

The Impact of Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Factors on Tourism and Economic Performance of Balkan Countries

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Abstract: *This study aims to unravel causes that have the potential to explain variation in performance of tourism industry and Balkan economies, in terms of GDP and employment variables. Authors used Travel and Tourism Competitiveness pillars as potential causes of this variation in tourism and country economic performance of Balkan countries. Tourism performance and country economic performance has been measured by using World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) data on tourism industry. In this study, we used the data of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) "The Travel and Tourism (T&T) Competitiveness Index Factors (T&T regulatory framework, T&T business environment and infrastructure, and T&T human, cultural and natural resources)" as independent variables for the years between 2008-2013 (2010 is missing), which are the only available data published by WEF for tourism and travel competitiveness. We also used World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) data for the same years in order to form tourism arrivals, tourism receipts, T&T industry and economy employment and GDP as dependent variables. By using the secondary data, we aimed to analyze, first, the relationship between T&T Competitiveness factors and tourism performance as tourist arrivals and receipts. Second, we examined the impact of T&T competitiveness index factors on T&T and economy employment and T&T and economy GDP. To analyze aforementioned relationships we employed correlation analysis because of the lack of enough data provided by WEF and WTTC to perform multivariate tests. Analyses results postulated that T&T competitiveness factors, in most of the relationship, have an impact on both tourism and economic performance of Balkan countries. The only exceptions of these results can be reported are the lack of relationship between T&T regulatory framework and T&T industry employment, T&T economy GDP, T&T economy employment, and tourist arrivals.*

Keywords: *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Factors, Gross Domestic Product, Tourism Performance, Employment, Balkan Countries*