

## DOES EVENT TOURISM PREVENT SEASONALITY? ASSESSMENT OF THE EAST REGION OF MACEDONIA

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### Abstract

The paper assesses the seasonality impacts on tourism development in the East region of Macedonia. This is made by applying several simple tests for calculating seasonality patterns in tourism demand in terms of tourist arrivals on monthly basis for the interval 2010M1:2014M12. Due to fact that the East region practices many events which are explored in tourism manner, the aim of the research was to identify whether they perform positively in preventing negative seasonality influences. Furthermore, the research gives an overview of tourism importance for economic development of the East region. The findings point to low level of tourism seasonality with balanced flow distribution to tourism demand. This confirms the positive interaction between the regional tourism events and tourism development of the region. Finally, the study may serve as a starting point in identifying possibilities for enhancing regional growth, in the first line by introducing new tourism events, as well as by boosting the current modest event tourism development.

Key words: Tourism; East Region; Seasonality; Event tourism; Development.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, tourism experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Despite occasional shocks (devastating terrorist attack (9/11) in 2001; the combined effect of three significant factors in 2003: the Iraq crisis, the SARS outbreak and a persistently weak global economy; global financial crisis 2007-2008; the great recession 2008-2012; the European debt crisis 2014, etc.), tourism development noted virtually uninterrupted growth. Starting from 25 million in 1950, to 278 million in 1980, 528 million in 1995, and 1,138 million in 2014, the international tourists' arrivals are worldwide increasing.

Yet, a seasonality is a factor which may cause serious negative consequences over tourism development. It may affect employment (part-time employment, social instability and insecurity etc.), investments (high risks over low occupancy rate), and environment (pollution, overcrowding, xenophobia, criminal activity etc.). Therefore, the need for introducing measures and activities in order to cope and overcome negative impacts on tourism, is a subject of interest among academicians and tourism practitioners.

The research aim is three-folded: (i) To empirically test and analyse the strength of seasonality in tourism demand at regional level; (ii) To identify whether events that are taking place in the region provoke positively on tourism development; and (iii) To detect does event tourism prevent seasonality in the East region of Macedonia. So generally, the intention of the study is to pose valuable findings about the seasonality impacts and to urge the need of enhancing

- Significant efforts to increase tourism income through subsidies or tax deductions as a precondition for regions' tourism development.

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