

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND THE EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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This article gives a brief contextual overview of the steps taken to design a Model to evaluate the degree of competitiveness of a tourist destination (TD) based on the identification and integration of the Critical Success Factors (CSF). The concept of CSF is based on the idea that only a limited number of factors are really critical or vital to guarantee a competitively successful performance. The main objectives of the article consist in devising an integral Model to evaluate, efficiently and effectively, the degree of competitiveness of a TD, through the identification and integration of specific factors relating to the theoretical framework of strategic management. A two-phase theoretical-empirical methodology was used to design the initial Model. First, an exhaustive review of the existing bibliography on the subject was carried out, together with case-analyses, to formulate an initial Model which was then submitted to empirical validation via a Delphi study. This allowed for the identification and validation of a set of specific CFS to gauge competitiveness of a TD which was integrated into the Critical Dimensions of competitiveness and which, likewise, were associated with a series of Key Indicators (KI) required for the evaluation. The end result is a strategic Model which allows for any tourist destination to optimise its management of competitiveness.

KEY WORDS: *Critical Success Factors, competitiveness, evaluation of competitiveness of tourist destinations*