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Determinants for port cities design

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Abstract

The cruise market is a constantly growing business, but cities and ports only benefit from it to a small extent as tourists spend most of their money on board. The aim of this article is to verify the motivation and needs of tourists to visit ports and cities and take advantage of local attractions. The aim is also to present a catalogue of the most important services and products that influence the creation of experiences in tourists and the willingness to return to a given port, as well as the role of AI in this process. The research methods used in the study are qualitative research - research walks and the method of cocreation design thinking. The research was conducted during a 14-day research cruise along the southern Baltic coast. During the cruise, 9 ports located in Germany, Sweden and Poland were visited. The insight into the research shows how the use of AI and technology in traditional services and products adds value for users.

Keywords: : design theory, tourism

1. Introduction

Creating a tourist offer at the moment is not enough to encourage people to come to a given place or to make the inhabitants of this city feel proud of it.

For this reason, the authors emphasize the role of research and the methods of design thinking in order to design the concept of a port city open to tourists, as well as friendly to residents. Research on satisfaction determinants and intention to return and recommendations (Gabe et al., 2006; Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2010; Larsen and Wolff, 2016), factors affecting passenger spending (Henthorne, 2000; Brida et al., 2012a; Lee and Lee, 2017) and the spatial behaviour of cruise ships at destinations (Jaakson, 2004; De Cantis et al, 2016; Ferrante et al., 2016), are of particular value to port and local authorities looking for ways to maximise the benefits for their destinations and minimise the various negative impacts of cruise tourism on port cities. As the poor contribution of cruise tourists to the local economy (Parola et al., 2014; Larsen et al., 2013, Domènech, Gutiérrez, 2019). Despitr of that more qualitative studies could be developed to collect information on the motivation to abandon ship, as this could be a variable with a high impact on expenditure at destination as well as on the satisfaction of the visit (Domènech., Gutiérrez, 2019)

This concept has not only place in theory, in practice, this method has been incorporated into the activities of the project, which aims to restore the splendour of selected port cities of the southern Baltic.

2. Destination management organization and value creation in design theory

Destination management organization (DMO) attempts to stimulate tourism development processes through cooperation and collaboration initiatives.

Service design is proposed as a major attitude and behaviour of stakeholders in the tourism destination. It enables a constant discussion and on-going process of co-development and co-production and is finally labeled as "tourism design".

Customer-orientation of all stakeholders in the destination can be increased and will lead to a strong consistent tourism value chain. The service design is based on the 4D concept consisting of the following elements: (discover), (define), (deliver). The indicated steps are part of the double diamond model shown in the figure below (figure 1).

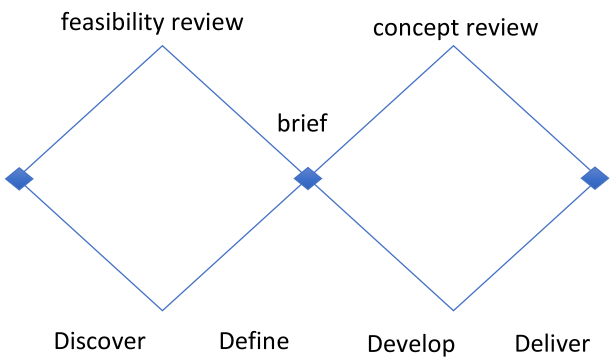

Figure 1. Double diamond model. Source: http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/about-design/how-designers-work/the-design-process/ (access: 28.04.2020).

If a successful method of service design is employed, the service will be user-friendly and relevant to the customers, while being sustainable and competitive for the service provider. For this purpose, service design uses methods and tools derived from different disciplines, ranging from ethnography to information and management science. Service design concepts and ideas are typically portrayed visually, using different representation techniques according to the culture, skill and level of understanding of the stakeholders involved in the service processes (Fesenmaier and Xiang, 2017).

It is important to bear in mind the cross-sectoral permeability of its activities. What is more, the way services are designed has been significantly influenced by the current trend of experience economy. Therefore, managers must be aware of the need to create appropriate conditions for establishing a direct relationship between the producer, the good and the recipient. The customer's experience refers to their emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual involvement in the consumption of products and services. Thanks to this approach, the recipient has a sense of co-participation and co-creation of different types of activities, and thus involvement and identification with the product.

The experience economy will translate increasingly into value creation also in tourism and cruise ships. In this way, there are three basic characteristics that make up the success and value creation of products and services (figure 2). First of all, usefulness is important - a product or service meets the needs of the recipient at the functional level. In turn, usability determines the way in which the customer derives benefits from the proposed service or product.

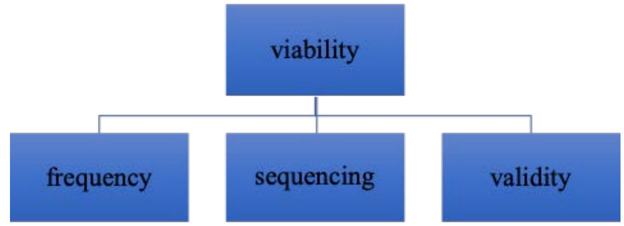

Figure 2. Model of value creation. Source: Stickdorn and Schneider 2011, This is service design thinking, BIS Publishers, Amsterdam, p. 87.

The viability is determined by three characteristics: frequency, sequencing and validity. Frequency is a measure of the functions most commonly used by the users; the most frequently used function should be as visible and accessible as possible. Sequence sequencing is based on the correct sequence selection, e. g. We pay for the transaction at the end, not halfway through the process. Important is information that is relevant from the point of view of the customer, should be clearly expressed at the right moment in the process, so that the user, when entering a given process, is aware that he meets the conditions and will be able to participate in the process from start to finish. The last feature in the concept of value is the pleasure that builds the experience of the recipient. It is a collection of all experiences that the recipient feels and gathers, using a given product or service (Stickdorn and Schneider, 2011).

The development factors of ports and destinations will change under the influence of globalisation, changing trends and economics, which will affect their perception and change their value. Experience is the last stage in the evolution of the economy, which aims to obtain maximum value from the market (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

According Pine and Gilmore, product and service design is based on the principle that it is not enough to design the products and services themselves, but also the accompanying feelings. At present, there is no cycling path, but only the experience of cycling. Apple does not design computers, but rather the philosophy of using ICT devices. Nowadays, success is based on the integration of experience in products and services that previously seemed trivial.

Thanks to new technologies, the scope of activities and possibilities in this aspect have been significantly expanded. The essence of experience increases the value of services and products on the market. Experience building around creative goods can have different levels of impact on the recipient. Figure 3 shows the pyramid of supplier and customer involvement through experience. This is very important tool especially for process of designing port cities concepts because especially in tourism engagement and experience are very important.

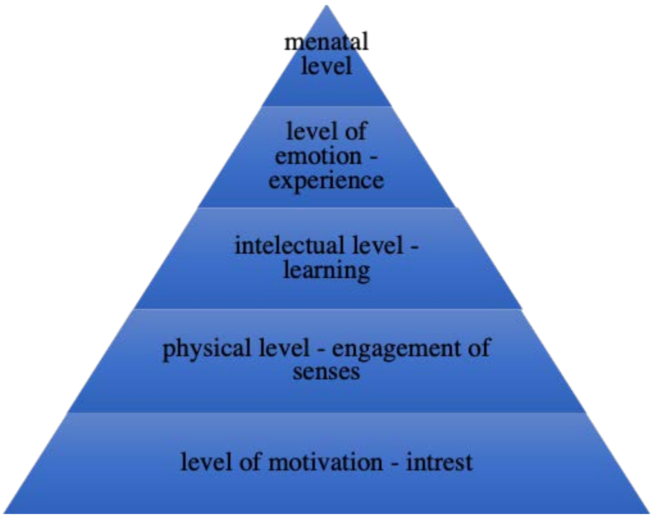

Figure 3. Engagement pyramid. Source: Martinson, Design Entrepreneurship Conference, Malmo 05.09.2013.

The customer's experience refers to his emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual involvement in the consumption of products and services. This approach gives the recipient a sense of co-participation and co-creating different types of activities and thus involvement, identifying with the product. The price of such an offer is therefore higher than the purchase of the good itself. In practical terms, the relationship between producer and consumer can take two extreme types of behaviour - active and passive. In an active relation, the producer allows the recipient to co-create a selected good or service, which the recipient wants to purchase. In a passive relationship, the producer recognizes that there is no need to involve the customer in the process of producing goods or services.

Tom Kelly, head of the American design firm Bleo, says that the contemporary global economy is less and less dependent on satisfying everyday real needs and more and more on satisfying experiences in which every trivial activity, supported by appropriate consumer behaviour, is to create a fascinating life project (Lyk, 2017). This trend is confirmed by Pine and Gilmore's thesis, which, while analysing the society, stated that goods and services alone are no longer sufficient to satisfy consumers. You need to create experiences for your customers to win against the competition. Deliveries form a framework for experience, but it is the customer who creates his own experience using the company's offer and adapts the frame to his own individual needs.

There is a pattern how the price varies depending on the offer and value of experience offered by products and services. The lowest price is achieved when we offer a mass product, the highest when the product or service produces the strongest sensation and causes a change in customer's behaviour. The increase in the willingness to pay is a response to products and services that meet individual preferences that are tailored to the needs of customers (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Therefore, it follows that the services will undergo constant transformation under the influence of external and internal factors, which will influence the demand and value of goods and services offered on the market. Also, the positive link between the length of stay at the destination and the expenditure of land-based cruise passengers has been widely proven (Brida and Risso, 2010; Brida et al., 2012; Di Vaio et al., 2018; Gargano and Grasso, 2016).

Pine and Gilmore have acknowledged that experience is the last stage in the evolution of the economy, which aims to obtain maximum value from the market. Experiences can provide a competitive advantage to ports that these ports create for the consumer. The new evolution is to integrate experience in products and services that previously seemed trivial. Thanks to new technologies, the scope of activities and possibilities in this aspect has been significantly extended. The essence of experience increases the value of services and products on the market. The cheapest are raw, unprocessed agricultural crops. The price increases when goods and services are produced from them. The experience and emotions are at the highest premium level (Pine and Gilmore 1999). The purchaser's experience refers to emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual involvement in the consumption of products and services. This approach gives the client a feeling of co-participation in different types of activities. The impact of satisfaction on the expenditure of cruise passengers on shore was studied, although to a more limited extent. Despite the fact that different types of variables were considered in the literature, a positive impact of satisfaction on cruise passenger spending was found (Gargano and Grasso, 2016; Brida et al., 2014, Di Vaio et al. 2018)

3. Baltic Sea Region Port Cities Challenges

The cruise market is a constantly growing promising but also is a highly competitive market - also in the Baltic Sea. The market is dominated by a few big operators, operating large vessels on established routes and offering standardized touristic activities. In consequence, only the large harbours are capable to provide the necessary infrastructure. Furthermore, cities are only marginally profiting from the cruise ships and tourists as the operators offer touristic modules themselves (often including activities outside the area) and most money is spent on the ships. Cruise passengers travelling on large ships (SSSh) usually spend much less time ashore than other passengers. SSSh is seen as an end in itself (Wood, 2004) because these giant ships have high quality facilities and services on board. Smaller cruise ships are seen as promising "niche" / market segment with potentials also for small and medium sized harbours in the southern Baltic Sea.

Analysis of the needs for the development of selected port cities of the southern Baltic has been implemented as part of the Joint development of Small Cruise Ship tourism heritage products in the Southern Baltic Sea Region – JOHANN project. Project is financed by INTERREG South Baltic (2018-2019).

JOHANN Project aims at developing the SB area towards an attractive small cruise ship (SCS) destination. SB city ports & their surrounding tourism destinations that are outlying the main cruise routes used from large vessels will jointly initiate the develop & establishment of cultural & natural heritage tours for SCS in order to claim their share & occupy a niche in the growing cruise market. At the end of JOHANN private cruise lines will operate SCS heritage tours in SBSR. A market for such services exists. SCS tours already operate in SB area, but hardly ever leave the main routes of established larger ports. Through joint activities & supported from external experts' partner destinations will turn their infrastructural limitations for large vessels into an advantage & make use of the existing potentials to develop & implement heritage cruise products for SCS & passengers seeking for customized high-quality experiences.

The innovation of the approach lies in the comprehensive capacity building process (steered from local support group) within the destinations (targeted advice from advisory board, training process for relevant actors applied experiences through pilot cruise implementation, visit of successful SCS destinations, learning from river cruise segment) as well as in the cross-border network of destinations to make them more attractive for SCS operators (approaching them with marketable all-round carefree products/packages regarding destination & local/regional touristic services/convenient information materials/perfectly serving SCS processing with joint port management standards) & enable the destinations to better exploit economic potentials of arriving cruise passengers. Additionally, the destinations prepare further investments to improve local conditions to welcome arriving SCS passengers & preserve maritime functions / revitalize historic heritage city ports through SCS. JOHANN activities lead to lasting structures, competences & economic benefit in the SB.

The BSR cruise ship market is steadily growing but dominated from large "mass-tourism all inclusive" ships, only able to stop in large ports (few in SBA) offering necessary conditions & infrastructure but only marginally profiting from passengers themselves (operators organise activities/money spent on ships). Small ships include everything from a yacht with several dozen or so passengers to a sailing ship designed for less than 100 people, to larger yachts and ships capable of accommodating several hundred passengers. When we speak of 'small ships' we are talking about every ship that sails with less than 1,300 visitors.

This focus on the large cruise ships opens niche markets/touristic segments for smaller ships/ports & more individual travelling/tourists for which targeted products have to be developed. First contacts to SCS operators show that a small market exists but that also small ships usually only stop at large ports (National Geographic Expeditions/NGE) or struggle to develop marketable products (former Hultgren ship Nordstjernen). On-top river cruises are a growing market also in SBA (Oder) with synergy potentials regarding tourism/port management. Thus, project destinations have already made first experiences with handling occasionally stopping SCS.

The future challenge will be how (as single port or network of ports) to actively steer the market (get in contact with operators & offer them already marketable products), stabilize & increase the number of calls & how to build capacity & gain expertise in order to make the SBA more professional & attractive for interested SCS operators regarding local touristic services as well as cruise ship processing, port infrastructure & management.

Another challenge, regarding the processing of SCS in small/medium sized ports, relates to the loss of maritime functions especially in heritage city ports (e.g. real estate investors want to build houses in old port areas/waterfronts). In order to preserve maritime functions, heritage character & waterfront areas for green & blue use, the location search for new as well as the optimization of existing cruise ship terminals & infrastructure will be used to actively steer the development, revitalizes the areas and support a future oriented urban development & mixed use of port areas.

4. Johann case study methodology and insight

Analysis of the needs for the development of selected port cities of southern Baltic has been done using triangulation of methods. The development of such research is particularly valuable as the requirements of tourists have evolved to such an extent that classical destination markets have changed, and new ones have emerged (Mariani et al., 2014):

- onshore: desk research (based on: Cruise Baltic Market Review; Port reception facilities, passengers, calls and turn-arounds per destination; Destination reviews – sources: www.cruisecritic.co.uk, www.cruisebaltic.com, Betlitz Cruise Ships Guides)
- offshore (Tour of JOHANN ship: Gdynia – Wismar – Rostock – Sassnitz – Stralsund – Szczecin – Karlskrona – Kalmar - Gdynia):
- expert Survey – Cruise Diary (consisted of 3 modules: cruise passenger survey, overall opinion survey, tour reflexions on each destination in form of SWOT Analysis),
- individual in-depth interviews in every destination on-land with local tour guide,

- expert Focus Group Discussions - after each destination on board to share & evaluate ideas,
- unstructured interviews, with harbourmasters, local cruise operators, local tourist guides, city officials.

As a main result, we can stress that experts strongly agreed on following statements:

- the cruise industry is one of the major areas of tourism growth since the start of the new millennium,
- small cruise liners are best target group for less popular port-cities,
- network of South Baltic Cities in favour of attracting small cruises has fruitful future,
- cruise liners will bring a large amount of revenue to local tourism business.
- The AI technology has to be implemented, to serve the needs of customers.
- Tourist likes to use the new technologies in creation of the experience and having the feeling of "Timeliness".
- Majority of the customers are not ready to accept the services before the travel, rather they expect these services at the time of their travel. These self-service technologies are largely possible, by the usage of Artificial Intelligence

Experts rather agreed that:

- South Baltic Region is an unexplored niche to cruise operators that is why it needs to be promoted,
- to attract cruise operators to come to South Baltic Cities they need to establish the one coordinator agency for PR and business relations,
- small cruise liners (up to 200 passengers) that explore more deeply one region (line South Baltic) are more attractive for tourists then big cruisers that go across Europe.

For comparison experts rather disagreed on following statements:

- overall, capital cities in Baltic Sea are more attractive for cruise tourists then smaller port-cities,
- cruise liners for South Baltic Cities are important because of their impact on brand creation, rather than profits for local business,
- Rostock should be considered as „icon" brand for whole region to attract cruise operators,
- for cruise operators, the most important factor are harbour taxes, fees and other port expenses.

There were also so ambiguous issues when experts neither agreed nor disagreed on following statements:

- in South Baltic region, small cruise liners are more attractive for tourists then river cruises,
- to attract cruise operators to come to South Baltic Cities, they need to prepare thematic tourist route for tourists,
- there is no need to prepare a thematic historical or cultural route to attract cruise operators.

According to the analyses the most essential factors for cruise operators is proximity and infrastructure:

- parking spaces for buses, public bicycle and taxi stands nearby cruise liner's berth,
- proximity to airports and train stations,
- tourism information available in port,
- dedicated website for South Baltic Sea network cites for cruise owners, operators and tourists,
- crew designated centre available in harbour,
- facility for cruise children in the harbour,
- facility for handicaps and disabled in harbour,
- X-ray available in the port.

All those aspects seem to be important as well as can be take in to account during process of port cities design. All mention issues are not very difficult to implement and often take place to some extent, but the introduction that comprehensively constitutes a certain challenge, both logistic and budget.

The most essential factors for cruise tourists are welcoming culture, uniqueness and infrastructure also technical, digital infrastructure:

- entry welcome for the cruise ship – personal welcome of city representative, musical welcome, free local food sample, gifts for passengers, cruise guest national flags etc.,
- harbour infrastructure – independent guest reception centre with tourist information, help desk and Internet access; free shuttle available; guided tour operators near the pier; facility for children and disabled, postal cards and post box near the pier; cruise-ready hotels nearby,
- uniqueness of the place – local history of cities and their regions, local handicraft and craft, one cohesive cultural route, local souvenirs, gifts, fridge magnets, food and drinks, local cuisine near the pier; museums and shops offer flexible opening hours for cruise guests; EURO payment acceptable; smartphone app. with GPS, maps, guidance, audio-video tours, discount vouchers.

Digital infrastructure examples that could be very important in ports for not only tourist but also citizens are:

- internet backbone,
- fixed broadband in ports,
- services of telecommunications providers,
- banking services and cash machines,
- other networks, like Wi-Fi network infrastructure,
- internet of things solutions, facilitating navigation around the port and port city.

There are several new technologies that evolved in the domain of Artificial Intelligence. These technologies include Facial Recognition technologies, Virtual Reality applications, Chatbots, Robots, Artificial Intelligence in Google Maps, Language Translators, Audio tours, Ease of Shopping, etc. These technologies are helpful in delivering a novel experience to the customers.

The important, but not essential factors for cruise operators are:

- harbour infrastructure:
- equipped cruise terminal
- attractive taxes, fees and other harbour costs;
- destination attractions:
- proximity to malls, shopping centres and world class dining;
- UNESCO World Heritage;
- unique souvenirs, local gifts, local craft and local food;
- proximity to contemporary design buildings, waterfronts, nature and historical architecture;
- Baltic Lighthouses, cliffs, sandy beaches or „icon" buildings, interactive museums.

In order to analyse what facilities should characterize a port city to adequately respond to the needs of tourists focus studies were carried out during which the design thinking method was used.

During focus studies moderators with cruise participants looked at who are the end users of the ports of South Baltic and what are their needs, problems, fears, but also opportunities and hopes.

Participants was also thinking what kind of trends ours target groups are facing, both positive and negative trends coming from the environment. In these discussions design thinking method and tools for mind mapping: persona canvas and wall of ideas was used.

Service design is the activity of planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication and material components of a service in order to improve its quality and the interaction between the service provider and its customers. Service design may function as a way to inform changes to an existing service or create a new service entirely. The purpose of service design methodologies is to establish best practices for designing services according to both the needs of customers and the competencies and capabilities of service providers.

Together with the most traditional methods used for product design, service design requires methods and tools to control new elements of the design process, such as the time and the interaction between actors. That is way service design method was chosen to work with participants of focus group during cruise around ports of South Baltic.

During mind mapping based on wall of ideas focus group participants showed end users of the ports of South Baltic mainly as a: tour operators, municipality representatives, cruises passengers. In the second place, they pointed out: generally, tourists, cargo operators, inhabitants, fisherman, businesspeople, sailors, coastguard, shipyards. This is very important issue because it shows that experts think that background of the port is important. Tourists may come and go but tour operators, municipalities employees stay, and port should be adapted to serve a broad group of people for many years, being both their home and tourist destination.

In the case of persona canvas all experts decided to focus on the tourists. This was due to the fact that it was the image of tourists that they want to analyse more closely and to understand what for tourists is important while choosing holiday destination.

Experts in the first place have seen many opportunities for the tourists in South Baltic ports, for example:

- good food,
- accessibility of public transport,
- exciting history,
- beautiful nature and small cities,
- relax,
- small cruises routs,
- interesting city tours,
- new infrastructure, ports, marinas.

Experts also saw that tourists can be demanding and have lots of hopes, like:

- discover interesting places,
- meet nice people,
- discover cultural, historical heritage,
- discover something new, unique,

- feel as a part of maritime family.

Expert pointed also some positive trends for Baltic Sea region like for example increasing demand for new destinations. Also, security issues were indicated so it was noticed that the recommendations are becoming a very important source of information about the direction of leisure. Experts also saw some negative trends like close distance to other big and interesting cities, not much information for tourists, they can also feel not welcome or polluted area.

Experts also feels that tourists can have some fears like:

- security issues,
- sea sickness,
- bad weather,
- getting lost,
- language barriers,
- other transport problems (on land).

Thanks to the analysis of the answers of experts who took part in focus groups it become possible to identify aspects relevant to tourists traveling around the Baltic Sea ports. These aspects will be used in the long-term perspective to develop policies for the development of a few chosen cities of the Baltic Sea. It is essential that the durability of tourists needs should be reflected in the design of facilities in cities.

5. Conclusions

The most important insights from the research shows that in the process of designing port city as an open for their guest is to deliver added value as in typical product. Cruise ships come and go - it is important to have night and day services for the customers that will attract them and give good experience. The usage of AI technology should easiest the access to the services offered by ports and cities.

AI technology affects every aspect of tourism, such as reception, service and listening to guests. AI is also used to improve the level of personalisation, to adapt customer recommendations and to guarantee a quick response time even in the absence of employees. The presence of artificial intelligence has become so important in the work environment that it is used to support and communicate with customers and thus enhance the quality of engagement

What is important is also economic issue: cruise operators want to earn money at harbours – they hire own guides, local programs of sightseeing, prefer that cruise tourists spend money on-board. Long distance to the dense city centre from the pier is not a problem for cruise operators – cruise operators often offer their paid means of transport (water or bus shuttle service) – more important is an attractive view from a ship in a harbour.

Not all of cruise tourists are interested in descanting from the ship – especially from big cruise liners. In comparison to large cruise ships, small ones have less packed infrastructure on-board. It means that there is larger opportunity to attract tourist to disembark to the Baltic cities onshore.

The results of the study have an impact on the marketing and management of destinations as they can be used to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Crouch, 2011) when designing tourism strategies, infrastructure and products that help to increase local economic benefits.

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