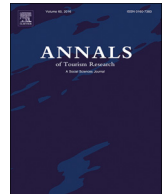




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Annals of Tourism Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/annalsCooperation evaluation with the use of network analysis[☆]

Katarzyna Czernek-Marszałek*

University of Economics in Katowice, The Theory of Management Department, Poland



ARTICLE INFO

Associate Editor: Chris Cooper

Keywords:

Relationships
 Collaboration/cooperation
 Partnership assessment
 Social Network Analysis

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to propose a way of assessing tourist partnerships using Social Network Analysis (SNA). The partnership structure chosen for this assessment was the ‘Wisła Tourist Organization’ (WTO) – a Destination Marketing Organization operating in the south of Poland. Collaboration assessment was based on discovering if, and to what extent new types of relationships between WTO members exist – and how big a part of the network structure they cover. It was assumed that the higher the extent of partnership relations in the WTO based on direct relations between WTO’s members including: business cooperation, communication, knowledge, trust, mutual understanding, dialogue, benefits from cooperation, and perceived fulfilled expectations, the higher the level of collaboration evaluation.

Introduction

Nowadays, growing competition between tourist destinations obliges representatives of a particular destination to offer tourists a destination product that will distinguish their offer from their competitors’ offers. As different entities are responsible for the various elements of such a tourist product, collaboration between them is vital (Beritelli, 2011; Gursoy, Saayman, & Sotiriadis, 2015; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2016). This includes also collaboration via different types of partnerships such as Destination Marketing Organizations that are aimed mainly at joint promotion of tourism destinations. Thanks to such partnerships, tourist destinations can stay on the market or even achieve a competitive advantage (Pechlaner, Volgger, & Herntrei, 2012).

In the paper collaboration (cooperation) is understood as “a process through which partners who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited version of what is possible” (Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 4). This definition is broad and does not specify any extent of agreements concluded between the entities concerned (verbal/written agreements, legal personality or not), neither does it determine any duration of cooperation – it can be long- or short-term (Czernek, 2013). Collaboration is understood here as a process which can take different forms, for example, partnerships, alliances and other collaborative structures. A partnership is defined as: “collaborative efforts of autonomous stakeholders from organizations in two or more sectors with interests in tourism development who emerge in an interactive process using shared rules, norms and structures at an agreed organizational level and over a defined geographical area to act or decide on issues related to tourism development” (Long, 1997, p. 239 after: Fyall & Garrod, 2005).

A significant problem, however, that has been emphasised by many authors (e.g., Augustyn & Knowles, 2000; Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009), is the evaluation of collaboration. Usually, cooperation structures are assessed by using the criteria of objectives set by such

[☆] The project was financed from sources of National Science Centre in Poland according to decision 2017/27/B/HS4/01051. The author would like to thank Reviewers and the Associate Editor whose substantive comments made it possible to improve the text. They also gave the author inspiration for future empirical research.

* Address: ul. 1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, Poland.

E-mail address: Katarzyna.czernek@ue.katowice.pl.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.07.005>

Received 26 February 2018; Received in revised form 3 July 2018; Accepted 11 July 2018
 0160-7383/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

structures. Analysis is conducted of whether these objectives have been achieved and to what extent. However, this is where the problems arise, because collaboration aims can be of different types: economic, social or environmental and some of them – especially the last two groups – are hard to measure (Gray & Wood, 1991; Pyo, 2010). Moreover, collaboration can be evaluated regarding different types of entities. It can be assessment from the point of view of a whole organization, or from an individual member's perspective. What is a benefit for one actor can be perceived as a loss for another. Benefits for the whole destination (and local authorities) and for individual actors (especially private entrepreneurs) can be also different. Finally, sometimes insufficient time does not allow for analysis of the level of the fulfilment of final collaboration aims. Those problems concern mainly collaboration in a form of partnerships which associate public, private and often non-profit sector representatives having different objectives and expectations. At the same time, those entities are crucial to provide tourists with a complex tourist destination product, thus they remain an important form of cooperation in tourism sector.

The complexity of collaboration makes that different proposals of its evaluation are presented in the literature (e.g. Pforr, 2006; Pyo, 2010). One of tools can be Social Network Analysis (SNA) useful in analysing relationships between network members. Evaluation of tourist collaboration using a network approach, especially its quantitative tools, is, to some extent, used in the tourism literature, but there is still some space for new proposals in this area (Pearce, 2014). This creates a literature gap and calls for contributions to current research into this issue.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to propose a way of assessing tourist partnerships (as one of the most important forms of tourism collaboration) using SNA. The partnership chosen for this assessment is the 'Wisła Tourist Organization' (WTO) in Wisła – a popular tourist municipality located in the south of Poland. In 2013–2014 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 48 members of the WTO. Collaboration assessment was based on finding if, and to what extent new types of relationships exist between entities within the WTO – and how big a part of the network structure they cover. It was assumed that the higher the extent of partnership relations in the WTO based on direct relations (individual business cooperation), communication, knowledge, trust, mutual understanding, better dialogue, benefits from cooperation, and perceived fulfilled expectations, the higher the level of collaboration evaluation. Building such relationships was also one of the statutory aims of the WTO. To achieve the aim of the paper selected network analysis parameters were used – especially network density. To fully understand the content and the background of particular relations some quotations of interviewees were also presented.

The research consists of six parts. After the introduction a literature review is presented. The second part shows how collaboration was previously assessed in tourism literature and how SNA can be utilized as a tool for partnership assessment. Also in this part, a conceptual framework comprising of different types of relationships built between network actors is presented. In the third part, the methodology is described while the subsequent fourth part shows the research results. After this, in the fifth section, an overall assessment of WTO is presented and discussed. The paper finishes with conclusions.

Literature review

Collaboration assessment

Problems with evaluating collaboration (including partnerships) have been stressed by many authors in tourism and broader literature (e.g. Augustyn & Knowles, 2000; D'Angella & Go, 2009; Gray, 2005; Rahman & Korn, 2014). Until now no single universal tool has been proposed for evaluating collaboration. Existing proposals are complementary in their character and usually focus on a particular issue of collaboration activity.

One of approaches to collaboration assessment in tourist destinations is based on critical success factors necessary to increase partnership effectiveness (e.g. Adnyana, Anwar, Soemitro, & Utomo, 2015; Jamal & Getz, 1999; Kozak & Baloglu, 2011; Peris-Ortiz, Álvarez-García, & Rueda-Armengot, 2015; Reid, Smith, & McCloskey, 2008). For example, Augustyn and Knowles (2000), using a partnership case in York, attempted to identify critical success factors for partnerships between the public and private sectors at tourism destinations, and to assess the performance of such arrangements. They tried to assess whether the programme areas and actions of the York partnership allowed partnership objectives to be achieved. Afterwards, they compared positive and negative trends for each of the York development programme areas with spending on those areas. This way of assessment proposed by authors is interesting and very complex. However, demands access to very detailed data collected by different entities in a destination and the identification of positive and negative tourism trends which can be perceived differently by different actors.

Different conceptual tools for evaluating tourism partnerships were proposed by March and Wilkinson (2009). The authors presented four analytical tools/approaches: the value nets of the main types of actors in the regional tourist industry; the partnership activity matrix; the ecological approach to classifying relationships; and finally resource scarcity – the source of numerous conflicts and tension between organizations. Such tools should offer destination organizations the potential to increase effectiveness and highlight impediments in their current networks. The paper proposes four analytical tools/approaches that destination managers can employ to better manage destination development, however, as March and Wilkinson (2009) themselves emphasise, goals of collaboration at times can be identified with difficulty, thus cannot be fully managed.

Another means of assessment is using a tourist value chain. According to this approach, collaboration should be analysed based on aims, strategy and joint activities conducted in the value chain (Pyo, 2010). The assessment consists of criteria such as: values, satisfaction, quality and effectiveness. However, this tourist value approach is not perfect because in every tourist destination there are many tourist value chains dependent on individual tourists' motives and needs.

One of the ways of assessing partnerships is the EFQM (EFQM Excellence Model, 2013) model adopted from business by the European Commission for the assessment of tourist destination management (Tourism, 2001). In the model different assessment

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7416219>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7416219>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)