


Destination Positioning Slogans as a Tourism Positioning Strategy: Albania and its Regional Competitors

Sonila Çela

Epoka University, Rr. Tiranë-Rinas, Km. 12, 1032 Vorë, Tirana, Albania

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8288-3692>

e-mail: scela@epoka.edu.al

Original research paper

Citation:

Çela, S. (2024). Destination Positioning Slogans as a Tourism Positioning Strategy: Albania and its Regional Competitors. *Economic Insights – Trends and Challenges*, 13(1), 71-83.
<https://doi.org/10.51865/EITC.2024.01.07>



Copyright: © 2024 by the author

Abstract: *The tourism and travel business is known as an important industry that supports an economy's economic growth and economic improvement. As reported by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Albania exceeds most of its regional competitors in terms of projected long-term travel and tourism growth expectations. The tourism slogan of a country plays an important influence on building a destination brand. Its slogan "Go Your Own Way" constitutes an essential element in its marketing strategies. Therefore, there is a notable limitation of evidence regarding the research that has been carried out on Mediterranean areas regarding the correlation between destination slogans, promotional strategies, and their impact on an increase in visitor arrivals. This study attempts to fill the space through carrying out exploratory research on Albania's slogan, compared to its seaside competitors, and the effect that it has on strategies to promote tourism and the amount of visitors arriving. The study incorporates secondary data and undertakes an in-depth examination of a few destinations such as Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Greece, and Italy. The examination of destination slogans, tourism promotion strategies, and coastal length in these areas reveals that the slogans and tourism strategies fit with the kind of tourism they are experiencing. The study highlights the necessity of additional analyses to assess the effectiveness of slogans as a vital component of marketing strategies to influence travel intentions toward a specific destination. The primary goal of this comprehensive approach is to provide significant insights into the continuing discussions on improving tourism promotion techniques for sustainable growth.*

JEL Classification:
M30; M31; M37; M39.

Keywords: *Tourism; Slogan; Tourism Promotion Strategy; Destination.*

Introduction

Travel and Tourism sector is the cornerstone of the economic development especially for our region. International tourist arrivals followed a remarkable tourism growth in 2019 by reaching a total of 2.4 billion tourists, according to the latest data from World Bank and UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization). This growth trend started declining due to COVID-19 showing the worst figures for Tourism as well as the entire economy. Nonetheless, despite the trend of increase or decrease due to major forces governments and tourism board organizations continue their efforts to position its place as a destination in the tourism competitive market. National Tourism Boards rush to promote their places as a good destination to be visited. In their five-year national tourism strategies one of the core elements is the marketing and promotion of the destination as such their efforts in the world of advertising are focused more in slogans, logos and commercials (Anholt, 2016). Tourism boards and tourism ministries have launched their communication slogans to position or revitalize their position in the global market. They have as their primary aim, the positioning of their places in the potential visitors and tourist's minds.

UNWTO and OECD in different studies has emphasized the increasing role of governments and national tourism organizations, the responsible authorities to develop their countries, communicate its image and manage the image of their respective countries. The promotions strategies, logos, slogans, taglines, visuals, and advertising are some elements which destinations use for transmitting their identity and attract more tourists. Research that Integration of place brand with a slogan facilitates the increase of the awareness, recall and association with the place brand. The purpose of the destination slogan should be to communicate the descriptive characteristics and persuade the potential tourist to visit their place. They should focus on features of desired image and aim to strengthen and differentiate in the global market. The purpose of this study is to analyze the slogan of Albania "Go your own way" with the regional competitors by adopting a comparative approach. This study follows an explorative approach by investigating tourism strategies of the destinations and exploring the positioning strategies and which target markets the slogan appeals. For understanding the competitive market, and promise each destination provides to its customers this study will investigate also the effect of this slogans in the tourist arrivals. A comparative approach to change on arrivals numbers for 5 years before launch and after slogan launch. The examined destinations are Albania, Croatia Greece, Italy and Montenegro.

Literature Review

The Concept of Branding and Slogan

The concept of branding is considered an old concept starting from old centuries, more concrete on early 19s and later in the phases where research started focusing on brand image. (Bastos & Levy, 2012) . Later on late 19 and early 20s we trace brand definition as a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these associated to a product, company or organization in order to differentiate it through the competitors in the market (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003, identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers (AMA, 1995)". A brand facilitates the identification and differentiation of the product or company through the competitive market. (Rooney, 1995) "A brand is a consistent group of characters, images, or emotions that consumers recall or experience when they think of a specific symbol, product, service, organization or location"(Simeon, 2006, p. 464) Many authors see brand as facilitator of the best choice in the market (Ginden, 1993), they are considered as tools for creating product differentiation (Kotler & Gertner, 2002) and create competitive advantage, while other authors identify brand as something the customers recall and react toward it (The economist, 1988; Rooney, 1995).

Keller (2003) includes “slogan” as part of the brand elements (brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, packaging, and slogans) which should be evaluated separately from each other because the different elements may have different advantages. Keller (2003) defines the ‘Slogans’ as short phrases that give descriptive or/and persuasive clue about a brand which can be communicated through an advertising campaign as well as play important role in the marketing program like packaging, promotion etc. (Keller, 2003). A well-designed slogan supports the brand name and its positioning through marketing communications (Keller, 1993). The slogan of a brand embodies a meaningful instrument that transmits information that occupies the consumer’s memory. (Dimofte & Yalch, 2007). Slogans are part of advertising campaigns and play important role in advertising and promotion. (Richardson & Cohen, 1994). They interplay in an effective resemblance with other brand elements and are considered as useful “hooks” or “handles” for consumers in catching the meaning of a brand and understanding why it makes it different and memorable (Dimofte & Yalch, 2007). Marketing scholars have guided companies in creating good and effective slogans (C. Kohli et al., 2005, 2007). Keller defines the slogans as fundamental instruments in summarizing and translating the brand claim. According to him a successful slogan is considered as the key component for an overall promotion campaign that effectively creates product memorability and builds a brand image, (Keller, 2003; Supphellen & Nygaardsvik, 2002) Effective brand slogans must be memorable, accurately reflect the brand image and appeal to the intended target audience, in order to achieve successful brand positioning.(Barisic, P.; Blazevic, 2014; Klenosky & Gitelson, 1997).

Researchers also agree in the importance of slogan in facilitating the awareness and recall of the image. Kotler (2002) emphasizes the importance of image management and proposes a Strategic Image Management (SIM) process. The author highlights the significance of image management and introduces the Strategic Image Management (SIM) process. One of the essential components of this process is a “slogan.” When it comes to creating a successful slogan for your brand, one of the most important factors to consider is recall. This refers to how easily and frequently people remember your slogan, which can have a significant impact on the overall success of your brand building efforts. By crafting a memorable and engaging slogan, you can increase the chances that your target audience will remember your brand and associate it with positive qualities and values. (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The increase in research on destination branding has highlighted the need for investigation into destination slogans.

Destination Brands and Slogans Research

Destination brand is the same as brand of product and services, though it is the use of slogan that facilitates the positioning of it. Destination brands like product and services have both tangible and intangible components, but they are mostly service dependent, and can be positioned through the use of slogans. Even the touristic slogans are very important, there exists the lack of research on effectiveness on tourism slogans on tourism growth. Many researchers has focused their studies on slogan categorizations, their design, evaluation and their linguistic characteristics, semiotic meaning of a slogan and semantic meaning of the slogan, content analysis of slogans, graphic projections, verbal expressions, and other explicit or implied messages (Chernysheva et al., 2011). More studies are conducted on effectiveness of slogans in travel intentions, the awareness effects of tourism slogans, the influences of consumer characteristics on the awareness effects of the slogan (Huang & Lin, 2017). Other authors has studied the consumer response toward the meaning of a slogan (Supphellen & Nygaardsvik, 2002) the effect of associative slogans on tourists’ attitudes toward slogan, (Zhang et al., 2017). Despot (2015) in his study investigating the aim of slogan argues that most of the slogans are created with the aim of influencing the tourists (Despot, 2015). The characteristics of successful slogans are studied by (Klenosky & Gitelson, 1997) and later by (Huang et al., 2017), brand slogan attribution, link and effect to the brand (Dahlen & Rosengren, 2005), the effect of the genuine characteristics of the slogan on the increase of the brand image (Galí et al., 2017).

Other researchers agree on the importance of linking the place brand with a slogan and the relationship between tourism slogan and destination image (Choi et al., 2007; Lehto et al. 2012). Recent years research on slogans is focused more on establishing a connection with destination image and connection between brand personality and tourism slogans. While brand personality is a significant part of brand image, it has a similar relationship with tourism slogans as that of visitor image. This means that brand personality plays a key role in creating the tourism slogan, while the tourism slogan shapes the brand personality (Pan, 2019). Despite studying destination slogans, in different aspect there is no evidence for any research which have been carried out in for measuring the role of slogans especially new slogans in increase of tourist arrivals.

Tourism Slogans as a Promotion Strategy

Efforts for promoting the destination require that government or destination marketing organizations try to find suitable good slogans and long-lasting since the slogan fundamentally aims and promotes the brand promise. (Huang et al., 2017)

A tourism slogan is considered as an element with a big influence in building the brand, exclusively in increasing brand awareness and building the image of a destination. (Plog, 2004). Slogan is one of the best ways to communicate and deliver the theme and image of tourist destination to traveling public (Sušac et al., 2016). The slogans of tourist destinations are core of marketing campaign and advertising” (Keller, 2003). The characteristics of a successful slogan shall be: easy to recall, the slogan shall be memorable, shall convey the image of the state and appeals to the right markets. (Klenosky & Gitelson, 1997) and they should be capable of adapting to the market diversity (Pike, 2004). Slogan is considered as one of the core elements of advertising as though the tourism slogan should reflect the characters and personality of the destination (Pike, 2012). Salehi & Farahbakhsh, (2014) have examined the impact of media and advertising methods used in the tourism industry. Authors place slogan, logo and other tools like TV, brochures etc. as the most effective tools in attracting domestic and foreign tourists. According to several authors, a well-crafted slogan should effectively communicate the unique qualities of a country in comparison to other places, while also attracting tourists (Lee et al., 2006)

Another interesting investigation on slogans in 2014 shows that the slogans have become more representative of more tangible aspects of the destination experience (Pagano, 2014).

The literature on tourism slogans confirms the importance of slogans in destination marketing and destination brands positioning. Through the literature screening it is noted that different researchers have investigated slogans starting from linguistic meaning of a slogan to the importance in destination branding as well as communication effectiveness of the slogans (Galí et al., 2017; Sušac et al., 2016). Although we have no evidence on any research conducted on the tourism slogans that reflect or present the tourism strategy of destination and the effect of the slogan on the increase of tourist arrivals.

Methodology and Data Analysis

The study applies to a mix methodology, qualitative and quantitative. A theoretical review of articles and existing research on destination slogans describes the concept of destination branding and destination slogans. This study is based on data collected through observation of tourism strategies of destination and collection of information like slogan, slogan launch date and coastline length. Slogan and tourism promotion strategies compound the main elements of Destination Marketing Organizations in their efforts to promote destination in the international arena. On the other hand, coastline length is the resource which drives the number of tourists a country can accommodate.

The empirical data is secondary data retrieved by the institution of statistics for each destination and World Travel and Tourism Council reports respectively number of arrivals from 2002-2022. The rationale behind determining these years is based on the dates of slogan launch for all states.

The study is an exploratory research which employs a comparative approach in analyzing the slogans of destination, tourism strategies, coastline of the destinations and the linkage between tourism strategy, coastline and tourism market as well as the its effect on increase of arrivals.

In this paper the destinations are selected due to the direct competitiveness they have in the Adriatic and Jon Sea making the direct competitors of Albania in 3S (sea, sun, sand) tourism. After defining the factors that should be investigated, some research questions are raised.

Research questions:

The main objective of the study is to analyze which are the target tourists to whom appeals the slogans of Albania and regional competitors? Beside this, it has some specific objective:

- Is the promotion slogan in line with the tourism strategy of the destination?
- Which is the target market of destination concerning the tourism strategy?
- Which is the effectiveness of the slogans on the destination arrivals?

Examination of Tourism Strategies, Tourist Markets and Destination Slogans

Nearly in every research on destination marketing, apparently is noted that every government/state works on developing tourism marketing strategies and bases the promotion strategy on some key objectives in achieving and increasing awareness, obtaining the aimed positioning strategy and encouraging visit intentions from the targeted market segments. (Lee, Caib, & O'Leary, 2006)

Albania

The Albanian Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2022 positioned out the main priorities for tourism in the country, which included (Tourism M. o., 2018)

- Product development (diversification of tourist offer);
- Human resource development (improving the quality of services);
- Marketing (promotion of Albania as a destination for all year tourism);
- Private and public investments;
- Designation of a Framework for destination management;
- Driving competitiveness and growth through high quality and sustainable tourism.

In the context of promoting Albania as a destination for all year tourism Albanian National Tourism Agency on May 17, 2014 has launched the slogan “Go your own way” (ANTA, 2014)

If monitored also the tourism types launched in the 2018-2022 Tourism strategy, a tourist can find in Albania find every type of tourism, 3s, Mountain, cultural, sports and adventure tourism etc. Albania with the slogan ‘Go your own way’ “appeals to the individual tourists and positions itself as a place where a tourist can do what he likes. Destination Marketing Organization together with ministry of tourism have are currently working for the 2023-2030 Strategic plan.

Croatia

Croatia's tourism strategy in for 2020 aimed to promote itself as a tourist destination in all globe, making it attractive to tourists and investors. Apart of being known as one of the best destinations in this region it aims to manage the destination in sustainable way by creating jobs that offer its guests hospitality safety, authentic attractions all year round experience. (Tourism M. o., 2013)

The Croatian Tourism Development Strategy 2013-2020 (Tourism M. o., 2013) were focused on:

- Improving the quality of accommodation and seeking diversification of the offer through themes;
- Developing new attractions with a potential to attract regional and international demand;
- Branding of the national and regional food offer;
- Creating modern visitor centers at key attractions;
- Incentivizing the development of cultural themed routes.

In achieving the vision and following its objective Croatia launched in February 12, 2015 “The Mediterranean as it once” was the slogan and from many researches is ranked as one of most successful slogan. (Barisic & Blazevic, 2014). In this way, Croatia positions itself geographically as a Mediterranean tourism destination and presents itself as a culturally authentic destination. By promoting its self by authentic roots it attracts hybrid tourists. Characterized also by its relieve coastline it aims to position itself in the top 20 touristic destinations. (Tourism M. o., 2018).

The tourism development strategy for 2030 has been updated in accordance with the European Tourism Plan until 2030 (Agenda 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals established by the UN Agenda 2030 (Tourism R. o., 2022). From this point of view, the strategic objectives for the development of tourism have been grouped into four categories.

- Establishing a tourism industry that operates consistently throughout the year and is evenly distributed across different regions;
- Fostering sustainable tourism that protects the environment, space, and climate;
- Promoting innovative tourism that is competitive in the region;
- Cultivating a robust and adaptable tourism industry.

Greece

The 2020 Strategy aimed to make Greece an attractive and safe destination offering authentic thematic tourism all year round.

Greece’s tourism campaign targeted global market, promoted religious tourists and pilgrimages to regions with a significant historical religious presence, such as the monasteries. The new national strategy focused on making Greece a Sustainable Destination by minimizing the environmental impact of tourism, advocating energy efficiency and waste management, and also conservation of biodiversity. Destination Management Organization aim to extend the tourism season by encouraging the development of niche tourism sectors such as medical tourism, rural tourism driven by innovation and diversification. Another goal of National tourism plan is the enhancement of infrastructure by modernizing port facilities and improvement of accessibility, developing mountain tourism amenities, also promoting other forms of tourism such as ecotourism, cultural tourism and community based tourism seeking attracting nature lovers. (Greece, 2023)

“*Greece All Time Classic*” the tourism campaign slogan was launched in February 27, 2013 by the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) With this slogan Greece states that “Greece is more than its current image,” and they are aiming to repair the country’s reputation after the crisis as it is seen the only choice for recovering the success and developing of their state. (Andreadis, 2014)

Italy

The tourism Strategy for 2020 aims innovation, sustainability and seeks reviving Italy's leadership in the tourism market. Its tourism objectives innovate, specialize and integrate the country's amenities, boost the tourism system's competitiveness and create effective and innovative marketing. The strategic plan for 2023-2027 is focused mainly on understanding travel behavior and promote sustainable tourism. As such in their strategic plan they first aim to identify the needs, expectations and behavioral barriers of tourists. Second they aim to make tourism human-centered and sustainable by design. Another goal is enhancing communication on green tourism by producing tourism communications using messages and visuals which promote behavior (Varazzani et al., 2023). The slogan Italy uses in the promoting tourism is launched in February 22, 2007 "*Italy leaves its mark*" is a slogan which invites tourists to experience Italy. (Tourism M. o., 2017) Positions itself to the mass tourism. Referring to the coastline and the type of tourism offered in Italy and also the slogan which invites every tourist to experience it, Italy appeals to the mass tourist market.

Montenegro

Montenegro strategic plan for 2020 aimed to turn the tourism in the all-year-round tourism. (Tourism M. o., 2018). The strategic goals for 2022-2025 aims to improve quality in touristic products by improving accommodation facilities, beaches and road, water supply and utilities infrastructure. Improving tourist experience by diversification of tourism product such as rural tourism, urban tourism, and nature based tourism. The third strategic goal outlines applying sustainability principles by encouraging ecotourism, green accommodation facilities, promoting wild beauty, eco lodges and eco villages. As such Montenegro aim to improve the quality, reduce seasonality applying a sustainable destination management (Ministry of Economic Development, 2022).

Montenegro has launched the tourism slogan "Wild Beauty" in 2009. Also considering the characteristics of the place, Montenegro positions itself as a place where a tourist can find every type of tourism, 3s, Mountain, cultural etc. and the market to which appeals is the individual tourists.

Tourist arrivals 2002-2022

The number of tourists from 2002-2019 shows an increasing trend in years, showing greater increase than the world trend in five of our destinations. In 2017 the world tourist arrivals grew with 7 % which seems to be the highest increase ever happened. In Albania tourists grew with 8 %, in Croatia 12 %, Greece 10 % Italy 15 % and Montenegro 18 %. Albania seems to have the smallest increase compared to other destinations however it leaves them behind regarding the long-term travel and tourism growth forecast and also the direct contribution of the tourism sector on GDP and employment, generating 24 % of the employment (approximately one in 4 people) in the tourism sector. (WTTC, 2017).

Table 1 outlines the international arrivals from 2002-2022 for five countries which are part of this study.

Table 1. International tourist arrivals

Year/ Country Name	Albania**	Croatia**	Greece*	Italy*	Montenegro**
2002	470,000	6,944,000	14,180,000	39,799,000	136,000
2003	557,000	7,409,000	13,969,000	39,604,000	142,000
2004	645,000	7,912,000	13,313,000	37,071,000	188,000
2005	748,000	7,647,881	14,765,000	36,513,000	272,000
2006	937,000	7,895,961	16,039,000	41,058,000	378,000
2007	1,127,000	8,445,250	16,165,000	43,654,000	984,000
2008	1,420,000	8,535,403	15,939,000	42,734,000	1,031,000
2009	1,856,000	8,545,479	14,915,000	43,239,000	1,044,000
2010	2,417,000	8,967,168	15,007,000	43,626,000	1,088,000
2011	2,932,000	9,722,848	16,427,000	46,119,000	1,201,000
2012	3,514,000	10,179,895	15,518,000	46,360,000	1,264,000
2013	3,256,000	10,791,263	17,920,000	47,704,000	1,324,000
2014	3,673,000	11,452,909	22,030,000	48,576,000	1,350,000
2015	4,131,000	12,552,968	23,600,000	50,732,000	1,560,000
2016	4,735,511	13,714,570	24,800,000	52,372,000	1,662,000
2017	5,117,700	15,592,899	27,190,000	58,250,000	1,877,000
2018	5,927,000	16,644,871	30,120,000	61,540,000	2,077,000
2019	6,406,000	17,353,488	31,500,000	64,510,000	2,510,000
2020	2,657,818	5,545,279	7,370,000	25,190,000	350,795
2021	5,688,649	10,640,809	14,710,000	26,890,000	1,553,558
2022	7,543,817	15,323,749	27,840,000	49,810,000	2,036,403

*United Nations World Tourism Organization (<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/global-and-regional-tourism-performance>)

**Albania (Institute of Statistics Albania, 2023), Croatia (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2023), Montenegro (MONSTAT, 2023),

Source: elaborated by author based on international arrival statistics.

According to the UNWTO World Tourism Board, there was a noticeable upward trend in international tourist arrivals across all countries, with the highest increase recorded at 7% in 2017. This increase was particularly prominent in emerging destinations such as Albania. The year 2019 saw a growth of 4%, reaching a total of 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals, as reported by various destinations worldwide. While 2019 experienced strong growth, it was comparatively slower than the exceptional rates observed in 2017 (+7%) and 2018 (+6%).

While in Albania the international tourist arrivals grew with 8%. This means that the growth of tourism in Albania is related also to internal factors which may be linked to quality of service, infrastructure, and prices competitiveness in the region, tax increase or decrease, as well as the slogan success.

Table 2 illustrates the percentage of change in years. 2003 includes the % of change compared to previous year 2002.

Table 2. Tourist arrivals percentage of change in years

Slogan launch year	Year	Albania	Croatia	Greece	Italy	Montenegro
	2003	19%	7%	-1%	0%	4%
	2004	16%	7%	-5%	-6%	32%
	2005	16%	-3%	11%	-2%	45%
	2006	25%	3%	9%	12%	39%
Italy	2007	20%	7%	1%	6%	160%
	2008	26%	1%	-1%	-2%	5%
Montenegro	2009	31%	0%	-6%	1%	1%
	2010	30%	5%	1%	1%	4%
	2011	21%	8%	9%	6%	10%
	2012	20%	5%	-6%	1%	5%
Greece	2013	-7%	6%	15%	3%	5%
Albania	2014	13%	6%	23%	2%	2%
Croatia	2015	12%	10%	7%	4%	16%
	2016	15%	9%	5%	3%	7%
	2017	8%	14%	10%	11%	13%
	2018	16%	7%	11%	6%	11%
	2019	8%	4%	5%	5%	21%
	2020	-59%	-68%	-77%	-61%	-86%
	2021	114%	92%	100%	7%	343%
	2022	33%	44%	89%	85%	31%
	Average increase trend	19%	8%	10%	4%	33%
	2022-2019	18%	-12%	-12%	-23%	-19%

Source: Author’s own elaboration by comparing change of tourist arrival with the previous year.

Average increase trend of the tourist arrivals in Albania from 2002-2019 is 19 % which is considered high compared to the world trend. Croatia has an average increase of 8 %. Italy 4 % and Greece have 10 % average increase. Montenegro has 2007 year with an extreme increase, and also the post Covid 19 thus the average increase is 33%. Latest world tourism data predicted a reach of 90 % level of pre- pandemic international tourist arrivals for 2023. Our data does not include the 2023 annual figures since they are not yet published however, the change in tourist figures for our countries indicated that except Albania which has surpassed the 2019 figures other countries have achieved levels of 77-88 % of pre pandemic international arrivals in 2022.

Findings

Findings indicate that tourism promotion strategies and coastline length of the specified locations indicate that Albania and Montenegro are the most favored countries by individual tourists. Croatia is distinguished by the hybrid form of tourism, whereas Greece and Italy predominantly align with the concept of mass tourism.

Table 3 illustrates the country included in the study, the date of the slogan launch, coastline length in and the results of the observations of positioning statements inside the tourism strategies.

Table 3. Research findings slogan and type of tourism

No.	Place/ Destination County	Promotion Slogan	Slogan launching date	Coastline Length in Km	Mass Tourism	Hybrid Tourism	Individual Tourism
1	Albania	Go your own way	May 17, 2014	476			X
2	Croatia	Full of Life	February 12, 2015	5835		X	
3	Greece	All time Classics	February 27, 2013	13676	X		
4	Italy	Italy leaves its mark	February 22, 2007	7600	X		
5	Montenegro	Wild Beauty	2009	293.5			X

Source: Own elaboration based on the observation of tourist arrivals, tourism promotion strategies.

Slogan Success

In order to understand if the increase of tourist arrivals is linked or not with the tourism slogan of the destination it is analyzed the average growth for a couple of years before and after the launch (the same number of year prior and after the slogan launch). As displayed in the Table 4 the average increase of tourist arrivals before the slogan is the nearly same with average after the slogan respectively showing no change effect. If we consider this result, it can be said that the Slogan of Albania “Go your own way” it is not successful comparing to Croatia which has launched the slogan on February 12, 2015. Table 4 indicates 11 % positive change on the international tourist arrivals after launching of the slogan. Displaying a positive effect, Slogan of Croatia is successful. This finding is also supported by other researchers who had studied successful slogans of destinations. The same situation is also found in the case of Greece, which has 6 % increase in the average of the tourist arrivals. The slogan “All times classics” emphasizes that Greece is more than what it is now, has resulted to be a successful slogan. Italy’s slogan “Italy leaves its mark” has not have any effect on the tourist arrivals in Italy. While for Montenegro, the effect seems to be negative -34 % while monitoring the yearly average increase/decrease of tourist arrivals.

Table 4. International tourist average increase

Destination	Average yearly Increase of tourist arrivals Before slogan	Average yearly Increase of tourist arrivals After the slogan	Difference of yearly average	Effect
Albania	13%	12%	-1%	Slightly negative
Croatia	6%	17%	11%	Positive effect
Greece	5%	11%	6%	Positive effect
Italy	1%	1%	0%	No Change
Montenegro	5%	1%	-4%	Negative effect

Source: Authors own elaboration based on comparing the tourists’ arrivals before and after launch of the tourism slogan.

It is important to mention here that the slogans of Italy and Montenegro are old considering their launch date respectively in 2007 and 2009. If noted the year just after the slogan launch in 2008, Italy shows a decrease of tourist arrivals with 2 %. On the other side in Montenegro on 2010, the year after the launch of slogan, international tourists grew with 10 %. These findings rise other question marks, is tourist arrivals number, a determinant on measuring the effectiveness of the slogan? How can be measured the real effect of a slogan? Can the success of a slogan be measured?

Conclusions and Discussion

The investigation and findings of this study underscore the pivotal role played by tourism promotion strategies and coastline characteristics in shaping the targeted tourist market. Destinations employ destination slogans as a key tool to appeal to specific markets. The alignment of promotion strategies with destination slogans is evident across various locales, with the additional influence of coastline length, although this pattern deviates in the case of Albania.

Albanian slogan uniquely targets individual tourists, diverging from the prevailing trend observed in other destinations. However, government incentives, particularly the removal of taxation for a decade for international brand 4-5 star hotels, signals a shift towards a new tourism objective - namely, the pursuit of “mass tourism” (Albanian Government: Council of Ministers, 2018). This strategic move aims to attract substantial investments in the tourism sector.

Albania exhibits a nuanced situation, marked by a discrepancy between its tourism strategy, slogan promotion, and tourism objectives. This incongruity is attributed to economic instability and political changes, a common challenge in the country. Notably, Albania witnesses shifts in tourism strategic plans with changes in government, impeding the seamless tracking and implementation of plans and objectives.

Upon observing the tourist arrivals, it is evident that Albania is seeing a significant increase in demand, since it is the sole country to have exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Therefore, diversifying the tourism product becomes a need. In addition to coastal tourism, which has been a primary focus for many years, there is also the need to focus on natural tourism, cultural tourism, and heritage tourism. Given the significance and contribution of the tourism sector to the economy, as well as the current era of digitalization, Albania's tourism strategy should prioritize the advancement of the industry. This entails providing assistance to entrepreneurs and tourism businesses in terms of investing in new technologies, leveraging social media platforms, and offering training opportunities. (Bănescu et al., 2021; Surugiu & Surugiu, 2015; Zaman, Vasile, Surugiu & Surugiu, 2010).

The study also addresses the complexity of evaluating the effectiveness and success of a slogan in promoting tourism solely based on tourist arrival numbers. Various determinants, such as competitive pricing, tax policies, infrastructure, and service quality, contribute to tourism growth. As a result, establishing a direct link between slogan effectiveness and increased tourist numbers is challenging. The study recommends a more in-depth analysis, advocating for the exclusion of other determinants of tourism growth to establish a definitive connection between slogan effectiveness and increased tourist influx.

In conclusion, this study proposes future research endeavors focused on conducting a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of slogans as integral elements of promotion strategies. Such analyses should extend to understanding their impact on travel intentions towards tourist destinations and the overall positioning strategies employed in the dynamic landscape of tourism.

References

1. Albanian Government: Council of Ministers. (2018, 5 9). Decision No. 257, date 9.5.2018. Retrieved from <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/vkm-257-2018-status-special.pdf>
2. AMA. (1995). www.ama.org. Retrieved from American Marketing Association: <https://www.ama.org/resources/Pages/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B>
3. Andreadis, A. A. (2014). Greek Tourism Strategic Plan. Retrieved from Greek Tourism Confederation. <https://sete.gr/>

4. Anholt, S. (2016). *Places: Identity, image and reputation*. Springer.
5. ANTA, A. N. (2014, May 17). Albania Go Your Own Way. Retrieved from <http://albania.al/>.
6. B.Klenosky, D., & Gitelson, R. E. (1997). Characteristics of effectiveness of tourism slogans. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 235-251.
7. Bănescu, C., Boboc, C., Ghiță, S., & Vasile, V. (2021). Tourism in digital era. In *Proceedings of the 7th BASIQ International Conference on New Trends in Sustainable Business and Consumption*, Foggia, Italy (pp. 3-5).
8. Barisic, P., & Blazevic, Z. (2014). Visual identity components of tourist destination. *International Journal of Social, Management, Economics and Business Engineering*, 8(7), 2155-2159.
9. Bastos, W., & Levy, S. J. (2012). A history of the concept of branding: Practice and theory. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 4(3), 347–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17557501211252934>
10. Chernysheva, E., Skourtis, G., Assiouras, I., & Koniordos, M. (2011). Social Media and Destination Branding: How Mediterranean Tourism Destinations use Facebook. *Academy of Marketing Conference*, 18, 5–7.
11. Choi, S., Lehto, X. Y., & Morrison, A. M. (2007). Destination image representation on the web: Content analysis of Macau travel related websites. *Tourism Management*, 28(1), 118–129. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2006.03.002>
12. Dahlén, M., & Rosengren, S. (2005). Brands affect slogans affect brands? Competitive interference, brand equity and the brand-slogan link. *Journal of Brand Management*, 12, 151-164.
13. Dimofte, C. V., & Yalch, R. F. (2007). Consumer response to polysemous brand slogans. *Journal of consumer research*, 33(4), 515-522.
14. Gali, N., Camprubí, R., & Donaire, J. A. (2017). Analyzing tourism slogans in top tourism destinations. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 6(3), 243–251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.04.004>
15. Greece, A. (2023, December). Retrieved from <https://acropolis-greece.com/2023/12/07/greece-forges-ahead-with-tourism-strategy-for-a-sustainable-and-diversified-future/>
16. Hawes, D. K., Taylor, D. T., & Hampe, G. D. (1991). Destination marketing by states. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(1), 11-17.. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759103000103>
17. Huang, S. C. L., & Lin, L. P. L. (2017). Awareness Effects of the Tourism Slogans of Ten Destinations in Asia. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 13(4), 375–387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2017.1399191>
18. Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.
19. Keller, K. L. (2003). Understanding brands, branding and brand equity. *Interactive marketing*, 5, 7-20.
20. Keller, K. L., Parameswaran, M. G., & Jacob, I. (2010). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. Pearson Education India.
21. Klenosky, D. B., & Gitelson, R. E. (1997). Characteristics of effective tourism promotion slogans. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 235-238
22. Kohli, C., Leuthesser, L., & Suri, R. (2007). Got slogan? Guidelines for creating effective slogans. *Business Horizons*, 50(5), 415–422. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2007.05.002>
23. Kotler, P. (2002). *Marketing places*. Simon and Schuster.
24. Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4), 249–261. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540076>
25. Lee, G., Cai, L. A., & O’Leary, J. T. (2006). WWW. Branding. States. US: An analysis of brand-building elements in the US state tourism websites. *Tourism Management*, 27(5), 815-828.
26. Lehto, X. Y., Lee, G., & Ismail, J. (2014). Measuring congruence of affective images of destinations and their slogans. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16(3), 250-260. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr>
27. Ministry of Economic Development, M. (2022). March 2022. In *Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy* (Issue 1, p. 220). <https://doi.org/10.46883/onc.2022.3603>
28. Pagano, N. (2014). Tourism Destination Image and Irish Websites. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 5(8(1)), 178–188.
29. Pan, S. (2019). Tourism slogans–Towards a conceptual framework. *Tourism Management*, 72, 180-191.
30. Pike, S. (2004). Destination brand positioning slogans – towards the development of a set of accountability criteria. *Acta Turistica*, 16(2), 102-124.

31. Pike, S. (2012). Destination positioning opportunities using personal values: Elicited through the Repertory Test with Laddering Analysis. *Tourism management*, 33(1), 100-107.
32. Plog, S. C. (2004). *Leisure travel: A marketing handbook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. New York: 47-72.
33. Richardson, J., & Cohen, J. (2012). State slogans: the case of the missing USP. In *Communication and Channel Systems in Tourism Marketing* (pp. 91-109). Routledge.
34. Rooney, J. A. (1995). Branding: a trend for today and tomorrow. *Journal of product & brand management*, 4(4), 48-55.
35. Salehi, H., & Farahbakhsh, M. (2014). Tourism advertisement management and effective tools in tourism industry. *International Journal of Geography and Geology*, 3(10), 124-134.
36. Supphellen, M., & Nygaardsvik, I. (2002). Testing country brand slogans: Conceptual development and empirical illustration of a simple normative model. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4), 385–395. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540085>
37. Surugiu, M. R., & Surugiu, C. (2015). Heritage tourism entrepreneurship and social media: opportunities and challenges. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 188, 74-81.
38. Sušac, V., Bunja, D., & Krpan, T. (2016). Communication effectiveness of tourism slogans. *Horizons.A*, 20, 289–303. <https://doi.org/10.20544/horizons.a.20.1.17.p19>
39. Tourism, M. o. (2013, February). *Croatian Tourism Development to 2020*. Zagreb, Croatia.
40. Tourism, M. o. (2017). *Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017-2022*. Rome, Italy.
41. Tourism, M. o. (2018, January). *National strategy of tourism development 2018-2022*. Albania.
42. Tourism, M. o. (2018, May 3). *Export.gov*. Retrieved from <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Montenegro-Travel-and-Tourism>
43. Tourism, R. o. (2022, December). Retrieved from <https://mint.gov.hr/strategija-razvoja-odrzivog-turizma-do-2030-godine/11411>
44. Varazzani, C., Sullivan-Paul, M., & Tuomaila, H. (2023). *Behavioural science for sustainable tourism: Insights and policy considerations for greener tourism* 60. OECD Publishing.
45. WTTC. (2017). *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact -Albania*. *World Travel and Tourism Council*.
46. Zaman, G., Vasile, V., Surugiu, M., & Surugiu, C. (2010). Tourism and economic development in Romania: input-output analysis perspective. *Romanian Journal of Economics*, 31(2), 40.
47. Zhang, H., Gursoy, D., & Xu, H. (2017). The effects of associative slogans on tourists' attitudes and travel intention: The moderating effects of need for cognition and familiarity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(2), 206-220. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515627029>