statistically significant at the 5% level. For confirmation of the gaps in significance, see Table A4 in the appendix.

In regard to our model (Figure 3), this result may be due to the high urbanization of space or low (lower) quality of environmental resources, which did not satisfy visitors. Further, it may be due to improperly designed tourism-created resources that do not utilize the full potential of the environmental attractiveness. The latter may occur because of the inaccessibility of these resources or the lack of tourism services that allow visitors to access and enjoy them.

Discussions and Implications

This article focuses on the effect of environmental resources on destination performance, the support they receive from tourism-created resources, and the expectations and experiences of the destinations' visitors. Based on the review of environmental resources in the tourism economic literature, a conceptual model has been proposed. The importance–performance instrument has been used to construct the model. On the basis of the importance of environmental resources, factor grouping into environmental and tourism-created has been proposed. Furthermore, based on the performance view, the mutual connections between environmental and created resources and their connections to tourism demand, for example, to the satisfaction of visitors, have been conceptualized.

On the basis of our results, we argue that destinations can measure their capacity to enable access to environmental resources to visitors. Furthermore, recognizing that environmental resources require tourism-created resources to become a part of tourist supply, destinations can measure how efficiently their created resources support value creation on the account of environmental visitor experience. It is important for a destination to understand if created resources enable tourism products to sufficiently employ environmental resources, such as natural or sociocultural resources. Many destinations today claim to build their competitiveness on the potential of their natural or cultural

endowments and may believe that they are successfully doing so. However, our data show that although Slovenia works to create an image of itself as a green destination, the destination itself does not utilize nature much and as well as its visitors expect. Moreover, we found that the sociocultural element is strongly represented in the studied impact on customer satisfaction. Improvements in tourism product could be made, thereby helping the country meet visitors' "greener" expectations. Proper investment in more supporting tourism-created resources, such as nature-based accommodation and tourism products, would help "sell" more natural resources to potential customers, increasing their overall satisfaction and destination performance.

Although one may argue that our model only represents a two-factor view that neglects many important factors, we claim that the selected model has a strong theoretical basis in tourism economics literature and, thus, is worthy of being tested empirically. This article represents an attempt to empirically test this type of model. Dividing tourism supply into the categories of environmental and tourism-created resources helps to understand the relationship between the two factor groups of tourism supply and their impact on tourism demand and on value creation. Furthermore, the model enables researchers to study the role of environmental resources and their impact on destination performance.

Furthermore, it can be argued that our model does not consider the efficiency of tourism management, which is an important element in transforming inherited environmental resources into tourism products. Yet, we argue that the model sufficiently analyzes the position of environmental resources in a destination's supply and thus is an efficient diagnostic tool that can be used to inform and adapt managerial activities and tourism policies. The results have shown that all other things being equal in tourism management efficiency, there is a negative gap between the importance and performance of Slovenian environmental resources. The gap is larger for natural resources and somewhat smaller for cultural resources. Obviously, immediate private and public managerial efforts to improve the destination's performance and to synchronize it with the country's green tourism vision and mission are needed. Tourism policy and more specifically tourism product development needs to incorporate more environmental resource-based experience and the visitor's access and actual enjoyment of environmental attractions, and more specifically natural attractions, needs to be improved.

These demand-side opinion-based results contradict previous research findings on Slovenian tourism, which are based on the opinion of supply-side tourism stakeholders, who believe that Slovenia is performing better in its environmental resources than in its created resources. This paper, then, shows a serious discrepancy that requires immediate attention and has strong policy implications. Such a view, as held by tourism stakeholders, demand more investment in tourism infrastructure only and is likely to increase the gap

in expected and experienced environmental performance of the destination. Consequently, the decreased satisfaction in environmental resources will lead to a decreased environmental competitiveness of the destination.

The presented demand-side view on performance of environmental resources in Slovenia is also a wider contribution of this research. Thus far, many applied economics-based studies measured competitiveness as perceived by tourism stakeholders on the supply side (Bahar and Kozak 2007; De Keyser and Vanhove 1994; Dwyer and Kim 2003; Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič 2008). However, the question of whether the evaluation of environmental attractions by supply-side stakeholders would be consistent with an evaluation gathered from visitors themselves can be raised (Bahar and Kozak 2007; Enright and Newton 2004). The advantage of the supply-side approach lies in lower costs and its ability to measure a wide range of competitiveness factors, such as supporting factors, destination management, or policy. It is assumed that demand-side respondents are more experienced and knowledgeable to evaluate the range of different factors. Further, it is also assumed that experts are "able to speak for the tourists" (Enright and Newton 2004, p. 781) and that their opinions represent a large group of tourists and are even more accurate, as there may be a gap between tourists' expressed opinions and actual behavior. In terms of our debate on tourism environmental resources, this phenomenon can be illustrated by assigning a high declarative value to the environmental quality of the destination (environmental resources), while actually being more interested in the quality of accommodations and related services (tourism-created resources). One single study that was conducted on both sides suggested that both tourism practitioners and tourists felt that natural and cultural resources were the most promising attributes for destination competitiveness, yet suppliers viewed this aspect as significantly more important than did visitors (Bahar and Kozak 2007). Again, we refer to already mentioned two earlier supply-based studies on the competitiveness potential of Slovenian environmental resources that noted that Slovenia has an advantage in environmental tourism attractors (Mihalič and Sirše 1999; Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič 2008). However, the supply-based research is not directly connected to consumers and might bring conclusions that contradict the opinions of visitors. Our model has successfully tested and confirmed that from the standpoint of a potential visitor, dividing resources into environmental and created resources is meaningful and that in the case of Slovenia, visitors clearly wanted more environmental resource-based experiences. This research offers an informed argument for Slovene tourism policy makers and practitioners to improve the accessibility and delivery of environmental resource-based tourism products and experience for the visitors.

Based on the fact that environmental resources may not have the same attractiveness potential for all types of

destinations, the view of different destination types needs attention. For example, Enright and Newton (2004) studied the competitiveness of the urban tourism destination of Hong Kong as perceived by Hong Kong tourism practitioners and found that some environmental attributes received low rankings. For example, climate ranked only 12th, probably because climates of city destinations may be considered less important than in resort destinations. This study implies that environmental resources may have varying importance in different types of destinations. Some destinations, such as cities or theme parks, may focus more on created tourism supply resources, while others, such as mountain or sea resorts, might build their customer experience more on environmental attributes. Specifically, many see that destinations, facing the stage of decline, as already illustrated in this paper, must improve its performance with regard to natural resources. In the past, these destinations have developed tourism infrastructures and super-structures to capitalize on the natural resources they possess; however, these created resources have failed to meet the visitors' satisfaction in regard to insufficient or poor experience in environmental resources, environmental quality included. It is true that destination development has strongly focused on the development of accommodation and other tourism infrastructure and has somewhat neglected the environmental dimension of destinations' tourism supply (Aguiló, Alegre, and Sard 2005). This observation can be illustrated by a strong investment in the quantity and quality of hotel rooms, restaurants and convention facilities, casinos and hotel indoor swimming pools, and larger indoor water-based parks, hotel spa centers, hotel coffee shops and souvenir shops or shopping centers, and so on, on the account of development of products that would take visitors outside hotel premises, offering them a more environmental experience in the destination. Furthermore, some investment in the beach facilities and urbanization have been done, yet the money and thus effective policy support for investing into the environmental quality of the destination has been scarce. The development plans have not built on the proper created-environmental resources relationship, as emphasized in the proposed model in this article.

Limitations and Further Research

The model developed in this article combines the supply-demand tourism view with the concept of importance-performance analysis and attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the ideal and actual role of environmental resources in destination performance. A test of the model has been conducted only in the case of the destination, Slovenia, and the results are thus limited to this test and this country only. However, given the general nature of our conceptualized model, we expect that the model can be used in different settings. To test its generalizability, it should be applied and tested in other destinations.

Furthermore, the importance statements that we used to create the groups of environmental and created resources might vary significantly among different types of destinations. In other words, not all potential destinations possess the same elements of environmental resources. Specifically, some may build their tourism development model on flora and fauna, while others on water or climate. In this regard, we argue that the conceptual model has a general nature, yet the measurement instrument needs to be further developed and expanded.

For a market-based study of tourism performance, the use of visitors as key informants is justifiable. At the same time, for measuring the importance of environmental resources, the researcher should ask potential visitors, not actual visitors in the destination. It is potential tourism supply that is a market category and that should be measured (Planina 1997). From the standpoint of destination focus on different market segments, the possible (potential) segments, not the existing ones, are relevant. If a destination focuses on offering green tourism products, green tourism market segments would be of relevance. However, the costs of such a potential demand research often prevent data to be collected from potential visitors, and such a method would also prevent the collection of data on both the importance and the performance of environmental resources from the same person at the same time. Nevertheless, with the help of web-based customer research, we assume that this theoretically correct approach toward potential demand might more often find its way in future tourism research. So far, measuring potential demand by asking the real visitors remains a research limitation (including our research). However, in our case, it has eliminated the need to differentiate the question on the importance of resources according to different destination types. We assume this for the importance data corresponding to the kind of visited destination, as well as for the performance data.

The results on the valorization of environmental resources through tourism might also vary on the account of a destination's development stage, expressed as the level of development of tourism infrastructure and super-structure. Yet, we expect that the model can prove a useful instrument even in such settings, emphasizing the lower than ideal customer experience based on the tourism-created, instead of the environmental resources. In this context, further research might analyze the rate at which environmental resources are valorized by created resources according to a different tourism destination development stage.

Furthermore, the purpose of this paper has been to develop a theoretically supported model to study the role of environmental resources in destination supply and demand and to offer a useful instrument to inform policy makers and tourism destination managers on the possible shortcomings in integrating the environmental resource-based experience into destination services. A strong focus only on measuring the performance in environmental resources has culminated in a two-factor model, as it became evident that

environmental resources need tourism-created resources to enable them to participate in the tourism market. Future research can expand the model to include other factors. For example, the role of general infrastructure that some authors see as “inherited” resource might be added to the model. The same can be argued for the (given) accessibility of the destination, for example.

Next, our conceptual model also suggests a relationship between the environmental and created resources, as has been seen by many tourism researchers. In this view, environmental resources are enabled by and depend on created resources. In our opinion, such a model enables the measurement of the full contribution of environmental resources, which was the only primary focus of our research. Thus, the arrows in our model point from created resources (seen as enablers) toward environmental resources (seen as attractors), and from environmental and created resources toward visitor satisfaction. In addition, some researchers have also discussed the complementarities between the two groups of resources (Krippendorff 1971; Kaspar 1991), which suggests a different type of complementary connection. In other words, such a theoretical ground would demand two-sided arrows between created and environmental resources in our model. It might be worth testing this kind of a model and analyzing its implications.

Another relevant issue for future consideration is environmental quality. The proposed model has combined environmental resources into two subgroups, nature being one of them. A well-structured importance–performance instrument that would include statements in relation to the environmental quality of the destination might help expand the model with a single subfactor, environmental quality. We assume that some destinations might face a low impact of environmental resources on customer satisfaction on the account of given conditions (e.g., environmental degradation, pollution levels, water and air quality) and not on the account of poor tourism policy and management that fails to integrate more nature-based experiences into the tourism service.

In conclusion, the model presented in this paper can be developed further but, in its current form, may help understand the importance of tourism environmental resources and their natural and sociocultural subgroups for destination performance. As our model also includes created resources, seen as tourism enablers of environmental resources, the model also has the potential to study the role of created resources for destination performance. Nevertheless, from the aspect of environmental resources, it is relevant for many modern destinations that claim to have advantages in natural or cultural resources. For these destinations, the model offers an instrument that may help their tourism policy makers test the connection between environmental and tourism-created resources and the environmental experiences they actually deliver to their visitors in order to make informed decisions on their investments and policies.

Appendix

Table A1. Importance and Performance Measurement Instrument.

Statements	Importance ^a	Performance ^a
Personal safety and security	•	•
The destination can be easily reached	•	•
Overall cleanliness of the destination	•	•
Unspoiled nature	•	•
Climate conditions	•	•
Diversity of cultural/historical attractions (e.g., architecture, tradition)	•	•
The quality of the accommodation (e.g., hotel, motel, apartment)	•	•
Friendliness of the local people	•	•
Organization of the local transportation services	•	•
Local cuisine offering	•	•
Possibilities for shopping	•	•
Nightlife and entertainment	•	•
Opportunity for rest	•	•
Availability of sport facilities and recreational activities	•	•
Cultural and other event offerings	•	•
Thermal spa offerings	•	•
Wellness offerings	•	•
Casino and gambling offerings	•	•
Conference offerings	•	•

^aGraded using a five-point Likert-type scale.

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics for the Measurement Model.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (Standard Deviation)	Skewness (Standard Error)	Kurtosis (Standard Error)
Infrastr	711	1.00	5.00	4.04 (0.75)	−0.88 (0.09)	0.78 (0.18)
Superstr	781	1.00	5.00	3.86 (0.70)	−0.70 (0.09)	0.73 (0.18)
Nature	1,035	1.00	5.00	4.22 (0.76)	−0.97 (0.08)	0.82 (0.15)
SocCult	1,005	1.00	5.00	4.146 (0.66)	−0.68 (0.08)	0.45 (0.15)
SATISF	1,054	1.00	5.00	4.58 (0.64)	−1.64 (0.08)	3.61 (0.15)
Valid N (listwise)	612					

Note: The SATISF Kurtosis is rather high, yet acceptable. The variable was selected (from a list of possible variables) for the model as it enabled a good fit of the model (high root mean square error of approximation). Infrastr = tourism infrastructure; Superstr = tourism super-structure; Nature = natural resources; SocCult = social and cultural resources; SATISF = visitor satisfaction.

Table A3. Covariance Matrix for the Measurement Model.

ROWTYPE_	VARNAME_	Infrastr	Superstr	Nature	SocCult	SATISF
COV	Infrastr	0.56				
COV	Superstr	0.23	0.48			
COV	Nature	0.05	0.05	0.58		
COV	SocCult	0.10	0.12	0.24	0.44	
COV	SATISF	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.40

Note: Infrastr = tourism infrastructure; Superstr = tourism super-structure; Nature = natural resources; SocCult = social and cultural resources; SATISF = visitor satisfaction.

Table A4. Paired Sample Tests for Tourism-Created and Environmental Resources for the Destination, Slovenia.

		Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Significance (Two-Tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
Pair							
Paired sample tests for importance							
Pair 1	TENV (Importance) – TCRE (Importance)	0.69	0.64	0.73	27.86	997.00	0.00
Pair 1	Superstr (Importance) – Infrastr (Importance)	0.17	0.10	0.24	4.78	1,002.00	0.00
Pair 1	Nature (Importance) – SocCult (Importance)	0.19	0.14	0.24	8.03	1,044.00	0.00
Paired sample test for performance – importance							
Pair 1	TENV (Performance) –TENV (Importance)	−0.11	−0.15	−0.07	−5,080.00	981.00	0.00
Pair 2	TCRE (Performance) –TCRE (Importance)	0.08	0.03	0.13	2,933.00	628.00	0.00
Pair 3	Nature (Performance) –Nature (Importance)	−0.15	−0.21	−0.10	−5,695.00	1,032.00	0.00
Pair 4	SocCult (Performance) –SocCult (Importance)	−0.06	−0.10	−0.01	−2,395.00	1,002.00	0.02
Pair 5	Infrastr (Performance) –Infrastr (Importance)	0.16	0.10	0.22	5,439.00	708.00	0.00
Pair 6	Superstr (Performance) –Superstr (Importance)	0.03	−0.03	0.09	0.98	775.00	0.33

Note: TCRE = tourism-created resources; TENV = tourism environmental resources; Infrastr = tourism infrastructure; Superstr = tourism super-structure; Nature = natural resources; SocCult = social and cultural resources.

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