

# Systematic Literature Review on Tourism Destination Competitiveness Research

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## Abstract

*This study aimed to conduct an examination of prior research on tourism destinations' competitiveness to shed light and broaden the field of knowledge on the topic. The review focuses on 45 practical and applicable studies that addressed the competitiveness of tourism destinations. The findings indicate that half of the analyzed articles are model-driven research, while Crouch and Ritchie's model is one of the most frequently applied models among articles. It has been shown that there are different perceptions and views of destination competitiveness on the demand and supply side. The majority of the study on destination competitiveness is based on a supply side given their experience and deeper knowledge of tourism businesses. The research also seeks to identify the most common indicators of competitiveness to understand the creation of tourist offers, as well as the advantages and disadvantages. Finally, it was important to give a more thorough overview of tourism competitiveness in Serbia and reveal any potential knowledge gaps in the literature and provide guidance for further research.*

**Keywords:** *tourism competitiveness, destination competitiveness, competitiveness models, indicators, Serbia*

## Introduction

Despite global challenges that threatened to hinder expansion, tourism has continued to develop and diversify over the recent decades, being among the greatest and fast expanding economic sectors worldwide. One of the most efficient choices for attaining economic growth and social well-being in countries across the world, especially in emerging or undeveloped countries, is to strengthen the tourist sector (Khan et al., 2020). As a result, it is crucial to consid-

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er how competitive the tourism destination and its tourism products are. This opportunity for expansion is paired with a product that can only be consumed there and then, which has proven to be a crucial component of local development strategies (Ferreira, Estevão, 2009).

One of the most crucial elements of regional and local development is competitiveness (Plummer et al., 2014; Ahn, Bessiere, 2023). The competitiveness of a country's tourism sector in the global tourism market significantly depends on the extent to which it may prosper from tourism (Gomezelj, Mihalic, 2008). A particular tourism destination should have the attributes and amenities that attract tourists there in the first place (Enright, Newton, 2004; Lustický, Štumpf, 2021). Determining the degree of competitiveness of tourist destinations is the focus of scientific research for many years due to many factors that influence the degree of attractiveness of a tourist destination, as well as the heterogeneity of tourist demand. The increasing amount of research in this area has been driven by the growing interest in the competitiveness of tourism destinations (Vila et al., 2015). One of the most used theoretical and conceptual frameworks by Ritchie and Crouch (2003) is, for instance, created to help understand how a tourist destination manages and monitors its competitiveness. But it is believed that the focus on destination competitiveness still doesn't match its significance and the highlighted imperative to act for the benefit of the destination's long-term growth (Abreu-Novais et al., 2016).

To exceed visitors' expectations and further assure the sustainability and long-term competitiveness of destinations and tourism enterprises, it is crucial to analyze quality in tourism and collaborate with all stakeholders involved in the provision of quality products and services. Also, the most presented approach for assessing the competitiveness of tourist locations throughout the world is Tourism & Travel Competitiveness Report presented by World Economic Forum (T&TCI WEF) every two years. Nevertheless, despite the limitations of this methodology (Wu, et al., 2012) and the accuracy and reliability of the results (Kunst, Ivandić, 2021), many authors are still employing T&TCI data to assess a tourism destination's competitiveness. However, a more specialized method for gauging tourism destination competitiveness is necessary, according to the literature and other research conducted so far. There is no universal competitiveness model that can be used for all tourism destinations, bearing in mind all the tangible and intangible determinants that affect it.

Enhancing the competitiveness of the tourist sector and related industries on the domestic and international markets is one of the objectives of the Strategy for the Development of Tourism in Serbia from 2016 to 2025, developed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, which recognizes tourism as one of the country's important economic branches (Ministry of Trade, Tourism, and Telecommunications, 2016). The number of tourists and overnight stays has both increased in Serbia during the past few years. Even after the Covid-19 lockdown and all of the problems that came with it, this tendency is still going strong. Given that the majority of visitors in Serbia are business travelers, this data does not, however, provide a clear image of Serbia's competitive strength in the international market. That indicates that the majority did not consider Serbia to be a desirable destination for leisure or other types of special interest activities. Understanding how to improve and maintain the destination's competitiveness is crucial for destination management. Because of this, it's critical to recognize and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors as well as to assess a destination's competitive position. Due to numerous studies regarding tourism destination competitiveness and frequent changes that can be observed regarding competitiveness indicators, aspects of research, methods of conducting research, etc. (Mior Shariffuddin et al., 2022), it is important to conduct a literature review to gain a better insight into the systematic analysis of relevant studies. On the other side, because of the dynamic nature of competitiveness, it is possible to examine

the factors that affect its dynamics and thereby provide a greater benefit for the tourism industry and future research.

This research is based on a systematic review of research from the past 10 years that examined the notion of tourism destinations' competitiveness. Thus, our main findings aim to clarify the available literature by using a systematic literature review (SLR) approach. This is strengthened by a broader analysis of tourism competitiveness in Serbia with the aim of emphasizing previous research and providing a critical overview. First, the literature on measuring tourism competitiveness is examined, before an in-depth discussion of the methodology of this article. The last section outlines the general discussion, limitations, and future research agenda.

## Literature study - competitiveness measurement

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) established the most well-known tourism destination competitiveness model, which has served as the foundation for several following conceptual models (Andrades-Caldito et al., 2014). The authors underlined that an effective destination management program can increase a tourist destination's competitiveness. In particular, marketing initiatives can boost the destination's reputation, and managerial initiatives can improve a destination's competitive position.

The model's strength is that it provides a framework for distinguishing comparative from competitive advantages (Mazanec et al., 2007; Boley, Perdue, 2012). Comparative advantages of the destination relate to human resources, physical resources, knowledge, fixed assets, infrastructure and tourism superstructure, cultural and historical resources, and the development of the local economy. Competitive advantages refer to the destination's ability to rationally use the resources at its disposal over a long period.

Even though the list of attributes for measuring destination competitiveness includes five dimensions of competitiveness and 36 sub-factors in the Destination competitiveness and sustainability model (Crouch and Ritchie conceptual model of destination competitiveness), Crouch (2011) states not all factors will have an equal impact on a destination's ability to be competitive, and some are more or less significant for particular market groups. Furthermore, not all indicators are available in all destinations, which may be limiting in the comparison of destinations (Vila et al., 2015).

Another widely used model developed by Dwyer and Kim (2003) mostly retained Crouch and Ritchie's (1993; 2003) paradigm, although there are some important variations. While Crouch and Ritchie's (2003) model assists management in making decisions by emphasizing supply-side factors, the Integrated model recognizes the demand side as a crucial factor in determining destination competitiveness. Not only do demand conditions are recognized as a distinctive determinant of destination competitiveness, but the suggested model also emphasizes competitiveness as a goal for regional or national economic growth. The authors provide a comprehensive list of destination competitiveness indicators for each of the six categories. In addition, the main elements of the model are resources and destination management. The model's resources, which are classified into inherited and produced, enable them to attract visitors and they are perceived as important resources for boosting the destination's attractiveness. The second element is the one that can serve as the foundation for a tourist-friendly offer, ultimately leading to a competitive offer. The model differs from the Ritchie and Crouch model in another significant way: it depicts causal links, i.e., the dependency between elements (Vanhove, 2010).

Recognizing the importance of sustainability for tourism development, Hassan (2000) introduced a competitiveness model that analyzes the relationships between all stakeholders involved in creating and integrating additional values to maintain a favorable market position about other competitors (Akin et al., 2022). In addition to its commitment to the environment, the model emphasizes the relevance of comparative advantage, demand orientation, and the structure of the tourist industry as the four key determinants of destination competitiveness. Although environmental protection is important for individual countries' overall competitiveness in a way that can lead to the introduction of innovations that can further strengthen competitiveness, Hassan (2000) believes that it is especially important in tourism, because the quality of the natural and cultural environment is an important component of the tourist experience.

Heath's (2003) model includes the core indicators of destination competitiveness found in prior studies (Ritchie, Crouch, 2000; Dwyer, Kim, 2003) with a focus on key competitiveness factors and vital connections. In order to create a comprehensive framework for long-term sustainable destination competitiveness, he emphasizes the significance of the human factor in the development of tourism as well as the creation of appropriate and mutually beneficial partnerships between stakeholders and destinations through communication and information management.

In addition to the aforementioned models, the World Economic Forum model is a globally recognized practical model that has contributed to determining a tourism destination's competitiveness (WEF). In 2007, the WEF developed the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), which consists of 14 categories and determines specific factors and policies to establish the tourism and travel (T&T) industry by measuring destination competitiveness. Recently, the World Economic Forum, relying on the T&T Competitiveness Index, developed the new Travel & Tourism Development Index. The index has five subindexes, 17 pillars, and 112 individual indicators, distributed among the different pillars (WEF, 2022, p.4).

Although key industry players are involved in determining destination competitiveness (Crouch, 2007), some authors (Vila et al., 2015; Mior Shariffuddin et al., 2022) state that TTCI is disputable since it does not take into account the importance of market size, the condition of the destination's economy, or its level of dependency when addressing the tourism industry. Furthermore, TTCI assumes that all variables that measure competitiveness are equally important (Zadeh Bazargani, Kilic, 2021), on the other hand, some research emphasizes that factors such as resident quality of life or real tourism receipts per capita may not necessarily be strong in ranking countries according to their competitiveness (Vila et al., 2015).

## Methodology

This research conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to investigate the literature on the competitiveness of a tourist destination, including competitiveness models and different approaches to measuring competitiveness. The goal of SLR is to thoroughly examine changes in theories and methodologies in tourism destination competitiveness research. The findings reveal any potential knowledge gaps in the literature and guide further research. Since this approach includes both empirical and theoretical studies to fully comprehend this phenomenon (Webb, Roe, 2008), the research was carried out by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing scientific articles in three phases:

1. Identifying the articles in the field of tourism destination competitiveness

2. Classifying and systematising the articles according to the set of criteria
3. Context and content analysis (with a focus on Serbia).

## Data Collection

Data collection was conducted based on the Scopus database. As one of the most widely used sources of bibliographic data, it was chosen for this study since it may offer comparatively greater coverage in a short amount of time providing coverage of the data type, topic, and adequate data extraction format (del Río-Rama et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2022).

The search criteria were determined by the researchers to extract the collection results. Since the concept of tourism destination competitiveness and the relevant competitiveness models were the main focus of this study, keywords such as: “tourism competitiveness”, “destination competitiveness”, “competitiveness factors” and “tourism competitiveness models” were searched in three sections, including the title, abstract, and keywords. Regarding the time period, the researchers determined the starting point, and articles published in the last ten years, between January 2012 and September 2022 were collected.

The first phase of the literature selection process resulted in 113 articles from Scopus. The next step implied language, article type, and study area as criteria in the following step of the review to determine the articles that fell within the purview of this paper. Only English-language articles were gathered in terms of language. In terms of document types, only research articles and review articles were collected, while conference papers, reports, and editorials were excluded. Since the search was limited to the research that has been conducted in European countries, these filters produced significantly fewer articles, and as a result, 62 articles were left.

In the second phase, the title, abstract, and method were screened to identify the studies that merely mentioned competitiveness, rather than measuring it on the destination. Twenty five additional articles were excluded as a result.

Finally, utilizing the “snowballing method” (Pullin, Stewart, 2006) eight articles concerning tourism competitiveness in Serbia were included in the final list of the 45 articles that were determined to be pertinent to this study. Papers were included to examine previous research, give a more thorough overview of research on the topic of tourism competitiveness, and identify any potential research gaps in Serbia.

The process of selecting and screening the articles is described in Figure 1.

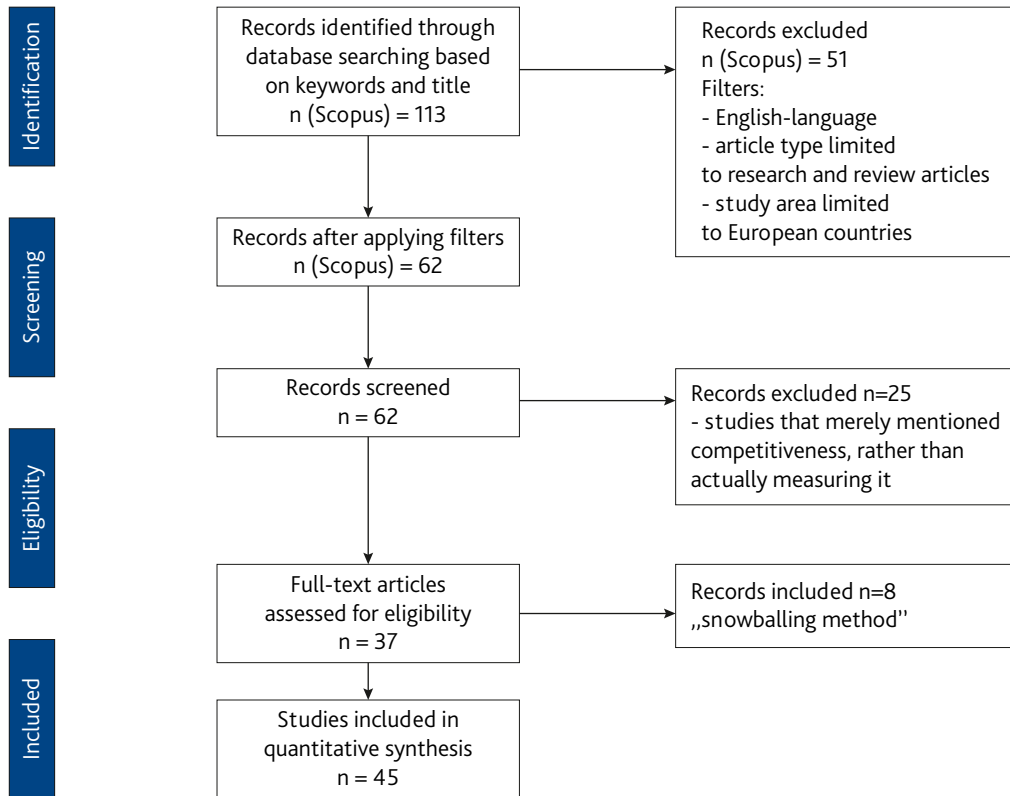


Figure 1. Flowchart of study review

## Findings and Results

The assembled data from selected articles were grouped in the general categories within the tourism and competitiveness branch of knowledge that evolved between 2012 and 2022. This section goes into detail about the analysis of annual publication patterns, including the number of papers published annually, journals (published more than once) countries, methods, competitiveness models, as well as supply or demand perspectives and indicators of tourism competitiveness.

Our initial stream of analysis is based on how our dataset is distributed following publications that have been published in scholarly journals. The majority of articles on tourism and/or destination competitiveness were published in the journals Sustainability and Tourism Analysis (4 articles each). The journals such as Tourism Economics, Tourism Management Perspectives, and Tourism and Hospitality Management published two (2) articles on this concept. In the other journals, one publication was published for a given period (Table 1).

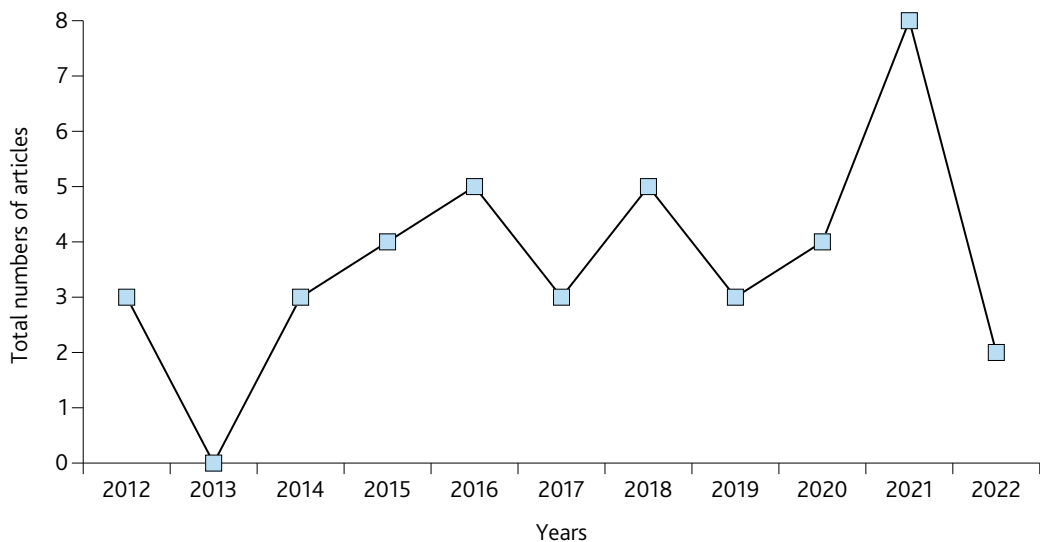
**Table 1.** Article distribution among journals (more than one article per journal)

Journal Name	Number of articles
Tourism Analysis	4
Sustainability	4
Tourism Economics	2
Tourism Management Perspectives	2
Journal of Travel Research	2
Tourism and Hospitality Management	2

The majority of journals have a significant impact on the field of tourism, indicating that the competitiveness of tourism and tourism destination reaches particular academic attention. However, the fact that several studies have appeared in other publications, such as those covering economics and business, shows that the topic of competitiveness is being studied in a variety of fields. This shows how important high-quality publications on tourism competition are to the body of evidence.

Further research is based on the distribution of our dataset across countries and throughout time. Except 2013, articles were published each year. Most articles were published in 2021 (8 articles) and this year has made the biggest contribution to the examination of tourism competitiveness, followed by 5 articles each in 2016 and 2018. Although the trend for the year of publication is more or less irregular, it was noted that no less than three articles were published per year over the observed period (Figure 2). Analysing articles by country, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia have the most research publications (4), followed by Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Montenegro, and Portuguese (2). The analysis confirms that the countries that represent each other's competitors in the tourist offer are mostly included.

This publishing trend is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Publishing trend of research articles



## Distribution of methodology and competitiveness model

Three types of methods - qualitative, quantitative, and mixed analysis methods are used in articles on tourism and destination competitiveness. Table 2 displays the frequency of methods used in articles more than once. With 29 studies, quantitative analysis predominates among the chosen articles, while 9 articles used qualitative analysis techniques.

**Table 2.** A methodological examination

		Number of articles	Total
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary data (WEF, TTCR, TTCI, GDP)</li> <li>• Empirical method (descriptive, factor analysis, ANOVA, MANOVA, T-tests, regression)</li> <li>• Cluster analysis</li> <li>• SEM analysis</li> </ul>	9 13 4 3	29
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview</li> <li>• Conceptual</li> </ul>	4 5	9
Mixed methods		7	7

When it comes to quantitative analytic methods, the empirical method that includes descriptive, factor analysis, ANOVA, MANOVA, T-tests, and regression analysis is the most widely used method. The second method that is frequently used includes secondary data (WET, TTCR, TTCI, GDP). The articles employ cluster analysis and SEM analysis applied 4 and 3 times. In terms of qualitative analysis methods, articles frequently use interviews (4 times) and conceptual methods (5). Finally, mixed methods are used in seven articles (Table 2).

Among the 45 articles on tourism and destination competitiveness, 21 are model-driven research and 24 did not apply the model in the article. According to the obtained results, the Crouch and Ritchie (2000, 2003) model is the most frequently applied model among articles, with a frequency of nine. Dwyer and Kim's (2003) model ranked second and was applied in six articles. Gomezelj and Mihalič's (2008) model ranked third and was used in two articles. Among other models that have been applied are listed Heath's (2003) model, the butterfly competitiveness model, and Porter's competitiveness diamond model (1990).

## Articles examining the supply or demand perspective and indicators of tourism competitiveness

Given the many factors that must be considered, measuring a tourism destination's competitiveness is regarded to be difficult and time-consuming. Some approach destination competitiveness from the demand viewpoint, arguing that since travelers are the ones who experience the tourism destination, their perceptions of these characteristics ultimately determine how competitive the destination is (Ritchie et al., 2000). Others believe that supply-side participants' viewpoints are more realistic and trustworthy since they have a deeper understanding-given their experience with tourism-related business in their own country. Additionally, some researchers believe they can take into account a greater variety of competitiveness elements, such as supporting variables and destination management, which tourists might not be able to evaluate (Mihalič, 2013; Novais et al., 2020). Twelve of the publications used a supply-side perspective, whereas only a few used a demand-side perspective. Only two papers combined these two approaches (demand and supply side). This is consistent with previous research indicating



that tourists can partially determine competitiveness and it can be seen through their opinions and actual behavior (Mihalić, 2013).

According to generally acknowledged competitiveness models such as Ritchie and Crouch (2000, 2003), Dwyer and Kim (2003), Heath's (2003), Gomezelj and Mihalić (2008), it is noted that a range of elements, indicators, or aspects that influence the tourism and destination competitiveness. One of the analyses sought to determine the most prevalent competitiveness indicators or factors from the sample of articles. Destination attractiveness factors are one of the most often represented in the analyzed articles and refer to destination amenities, tourism infrastructure, accessibility, cultural and historical legacy richness, including activities at the destination. Among the represented factors there are also skilled labour, hotels and accommodations as part of the infrastructure, quality of service, the perceived image of a destination, events, gastronomy, safety, and security of the destination. Additionally, the analysis observed the inclusion of protected areas which refers to establishing environmental standards and enhancing environmental attractiveness. The indicator relating to innovation and technology is the one that receives the least attention in the articles.

## Research in Serbia

Several prior studies on Serbia's competitiveness as a tourism destination may stand out. Dwyer et al. (2016a) use the IPA method to assess Serbian tourism competitiveness and tourism business strategies (Dwyer et al. 2016b). Dwyer et al. (2016a, 2016b) indicate the necessity of achieving competitiveness through the measurement of importance and performance (IPA). The application of the IPA approach in this study, using the example of Serbia, has certain benefits in the analysis of a tourism destination's competitiveness since it can be utilized to recognize potential changes as well as a guide for strategic planning and sustainable development. Serbia was one of the many environments in which Dwyer et al. (2014) utilized the Integrated Destination Competitiveness Model to investigate destination competitiveness. The same authors mention that, in several studies conducted in Serbia, the use of the same competitiveness determinants and sub-determinants as in the Integrated Model has proven effective for comparison and policy advice. (Armenski et al. 2012; Dragičević et al., 2012; Mihalić et al., 2011).

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 (WEF, 2019) makes it clear that Serbia does not possess a particularly strong competitive position in the international market. Several authors have previously discussed Serbia's competitive position as a tourism destination. They applied different approaches, took into consideration several competitiveness factors, and, for the research's objectives, singled out various stakeholders in the country's tourist industry. Thus, for instance, Milutinović et al. (2021) concluded that the safety element is significant in influencing the attractiveness and relevance for a better competitive position of a tourism destination after evaluating stakeholders' perceptions of a destination's competitiveness. According to these authors, a significant portion of respondents considers that Serbia's weaknesses which influence competitiveness in the tourism market may be seen in the areas of trash disposal, cleanliness and order, and nautical tourism. Petrović et al. (2017) stress the significance of locals in achieving a high-quality rural tourism offer and a more competitive position in the tourism market, including notions of community connection, the growth of rural tourism, assistance for multifunctional agriculture, and residents' well-being. By choosing components of the destination-integrated product such as attractive-

ness, accessibility, and destination amenities and services, Pavlović et al., (2016) analyse the competitiveness of two Western Serbian destinations that are closely correlated to one another but with different tourism performances. Milićević et al. (2020a), on the other hand, examine the competitiveness of one of Serbia's major spa tourism destinations. Đeri et al. (2018) employ the IPA approach to assess the effectiveness of resource allocation focused on discrete variables and the potential for improving management strategies for enhancing the destination's competitiveness in the Jablanica district in Southeast Serbia. Other authors take the implementation and use of ICT as an indicator of the competitiveness of a tourism destination (Milićević, et al. 2020b).

To develop a model to evaluate the competitiveness of a tourism destination, many authors, including Gajić et al. (2018), adopt the 24 indicators defined by Dwyer and Kim (2003). This model closely resembles the model presented by Crouch and Ritchie and is frequently used for assessing the benefits and disadvantages of tourism destinations, including Serbia. (Štetić et al., 2014) The same model was used by Dragičević et al. (2012) who applied this approach to measure the competitiveness of the Serbian province of Vojvodina in the context of business tourism. Drakulić Kovačević et al. (2018) evaluated the views of stakeholders from the public and private sectors using this model and discovered some variations of opinion regarding the competitiveness of the two determinants in one of the Serbian regions: Management of destinations and destination policy, planning, and development. Also, according to the study by Armenski, Dwyer, and Pavluković (2018), managers in the private sector are more critical of the performance of all competitiveness indicators when it comes to Serbian tourism. It demonstrates that researchers are particularly interested in how diverse perspectives from the stakeholders in the public and private sectors view the question of a tourism destination's competitiveness.

## General Discussion

The relevant tourism competitiveness literature was thoroughly reviewed for the current study. By providing an up-to-date comprehensive picture and identifying the historical trend, research areas, models, methods, and most important tourism competitiveness indicators we have contributed to the existing literature. The number of published scientific papers has more or less changed over the last 10 years, except 2021 when, according to the Scopus database, 8 papers were published.

For the tourism sector and government, it is vital to understand where a destination's competitive position is strongest and weakest, as well as how competitiveness is changing. As many authors stated (Dwyer, Kim, 2003; Crouch, 2011; Dwyer et al., 2014; Cronjé, du Plessis, 2020), there is not a single or particular set of competitiveness indicators that is always applicable to all destinations. Different competitiveness factors will be relevant for any given destination, and that is something that needs to be considered in measuring tourism competitiveness.

This study showed that the most competitiveness research is conducted from the supply side, indicating that the majority of theories regarding what makes a destination competitive are based on the opinions of stakeholders or tourism industry professionals. This approach is frequently used since it can aid in a more accurate discovery of the tourism destination due to their understanding of the whole range of competitive destination resources. On the other hand, tourism and destination competitiveness research from the demand side appears to be significant since tourist profiles and preferences vary over time. For this reason, some authors

(Novais et al., 2020) support continuous research on significant viewpoints and give more complete insight. Besides certain TDC models, some authors (Armenski et al., 2018) suggest the Importance Performance Analysis in the measurement of competitiveness to help precisely identify and prioritize initiatives to enhance destination competitiveness from both the supply and demand sides. This examination of the indicators can thoroughly identify the benefits and drawbacks of a destination's competitive position from both equally.

Among the various factors that contribute to tourism development, technological advancements and ICT have aided the growth of smartness, which is one of the competitive trends. (Cimbaljević et al., 2018). Therefore, the innovation and technology indicator should be in focus in future research toward destination competitiveness.

### Gaps in tourism competitiveness research in Serbia

Based on the TTDI Framework, it may be inferred that there is presently no scientific research that addresses all of the identified competitiveness pillars in Serbia. To begin with, research on this issue in Serbia has been quite limited so far, which is supported by the lack of a unique and tailored competitive framework based on the features of Serbia as a tourism destination. It can be noted that a great number of research studies that investigate the competitiveness of a tourism destination employ a similar methodology. Most of them initiate research with the WEF or Dwyer and Kim frameworks to generate indicators. Furthermore, the IPA method is one of the models that is frequently utilized as a methodological framework for addressing the subject of tourist competitiveness in Serbia. Furthermore, focusing on the partially described indicators, we may say that previous research in Serbia has not incorporated all of the established indicators in order to gather more relevant information regarding Serbia's strengths and shortcomings as a tourism destination. The issue of human resource quality and the labor market in the tourism sector is often not examined in depth as an indication of Serbia's competitiveness in the tourism market. Following the pandemic era, the service industry in Serbia is confronting a labor shortage, which is a crucial part of maintaining competitiveness and providing quality tourism products.

In addition, from the perspective of tourism competitiveness, the assessment of the extent, distribution, and quality of infrastructure in Serbia has not frequently been the subject of scientific research. The accessibility of a tourist destination is one of the fundamental elements of competitiveness; therefore, the issue of traffic accessibility, as well as the quality of tourist infrastructure and superstructure, is an important indicator that requires special attention from the scientific community. Furthermore, based on the systematic review, there are not many scientific papers that address environmental management and sustainable development. In comparison to the competitive set, Serbia is at the very back in these areas, according to the WEF (2022), and it is therefore critical to look at the reasons that have put this destination in such a poor spot, as well as what solutions could be offered with the goal of improving the competitive position, according to these indicators, in the following period. Furthermore, the implementation and use of ICT in the tourism industry have not been thoroughly studied, particularly in light of the constant changes imposed by current technology, but also the possibilities of usage that may be successfully employed in tourism marketing and tourism product development.

Finally, the question of incentives for investors and state governments in the growth of the tourist sector may be thoroughly studied. There has not been enough done to attract investors and develop the T&T business in Serbia, and further study on this topic may help to identify

the causes of the problem. Given that the degree of competitiveness of a tourism destination is deeply affected by the public and private sectors' support of its development and growth, a higher scientific contribution might dispel any worries and stimulate increased investment in the tourism sector.

### Limitations and future research

The study provides a number of significant implications for future research topics. The scope of the current review was restricted to full-length research articles in the Scopus database and additional databases were not considered. Additionally, the academic conference proceedings were not included in our review. Since our research only included English-language articles and was easily accessible, the sample may have been biased. For the topic of tourism destination competitiveness in Serbia, future research should include articles and other types of publications on the Serbian language. One of the limitations of the paper derives from the specific keywords that have been set up at the beginning stage of the research, and this can be expanded to avoid a decrease in competitiveness research.

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