

The Role of Culture in Attracting Tourists Travelling by Low-Cost Carriers to Zadar

Božena Krce Miočić

University of Zadar, Croatia
krceb@unizd.hr

Tomislav Klarin


University of Zadar, Croatia
tklarin@unizd.hr

Gabrijela Vidić

University of Zadar, Croatia
gvidic@unizd.hr

Zadar is a tourism destination in the central part of the Croatian Adriatic coast. Its geographical position and climatic conditions largely determine its development in the direction of sun and sea and leisure tourism. However, Zadar is also positioning itself as a cultural tourism destination, because of its very rich cultural and historical heritage. To attract more tourists from distant markets, the destination has decided to co-finance and encourage low-cost carriers (LCCs) to connect with Zadar Airport. The aim of this paper is to determine the extent to which Zadar's strategic orientation towards cultural tourism is reflected in its communication through various platforms, and at the same time to examine the extent to which tourists arriving in Zadar by LCCs are attracted by cultural heritage. The research included a content analysis of Zadar Tourist Board's and Zadar Region Tourist Board's social media content. The results of the survey included data collected using a semi-structured survey questionnaire on a random sample of tourists, who arrived in Zadar by LCCs from July to November 2021. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used for the data analysis. The results indicate a mismatch between the strategic orientation of the destination towards cultural tourism and marketing activities on the aforementioned media, where culture is not really in the focus. Accordingly, tourists who come to the destination by LCCs are not significantly motivated by culture. The recommendations are aimed at overcoming the constraints, as well on further study of the behaviour of cultural tourists who use LCCs.

Keywords: culture, pull factor, destination marketing, low-cost carriers, Zadar

 <https://doi.org/10.26493/2335-4194.16.89-102>

Introduction

The liberalization of air transport has led to an increase in the use of aircraft in the tourism travel segment. Therefore, today the airplane is the first means of transport for reaching a destination. A total of

58% of all tourists arrive at their destination by air (UNWTO, 2019). Low-cost carriers (LCCs) have changed a number of elements of their business models to ensure lower travel costs (Bachwich & Wittman, 2017) and to attract a new segment of consumers – tourists

who want to travel more often and have limited funds for tourist trips (Sarilgan, 2016). According to data from Statista (2022), LCCs make up 35% of the total capacity of air carriers in the world. At the same time, there is a strong growth in cultural tourism within the tourism market as one of the forms of special interest tourism that represents a shift from classic mass tourism to tourism aimed at satisfying the special wishes of consumers (Weiler & Hall, 1992). Cultural tourism, according to the definition of UNWTO (2018), implies 'a type of tourist activity whose primary motivation for visitors is to learn, discover, experience and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in the tourist destination.' The number of cultural tourists is constantly increasing, and destinations are finding ways to position themselves in this rapidly growing market. Cultural heritage protected by UNESCO is only one of the attractive factors that destinations use to attract tourists. From a strategic point of view, the city of Zadar wants to position itself as a cultural tourism destination, while at the same time it attracts and financially supports low-cost carriers. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to investigate to what extent the strategic orientation of the city of Zadar towards cultural tourism is reflected in its marketing communication through social media, and with this in mind, to determine whether tourists travelling by LCC are motivated by culture when choosing Zadar as their destination.

Culture as a Motivator and Driver of Tourist Movements

Motivation is determined by a person's emotional, spiritual or physical needs (Dai et al., 2019). Tourist motivation is a state of mind that in a certain way motivates an individual or a group to travel, and which is later interpreted by others as a valid explanation for making the decision to travel (Dann, 1981). The motivation that drives an individual to make a tourist trip can be different from the need to learn, get to know new cultures, escape from reality, or the need for adventure, etc. Culture represents one of the fundamental motives that drive tourists to travel (Richards, 2018; Cros & McKercher, 2015). Cultural tourism develops from the need to discover new cultures, acquire

new knowledge and other cultural motives of tourist travel. The UNWTO Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies (2018) pointed out the importance of cultural tourism. According to their research, 89% of all National Tourism Administrations point out that cultural tourism is an element of their tourism policy. The same research showed that 39% of all tourist trips are motivated by culture. Such a share of cultural tourists may at first seem extremely high, but here, above all, the question related to the typology of who is considered to be a cultural tourist is important. Therefore, considering the typology of cultural tourists, this share can be considered low. A detailed elaboration of the motivation and typology of cultural tourists is offered by a whole series of authors (Pulido-Fernandez & Sanchez-Rivero, 2010; Barbieri & Mahoney, 2010), the most famous of which is the one given by Bob McKercher (2002), Bob McKercher and Hilary du Cros (2003) and Hilary du Cros and Bob McKercher (2015; 2020) through various papers. This classification, based on the motivation when choosing a destination and the depth of experience that tourists have while visiting cultural attractions, offers five types of tourists. It starts from tourists who set out on their trip solely motivated by culture and who achieve a deep cultural experience, to those accidental cultural tourists whose motivation by culture when choosing a destination is extremely small, but who, in the destination, participate in cultural tourism activities and whose depth of cultural experience is superficial. In this context, it can be determined that cultural tourists can be categorized as tourists who have consumed any cultural attraction or participated in some cultural event in the destination, regardless of whether they were aware of its existence when choosing the destination, or deeply impressed by that attraction/event. There are a number of papers that have explored the specific characteristics of cultural tourists. According to these, it can be determined that those tourists are usually of an older age, who spend more in the destination and have an above-average number of overnight stays (Vergori & Arima, 2020; Cros & McKercher, 2015; Falk & Katz-Gerro, 2017). Likewise, cultural tourists are on average more loyal guests, and their motivation is often related to fac-

tors such as satisfaction and the intention to return (Richards, 2018).

Too often it has been assumed that a person has one set of motivations and seeks one type of vacation to satisfy them. Here it is important to emphasize that tourists are usually not guided by only one, but that there are several motives for visiting a destination, i.e. there is a multiple motivational nature of making vacation decisions (Robinson et al., 2011). The findings also confirm that travel motives vary depending on the nature of the trip (Dunne et al., 2007).

Destinations often force the development of cultural tourism in order to valorize their cultural wealth, but also as a response to the ever-present seasonality in tourist movements. According to its characteristics, cultural tourism should be less seasonal (Butler, 2001; Vergori & Arima, 2020; Qiang, 2020), although some studies show that this is not necessarily the case, especially in cultural coastal destinations (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011). With the aim of attracting a larger number of tourists, especially off-season, destinations decide to attract LCCs to nearby airports, offering them benefits in the form of reduced fees, advertising on their websites, etc. (Graham & Shaw, 2008; Mandić et al., 2017; Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013). Tourists who come off-season are most often offered a cultural tourism product that is less seasonally sensitive, and cultural attractions are used as an attractive motivator for LCC tourists who come to the destination in the pre- and post-season (Davison & Ryley, 2010).

Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) in Tourist Movements

Low-Cost Carriers represent perhaps the biggest change that has taken place in air transport, prompted by its liberalization, which has also had a strong impact on the tourism market. All LCCs share a commitment to the *cult of cost reduction*, a business model that offers low fares, reduces total costs and uses resources – both human and material – to the fullest (Graham & Shaw, 2008). However, in addition to price competitiveness, LCCs have recently started to use a differentiation strategy in their business (Akamavi et al., 2015; Mandić et al., 2017). These companies, in addition to the transport function itself, have also taken on active engagement in the promotion of the destinations

they connect (Tsui, 2017). This also represents a conceptual change in the business of airline companies, which, in addition to the role of a carrier, also take on the role of a co-creator of demand for a certain destination. Therefore, it is expected that an increase in the number of LCC users leads to an increase in the total number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the destination (Smith, 2009; Tsui, 2017; Pulina & Cortés-Jiménez, 2010; Rey et al., 2011; Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013). The reduction in air transport prices has enabled more tourists to reach more distant destinations. LCCs promote changes in the behaviour of tourists, who now travel more often (Martínez-García et al., 2012).

A number of studies have been conducted with the aim of determining the profile of LCC tourists (Smith, 2009; Graham & Dennis, 2010; Clavé et al., 2015; Krce Miočić et al., 2018; Vidić et al., 2019). It has been established that most of the demand for LCC services is generated by tourist movements, and when viewed from a motivational aspect, they are most often tourists who travel for vacation and recreation, and to visit friends and relatives (Kuljanin & Kalić, 2015; Martínez-García et al., 2012; Mason & Alamdari, 2007). Research has confirmed that tourists who use LCCs are usually younger, with medium and higher spending power and who stay in the destination for a shorter time than average (Graham & Dennis, 2010; Smith, 2009; Davison & Ryley, 2010; Eugenio-Martin & Inchausti-Sintes, 2016). One of the reasons for their greater buying power in the destination stems from the low cost of air transportation offered by LCCs, so the total holiday budget is partially redistributed to increased consumption in the destination (Eugenio-Martin & Inchausti-Sintes, 2016). LCCs found their market segment of passengers in tourists who want to travel for a short vacation (most often 2 to 5 days), who actually represent typical mass tourists, who in this way have the option of a more flexible choice of travel dates and can achieve a shorter stay in the destination (Smith, 2009; Pilling, 2008). According to research by Eugenio-Martin & Inchausti-Sintes (2016), the shortening of the stay of LCC users in the destination compared to tourists who did not use LCCs was 1 to 1.8 days. LCCs have changed travel habits, they

have encouraged tourists to travel more often, to go on shorter trips and to use this transport for *VFR* (Visiting Friends and Relatives) trips, but also operate for the student population that decides to study abroad (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013; Kuljanin & Kalić, 2015; Craps, 2021).

Research conducted on tourists who visited Malta using *LCCs* (Graham & Dennis, 2010) showed that these tourists are younger, wealthier and more independent tourists than those who came to Malta by charter flights or through tourist arrangements, and they showed less interest in culture and history in comparison to other tourists. This reduced interest in culture can be seen especially in the post-season (autumn and winter), which, according to current knowledge about cultural tourism, aims to reduce seasonality, and should perhaps be the most important period for the arrival of cultural tourists. Likewise, destinations often resort to attracting *LCCs* in order to extend the season of tourist arrivals (Pulina & Cortés-Jiménez, 2010). Smith (2009) investigated in Malta how the introduction of *LCCs* affected the share of cultural tourists from the *UK* market. He found that before the introduction of the *LCCs*, this percentage varied depending on the season – 30% in autumn and winter, and 30% in the spring before the *LCC* flights to Malta were introduced, while after the introduction of the flights, the percentage was 24% in autumn, 27% in winter and 31% in autumn. As the intention of the Maltese government in promoting the *LCCs* was precisely the development of cultural tourism, these data show that tourists who came to the destination in this way were less motivated by historical cultural reasons. In no segment of tourists who used *LCC* transport was this motive among the first two reasons for arrival, nor did these tourists stay in an area with a high concentration of cultural attractions (Smith, 2009).

Furthermore, research into the motivation of city break tourists who visited Dublin (Dunne et al., 2007) using *LCCs* showed that there is no one-sided motivation to travel. In their research, they also do not find cultural motives to be an important motive when choosing a destination. Easy accessibility, ticket price, but also a number of other motives such as relaxation, social acceptance and escape are the motives that drive

tourists who use *LCCs*. At the same time, destination management organizations (*DMOs*) encourage the establishment of *LCC* flights in order to attract cultural tourists (Smith, 2009; Dunne et al., 2007), and the existence of multidimensional motives has been shown. Vidić et al. (2019) determined that there are significant differences in destination satisfaction between groups of tourists with different primary motives (a total of 37 motives).

In a similar vein, Krce Miočić et al. (2018) provide an overview of longitudinal research in Zadar County (Croatia) from 2013 to 2016, in which it was shown that the motivation of *LCC* users for culture is relatively low, and that tourists primarily motivated by culture make up a maximum share of 2.8%. At the same time, if we look at those tourists who put cultural activities and events as one of the first three motives, then the share of cultural tourists in the total number of *LCC* users ranges from 13.10% to 33.6% depending on the observed year.

The lower price of air transportation does not represent a significant motivational factor among cultural tourists, who are less sensitive to price than tourists motivated by many other motives (Graham & Dennis, 2010). Cultural destinations have their own attractive power for most tourists (*UNWTO*, 2018), according to which tourists travelling by *LCCs*, when choosing a destination, most often choose those with cultural attractions. The links between the development strategies of tourist destinations and *LCC* business models point to the fact that *LCCs* have played a key role in the development of city destinations for short vacations, thus promoting cultural tourism (Graham & Shaw, 2008; Davison & Ryley, 2010). Davison and Ryley (2010) establish a statistically significant relationship between the destination and the length of stay of tourists, and the fact that cultural destinations are suitable for short vacations, but that some (like Rome) are also suitable for longer vacations. The same research showed that cultural destinations have priority among *LCC* users and that the most common motivation when choosing a destination is rich cultural heritage. From this it can be concluded that the segment of cultural tourists, regardless of price insensitivity, still recognizes the flexibility achieved by using

LCCs. It was also established that cultural destinations more often attract tourists travelling as couples, while summer destinations attract larger groups (Davison & Ryley, 2010).

Various studies show that these carriers strongly encourage the segment of emigrants who travel more often to their country of origin, so sometimes their share in total LCC passengers exceeds 1/3 (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013; Kuljanin & Kalić, 2015; Craps, 2021). Although methodologically these travellers can be seen as part of the tourist demand, their full contribution to the destination is still questionable.

The Arrival of LCCs and Tourist Movements to Zadar

The city of Zadar is located in the centre of Dalmatia, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. It is the administrative and tourist centre of Zadar County. The city of Zadar and Zadar County are developed tourist destinations that abound in various natural and cultural beauties. The diversity of the attraction is the basis for attracting different segments of tourists, among whom the leading ones are those motivated by the sun, sea and comfortable climate. This is why Zadar and Zadar County are above all swimming destinations with distinct seasonality. Zadar Airport is located at a distance of 8 km from the city of Zadar, and is a relatively small airport with less than 5 million passengers. It has relatively low landing costs and is therefore an ideal port for attracting LCCs. LCCs base their choice of airports on the decision that they can be 100 to 120 km away from the city they serve (Graham & Shaw, 2008), thus Zadar Airport highlights its advantages in easy destination accessibility. Since 2007, the County of Zadar has made a decision to attract LCCs, primarily Ryanair as the largest LCC in Europe, with the aim of attracting off-season tourists with more paying power from more distant outbound markets who will not necessarily be attracted by the sun and sea, which is the main motive for coming to this destination (Vidić et al., 2019). Although tourism in Zadar County is still seasonal, the introduction of LCCs has led to an extension of the season. While tourist movements are concentrated in July and August with small shifts towards June and September, LCCs transport takes place from the be-

ginning of April to the beginning of November. There is an evident increase in tourists in the pre-season and post-season, and the share of tourists who came to the county by LCC in the pre-pandemic year of 2019 was as much as 18% of total tourist arrivals (internal data). In the same year, Zadar County achieved 1.75 million arrivals and 9.87 million overnight stays, with the city of Zadar contributing more than 30% (CBS, 2020).

Encouraging the arrival of LCCs took place through a joint advertising project in which all stakeholders in the tourist offer financially supported advertising, and thus the arrival of Ryanair. The very concept of attracting Ryanair through advertising payments is a controversial policy that can also represent illegal market competition (Graham & Shaw, 2008). It is important to emphasize here that the payment of compensation to Ryanair of EUR 1.5 million (Šćuric, 2021) represents a significant expenditure for the tourist economy of the city of Zadar and Zadar County, which affects the reduction of other forms of promotion of the destination. At the same time, the contracts of Croatian airports with LCC companies are short-term, which means that even the smallest changes in demand can result in the cancellation of routes. For destinations like Croatia, this is extremely important because LCCs play a significant role in attracting visitors from distant developing markets in peak season and off-season (Mandić et al., 2017). According to ACI Europe data, Zadar Airport is one of the five busiest small airports (up to 5 million passengers, group 4) in Europe. In the same category, this port recorded the second highest growth of 37.6% in 2019 (Naletina et al., 2019).

Heritage represents one of the foundations for destination branding. Every place has its history and heritage, which will influence the image that tourists get (Kotler et al., 2004). The city of Zadar and Zadar County are extremely rich in cultural heritage, which goes back over 2,000 years and is visible through the preserved urban planning of the city and the remains of the Roman Forum, but it is also enriched with modern heritage, such as the Greeting to the Sun monument and the Sea Organ. However, tourists did not particularly express their motivation for cultural heritage when visiting Zadar; rather, the sun and the sea

are the most common motive (Gluvačević, 2016). The city walls of Zadar, as part of the Venetian defences of the 16th and 17th centuries, along with 5 other destinations in Italy, Montenegro and Croatia, have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2017. Encouraging the inclusion of their cultural heritage on the UNESCO list of cultural heritage represents the goal that cultural tourism destinations want to achieve, with the aim of encouraging tourist arrivals. Research has shown that the entry of a destination into the UNESCO list of natural and cultural heritage does not bring an increase in the number of tourist visits in destinations that were not attractive to tourists until then; however, in destinations that already recorded significant tourist attendance, the number of tourist arrivals after entering the UNESCO list increased (Cros & McKercher, 2015). Zadar was an active tourist destination even before it was entered on the list, so it is expected that the cultural motivation of the tourists who come to it will grow. Strategic documents for the development of tourism in Zadar County and the City of Zadar (Matassi, 2013; Krce Miočić et al., 2016) recognize the strong resource basis of culture, and cultural tourism is one of the fundamental forms in which the destination's offer should be developed.

Research Methodology

Based on the defined research subject, and in order to achieve the set goals of this paper, two studies were conducted. In the first step, a qualitative research was conducted, the goal of which was to determine to what extent Zadar's strategic orientation towards cultural tourism is reflected in its communication through various digital platforms. At the same time, the quantitative research examined the extent to which tourists who arrive in Zadar by LCCs are attracted by the cultural heritage of Zadar and to what extent they actually consume it.

In the qualitative part of the research, an analysis of the content of the posts on social media of the Zadar Tourist Board and the Zadar County Tourist Board was carried out, since these are two organizations whose primary task is the promotion of tourism in Zadar and the Zadar region. An additional reason

Table 1 Number of Facebook and Instagram Tourist Boards of Zadar and Zadar County Users

Profile	Facebook	Instagram
Like Zadar	102,970	27,160
Zadar Region	100,966	48,853

why the aforementioned digital platforms were chosen is that as many as 45.3% of surveyed tourists who come to Zadar County look for information on the Internet, with 59.7% stating that social media is their main source of information, and 32.8% citing websites of tourist boards as a source (Marušić et al., 2020).

For the purposes of this research, the social media Instagram and Facebook were chosen, since they are two different social media where both tourist boards have active profiles. Instagram is a content community that enables the publication, maintenance, management and sharing of image content, while Facebook is a social network where, in addition to networking and connection, it is possible to publish different types of content such as images, video content, text, links, etc. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). It is also important to emphasize that these two social media attract different target groups. According to global data, Instagram is used by a younger population compared to Facebook. Instagram is mostly used by users in the age group of 16 to 34 years, while Facebook is used more often by users over 35 years old (We Are Social, 2022).

The Zadar Tourist Board has an official profile on the Facebook social network and Instagram called Like Zadar. The Zadar County Tourist Board has official profiles on Instagram and Facebook called Zadar Region. It has 48,853 followers on Instagram and 100,966 followers on Facebook (May 2022). Although the official Instagram profile of Zadar County Tourist Board has more followers than that of TB Zadar, the activity is approximately similar.

Therefore, within this part of the primary research, social media were used as sources of information for content analysis. For this purpose, quantitative content analysis was used. It is also called frequency analysis of content because, in addition to determining the presence and characteristics of content, the frequency

and volume of content are quantitatively expressed (Tkalac Verčič et al., 2013). In doing so, the frequency of certain types of content was determined, but also the frequency of occurrence of the dominant attribute appearing on the content.

The contents were analysed for the period from January to November 2021. Considering that tourists arriving by LCC have the possibility to come to Zadar and Zadar County from March/April to November, when most low-cost air routes (especially Ryanair) with outbound destinations are available, this period was chosen for analysis. This is the period when the largest number of potential tourists are looking for information about the destination, so it is especially necessary to give attention to the communication strategy of the destination according to the outbound markets.

On Instagram, only image content published during the specified period was analysed, while video content and any other content were excluded from the analysis. In addition, it should be noted that only image content published on the profile feed was analysed, not posts in stories. On average, both tourist boards published one image per day on Instagram during the observed period. The analysis of Facebook profiles of tourist boards was more demanding, since tourist boards use this social medium to publish different types of content. This is also a limitation of this research. To begin with, it was determined that only the content on the timeline of each tourist board would be analysed. It was determined that the communication strategies of the Zadar Tourist Board and Zadar County Tourist Board differ greatly, and that this will significantly complicate the content analysis. The Zadar Tourist Board uses Facebook as a kind of 'bulletin board' on which it publishes a whole range of different types of content (links to websites, video content, photos, etc.), while the Zadar County Tourist Board uses this social media mostly for posting pictures, although it also occasionally publishes links to other websites and other content. In order to collect relevant data, for the purposes of analysis, the initial display of the website, which is visible to users if the link is shared on Facebook, as well as the first display of video content, was taken into account. The aforementioned was analysed using the same methodology

as the image content, i.e. the initial dominant attribute that was displayed on the image content was analysed.

The analysis of the image content in this paper was carried out according to the paper of Stepchenkova and Zhan (2013). These authors classified image content into twenty categories according to the dominant attributes of the destination that are shown in the image content depicting Peru (e.g. nature and landscapes, traditions and customs, architecture/buildings). Given that this paper deals with the analysis of a Mediterranean destination, the categories have been slightly modified and a total of sixteen categories have been established. Each image content is determined by one dominant feature that prevails over the image content and is thus classified into categories.

The second part of the empirical research was a survey, which was conducted on passengers using LCCs that connect the city of Zadar and Zadar County with numerous European destinations. The aim of this part was to examine to what extent tourists who arrive in Zadar by LCCs are attracted by the cultural heritage of Zadar, whether they visit it, and ultimately, how satisfied they are with the offer and the destination. The research was conducted at the departure terminal of Zadar Airport from July to October 2021. It was estimated that this is the most favourable time for the consent of the respondents to participate in the research, because they are in a relatively small and closed space and thus have the feeling of reducing the waiting time. This research is part of a longitudinal research that has been conducted since 2013, but for the purposes of this paper, only the research conducted during 2021 was considered. The research was conducted using a structured questionnaire with the presence of an interviewer. Motivation testing is usually done through surveys, on a representative sample, on an annual basis (Vanhove, 2012). The questionnaire was answered by people over the age of 18 who spent at least 2 nights in Zadar. Considering the characteristics of the city of Zadar as a destination, it was estimated that this is the minimum time to get to know the destination, as this was an effort to ensure the suitability of tourists for the experience and evaluation of the city of Zadar as a destination.

The questionnaire contained a total of 35 ques-

tions related to the respondents' demographic characteristics, travel behaviour, satisfaction with the destination, etc. The question of motivation for visiting the destination was examined with the help of an adapted scale used in the research TOMAS – 'Attitudes and consumption of tourists in Croatia,' which has its origins in the research methodology carried out in Switzerland under the name 'Touristisches Marktforschungssystem Schweiz' (Kozić, 2009). Intention to recommend and return to the destination was examined using an adapted composite scale with three items according to Lam and Hsu (2006). For ease of understanding, the questionnaire was offered in German, English and French. Only results related to the subject and objectives of the paper were used in the paper. For this purpose, the characteristics of respondents motivated by the heritage that is under the protection of UNESCO were considered, given that the city of Zadar and other destinations in Dalmatia possess cultural and natural heritage protected by UNESCO. These respondents were considered in relation to other respondents in order to determine possible differences.

Results of Content Analysis

An analysis of the content of the posts of the Zadar Tourist Board (Like Zadar) on Instagram revealed that the local Zadar Tourist Board mostly publishes image content in which the dominant attribute is architecture (buildings, streets, squares, etc.) (35%), followed by people (dominant part of image content is concentrated on people) (19%), nature and landscape (sunset, sea, etc.) (18%) and lifestyle (everyday activities of people in the destination) (11%). The results of the analysis are somewhat different for the Zadar County Tourist Board, where the image content predominantly depicted nature and landscape (29%), while people (15%), architecture (14%) and gastronomy (food and drinks, groceries, food preparation and drinks, etc.) (15%) are almost equally represented. These are categories of image content that are represented by more than ten percent in the analysed content.

On the social network of Facebook, the analysis was more demanding, as previously stated. However, it was determined that the Zadar Tourist Board pri-

marily publishes events as content (concerts, festivals, local events, etc.). At the same time, it should be noted that it is a presentation of a really wide range of different events, from sports to cultural and entertainment events. Next, the contents are dominated by depictions of architecture, followed by contents classified into the 'other contents' category, such as the promotion of products, accommodation, commercial attractions, etc., followed by lifestyle. This tourist board uses Facebook primarily to inform tourists and potential tourists about activities in the destination. In this way, it achieves one of the basic functions of social networks – it connects different users. At the same time, the Zadar County Tourist Board publishes content related to nature and landscape, architecture, people and lifestyle. So, its communication strategy is fairly uniform for both social media, and it should also be noted that it does not use the specifics and features of each of these social media, nor the specifics of the target market to which it communicates.

It can be concluded that the aforementioned tourist boards have different communication strategies on the analysed social media. This is particularly evident in the content that is communicated, which refers to certain forms of tourism. Given that the Zadar Tourist Board is related to the promotion of the city of Zadar itself as an urban destination, the emphasis on architecture is not surprising. Likewise, as previously emphasized, it is a destination that has a rich heritage. However, architecture is only one element through which cultural destinations can be branded. There are a whole range of other attractive factors related to culture that could be emphasized more on social media, especially intangible heritage. On the other hand, the Zadar County Tourist Board sees its attractive factor mainly in the nature and landscape, as well as the basis for various types of sports activities and recreation in the destination. This is not surprising considering the fact that for the last few years this destination has been positioned through the marketing campaign 'Say yes to everything!' in which there is a special emphasis on just such activities and outdoor activities. However, it should be emphasized here that Zadar County is rich in various resources of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but apparently did not recognize them as a

sufficiently attractive factor for the primary branding of the destination through social media.

The Results of a Survey Conducted on Tourists using LCCs

A total of 517 respondents who spent at least two nights in Zadar County participated in the research. As stated, certain characteristics of the behaviour of respondents whose arrival in Zadar and Zadar County was motivated by UNESCO heritage were considered, in relation to other respondents. In the total sample of surveyed tourists, only 5 respondents (0.97%) were primarily motivated by UNESCO heritage, while 136 respondents (26.31%) stated this as one of the three secondary motives. So, these 141 (27.27%) respondents were considered in relation to the other respondents.

At the beginning, it should be emphasized that all respondents in the sample were most often motivated by the sun, the sea and a pleasant climate, and then by new experiences. This is also the most common motive in past researches (Krce Miočić et al., 2018; Vidić et al., 2019). The demographic characteristics of respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage are given in Table 2.

Respondents are experienced travellers because on average they travel outside their country of permanent residence 2 or more times a year (69%), with 39% of respondents using LCCs 6 or more times. The demographic characteristics of the other respondents did not differ significantly from those motivated by UNESCO heritage. The above characteristics are in accordance with the data on passengers who most often travel on LCCs (Graham & Dennis, 2010; Smith, 2009; Davison & Ryley, 2010; Eugenio-Martin & Inchausti-Sintes, 2016).

Respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage received their first information about Zadar and Zadar County via the Internet (54%), and then through the recommendation of friends and relatives (21%), which shows that the strongest communication channel is still the Internet and recommendations (Word-of-Mouth). As for gathering information about the destination, the respondents most often got information via travel agency websites such as Tripadvisor (41%), followed by recommendations from friends and rela-

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents Motivated by UNESCO Heritage

Gender	Male (53%); Female (47%)
Age	18–35 (63%); 36–55 (33%)
Education	Bachelor or master's degree (76%)
Employment	Yes (67%)
Income	>1,500€ (25%); 1,500–3,000€ (52%)
Marital status	Single (41%) or in a relationship (29%)
Travelling with	Family (38%) or friends (37%)
Travelling exp.	2 times or more a year (69%)
LCC experience	6 times or more (39%)

tives (38%) and social media (30%). It should be noted that only 17% of respondents got information about the destination through the Zadar Tourist Board website and Zadar County Tourist Board website, and 13% through the website of the LCCs they used. The other respondents were similarly informed about Zadar and Zadar County. They got their information a little more through recommendations from friends and relatives (41%), and a little less through travel websites (26%). With the other respondents, it is also evident that websites of regional or local tourist boards and websites of LCCs are not significantly represented when seeking information about the destination (about 10%), although Zadar and Zadar County allocate significant funds for promotion, especially for joint advertising through the websites of LCCs.

The main or primary destination for respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage was Zadar and Zadar County (66%), which is slightly more than other respondents (45%). However, at the same time, it is evident that these respondents visited other places in Dalmatia more often, such as Šibenik, Split and Dubrovnik, which also have heritage under the protection of UNESCO. Also, these respondents visited protected natural areas more often, especially Krka National Park and Plitvice Lakes National Park (32%), which is also a UNESCO heritage site. Considering the above, it can be concluded that respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage really actually visited these places. This is not surprising, because respondents also mentioned cities like Split and Dubrovnik, as well as

Table 3 Sources of Information about Zadar and Zadar County

Attitudes and behavior	Motivated by UNESCO heritage	Others
First informat. on Zadar & Zadar County	Internet (54%); Friends & relatives (21%)	Internet (53%); Friends & relatives (31%)
Information on Zadar & Zadar County	Travel websites (41%); Friends & relatives (38%); Social media (30%)	Friends & relatives (41%); Social media (30%); Travel websites (26%);
Other information sources	Websites of regional or local tourist boards (17%); Websites of LCC (13%)	Websites of regional or local tourist boards (9%); Websites of LCC (10%)
Main destination	Zadar and Zadar County (66%)	Zadar and Zadar County (45%)
Visiting other destinations on the trip	Šibenik, Split, Dubrovnik (UNESCO) (73%)	Šibenik, Split, Dubrovnik (UNESCO) (42%)
Visiting protected area on the trip	NP Krka, NP Plitvice Lakes (UNESCO) (32%)	NP Krka, NP Plitvice Lakes (UNESCO) (21%)

Table 4 Motivation and Consumption of Cultural Events and Facilities

Attitudes and behaviour	(1)	(2)
Cultural events and facilities as a motive to visit Zadar or Zadar region (%)	40	10
Consumption of thematic sightseeing tours (culture, religion, gastronomy, history, etc.) (%)	28	10
Consumption of cultural events and activities (museums, exhibitions, theatres, etc.) (%)	19	13
Average personal expenditure for cultural and entertainment event and facilities (€)	75	41
Average personal expenditure for museums (€)	25	20

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) motivated by UNESCO heritage, (2) others.

Plitvice National Park, as the main/primary destination on their trip. It should be added to this that all respondents in the sample visited at least one protected area.

Respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage were also motivated by cultural events and contents in coming to Zadar and Zadar County (about 40% of these respondents), which is slightly more than other respondents (10%). The results on motivation and consumption of cultural events and contents are shown in Table 4.

However, it is evident that respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage consumed relatively little of the cultural offer. Only 28% of them (or 38 respondents) consumed cultural events and contents (museums, exhibitions, theatres, performances, etc.), and 22% enjoyed sightseeing cultural heritage and themed tours. This is also confirmed by consumption, as only 10% of the respondents actually spent on cultural and enter-

tainment events and activities, and on average around €75 per person. As for museums, only 3% of the respondents spent on museums and on average around €25. Other respondents are not overly interested in the offer of cultural content, as indicated by the results on motivation and consumption of the same.

At the end of the survey, the respondents evaluated their satisfaction with the elements of cultural and natural heritage in Zadar and Zadar County. They could evaluate satisfaction with grades from -2 to 2, and the grades are shown in Table 5. From the table, it is possible to see that respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage are somewhat more critical about satisfaction with cultural heritage, that is, their grades are on average lower than the group for which this was not the reason for coming. So, given that they were partly motivated by cultural heritage and that they visited or consumed it, the aforementioned elements obviously did not meet their expectations. At the same time, it is

Table 5 Satisfaction with the Heritage and Recommendation

Category	Item	(1)	(2)
Satisfaction (from -2 to 2)	Maintaining of cultural heritage	0.73	1.42
	Accessibility of cultural heritage	0.87	1.31
	Presentation of cultural heritage	0.80	1.31
	The beauty and preserved nature and landscapes	1.58	1.71
Recommendation (%)	Yes	90	90
Reasons for visiting in the future (%)	Peace and the preserved environment, gastronomy	50	40

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) motivated by UNESCO heritage, (2) others.

interesting to note how the other respondents rate cultural heritage highly, even though they consumed significantly less of it. Natural heritage was rated highly by both groups of respondents, with respondents motivated by UNESCO heritage being somewhat more critical.

Finally, one can add to this that both groups of respondents would come again to the city of Zadar and Zadar County, to enjoy the peace and preserved nature and gastronomy. Also, respondents would recommend the same destination to their friends, colleagues and relatives (90% of them). This data is not surprising, because in addition to these, the respondents were also very satisfied with other elements of the destination's offer. However, only 55% of all respondents would return to the destination again, which is in line with consumer behaviour in the tourist market, especially the younger population, which is more inclined to change destinations. Considering the extreme mobility of the respondents, all these elements related to the examination of the experience and satisfaction with the elements offered by the city of Zadar and Zadar County should be taken with caution, because their impression was partly influenced by the experience of other places and attractions.

Conclusion

Previous research has shown that LCCs have made a significant shift in the air transport services market. With their concept of low service prices, along with a reduced scope of services, they have enabled passengers with relatively lower incomes to use air transportation services. With this concept, they encouraged

the segment of tourists who tend to take shorter trips to travel, and who want to travel several times a year, as well as the emigrants of the countries that were their destinations. Destinations competed to attract LCCs because they expected their arrival to attract more distant markets, but also to encourage off-season arrivals. Therefore, the destinations encouraged the arrival of LCCs through various discounts on the prices of port fees, as well as through online advertising programmes about the destination on the LCC websites. In this paper, it was determined that the extremely high investment for internet advertising of LCC companies is only one way to attract them. Namely, only 11.5% of surveyed LCC tourists were informed about the destination via the website of the LCCs they used. Therefore, the above cannot justify the high expenses that the Zadar County pays to the LCCs for connecting the destination with other destinations. The reduction of seasonality, which is the primary goal of both the development of cultural tourism and the attraction of LCCs, was not yet achieved in the example of the researched destination. LCCs achieve most of their traffic in the summer months, when it is common for this coastal destination to have the highest number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays.

By analysing the social media content, it was possible to determine that neither of the two observed tourist boards focused their communication strategy on digital platforms primarily on culture as an attractive element, although they have highlighted it as a primary strategic orientation and one of the tools for reducing seasonality. Therefore, there is no uniform positioning of Zadar and Zadar County as a cultural

tourism destination. This is also indicated by the results of the survey, according to which it is evident that tourists using LCCs are not significantly motivated by culture and consume it even less. Although culture in the broadest sense is used as a resource in destination branding, it seems that this is not clear, nor emphasized enough. Although architecture is used as one of the fundamental attributes of the content that is published, especially when it comes to the city of Zadar, this is also not enough when it comes to highly motivated cultural tourists who are, for example, motivated by UNESCO heritage. According to the results of the conducted research, a relatively small percentage of such tourists consumed other types of cultural activities (museums, theatres, etc.), and the satisfaction with the various elements of heritage is lower compared to other surveyed tourists. It is not entirely clear from these results whether they could find information related to these other types of cultural activities or if this offer did not meet their expectations, and for that reason they were not satisfied and did not use it. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct additional research in order to determine the specific behavioural patterns of cultural tourists who travel by LCCs. In addition, it is necessary to conduct a content analysis of other digital platforms that tourists use when seeking information about the destination, such as TripAdvisor, the websites of other tourist boards and LCCs, in order to determine what type of content is published and to analyse tourist satisfaction through various tourist review sites.

In conclusion, it has to be stressed that, as seen from this research, Zadar and Zadar County did not sufficiently utilize the potentials that LCCs could bring to the destination. This potential is especially visible in the number of connecting flights between Zadar and distant European outbound markets (<https://www.zadar-airport.hr/destinacije#zad>), that are highly motivated by culture and sightseeing when visiting this destination and which, therefore, spend more than average on cultural activities in the destination, such as the United Kingdom, France, Scandinavian countries, Belgium, and the Netherlands (Marušić et al., 2020). These are also the markets in which a very high percentage arrive by plane to Zadar County. So, this is a

very good basis to prolong the tourist season by attracting cultural tourists with higher spending power. Therefore, Zadar and Zadar County Tourist Boards should focus their marketing strategies on the rich cultural heritage and other cultural products to attract these markets, especially in pre- and post-season. The role of providing information about cultural tourism offers is crucial in this sense, as has been visible from the conducted research. This should be done through targeted digital marketing activities on their official digital platforms, and also other offline marketing channels on the above-mentioned markets.

Acknowledgments

This research has been supported by Zadar County. The authors would like to acknowledge Zadar airport for their engagement during the data collection process.

References

- Akamavi, R. K., Mohamed, E., Pellmann, K., & Xu, Y. (2015). Key determinants of passenger loyalty in the low-cost airline business. *Tourism Management*, 46, 528–545.
- Bachwich, A. R., & Wittman, M. D. (2017). The emergence and effects of the ultra-low cost carrier (ULCC) business model in the US airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 62, 155–164.
- Barbieri, C., & Mahoney, E. (2010). Cultural tourism behaviour and preferences among the live-performing arts audience: An application of the univorous-omnivorous framework. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(5), 481–496.
- Butler, R. W. (2001). Seasonality in tourism: Issues and implications. In R. W. Butler, T. Baum, & S. Lundtorp (Eds.), *Seasonality in tourism* (pp. 5–22). Routledge.
- CBS (Croatian Bureau of Statistics). (2020). *Tourist arrivals and nights in 2019*. https://mint.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/AAA_2020_ABC/c_dokumenti/200228_DZS_turizam2019.pdf
- Clavé, S. A., Saladié, Ö., Cortés-Jiménez, I., Young, A. F., & Young, R. (2015). How different are tourists who decide to travel to a mature destination because of the existence of a low-cost carrier route? *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 42, 213–218.
- Crap, A. (2021). What are the changes in LCA passengers' mobility practices? Insights from a European survey. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 12(1), 100477.
- Cros, H. du, & McKercher, B. (2015). *Cultural tourism* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

- Cros, H. du, & McKercher, B. (2020). *Cultural tourism* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Cuccia, T., & Rizzo, I. (2011). Tourism seasonality in cultural destinations: Empirical evidence from Sicily. *Tourism Management*, 32(3), 589–595.
- Dai, T., Hein, C., & Zhang, T. (2019). Understanding how Amsterdam City tourism marketing addresses cruise tourists' motivations regarding culture. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 29, 157–165.
- Dann, G. M. (1981). Tourist motivation an appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(2), 187–219.
- Davison, L., & Ryley, T. (2010). Tourism destination preferences of low-cost airline users in the East Midlands. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 18(3), 458–465.
- We Are Social. (2022, 21 October). *Digital 2021 October Global Statshot report*. <https://wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2021/10/social-media-users-pass-the-4-5-billion-mark/>
- Dobruszkes, F., & Mondou, V. (2013). Aviation liberalization as a means to promote international tourism: The EU-Morocco case. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 29, 23–34.
- Dunne, G., Buckley, J., & Flanagan, S. (2007). City break motivation: The case of Dublin, a successful national capital. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 22(3/4), 95–107.
- Eugenio-Martin, J. L., & Inchausti-Sintes, F. (2016). Low-cost travel and tourism expenditures. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 57, 140–159.
- Falk, M., & Katz-Gerro, T. (2017). Modeling travel decisions: Urban exploration, cultural immersion, or both? *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(3), 369–382.
- Gljučević, D. (2016). The power of cultural heritage in tourism-example of the city of Zadar (Croatia). *International Journal of Scientific Management and Tourism*, 2(1), 3–24.
- Graham, A., & Dennis, N. (2010). The impact of low cost airline operations to Malta. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 16(3), 127–136.
- Graham, B., & Shaw, J. (2008). Low-cost airlines in Europe: Reconciling liberalization and sustainability. *Geoforum*, 39(3), 1439–1451.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2009). The fairyland of Second Life: Virtual social worlds and how to use them. *Business Horizons*, 52(6), 563–572.
- Kotler, P., Nebenzahl, I. D., Lebedenko, V., Rainisto, S., Gertner, D., Clifton, R., . . . Aaker, D. (2004). Where is place branding heading? *Place Branding*, 1(1), 12–35.
- Kozić, I. (2009). TOMAS trends: Attitudes and expenditures of tourists in Croatia 1987–2008. *Tourism*, 57(3), 347–348.
- Krce Miočić, B., Klarin, T., & Vidić, G. (2018). The impact of low-cost carriers on tourists' motivation and decision on selection of a destination. In J. Šimurina, I. Načinić Braje, & I. Pavić (Eds.), *CAUTHE 2018: An Enterprise Odyssey; Proceedings of FEB Zagreb 9th International Odyssey Conference on Economics and Business* (pp. 139–140). University of Zagreb.
- Krce Miočić, B., Magaš, D., Bacalja, R., Razović, M., Vidić, G., & Klarin, T. (2016). *Strategija razvoja turizma Grada Zadra za razdoblje 2016.–2026. godine*. Turistička zajednica Grada Zadra.
- Kuljanin, J., & Kalić, M. (2015). Exploring characteristics of passengers using traditional and low-cost airlines: A case study of Belgrade Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 46, 12–18.
- Lam, T., & Hsu, H. C. (2006). Predicting behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination. *Tourism Management*, 27, 589–599.
- Mandić, A., Teklić, M., & Petrić, L. (2017). The effects of the low cost carriers' presence on airport performance: Evidence from Croatia. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 23(1), 17–34.
- Martínez-García, E., Ferrer-Rosell, B., & Coenders, G. (2012). Profile of business and leisure travelers on low cost carriers in Europe. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 20, 12–14.
- Marušić, Z., Čorak, S., Ivandić, N., Beroš, I., & Ambrušec, M. (2020). *Stavovi i potrošnja turista u Hrvatskoj: Tomas Hrvatska 2019*. Institut za turizam.
- Mason, K. J., & Alamdari, F. (2007). EU network carriers, low cost carriers and consumer behaviour: A delphi study of future trends. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 13(5), 299–310.
- Matassi, J., Kevrić, V., Peričić, S., Krce Miočić, B., Razović, M., Klarin, T., Magaš, D., Brkić-Velmejkica, J., & Krajinović, A. (2013). *Glavni plan razvoja turizma Zadarske županije 2013.–2023*. Turistička zajednica Zadarske županije.
- McKercher, B. (2002). Towards a classification of cultural tourists. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(1), 29–38.
- McKercher, B., & Cros, H. du. (2003). Testing a cultural tourism typology. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 5(1), 45–58.
- Naletina, D., Damić, M., & Jabučar, A. (2019). Customer satisfaction with services of low-cost carriers at Pula and Zadar airports. *InterEULawEast: Journal for the International and European Law, Economics and Market Integrations*, 6(2), 71–97.

- Pilling, M. (2008, October). Malta looks for a break. *Airline Business*.
- Pulido-Fernández, J. I., & Sánchez-Rivero, M. (2010). Attitudes of the cultural tourist: A latent segmentation approach. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 34(2), 111–129.
- Pulina, M., & Cortés-Jiménez, I. (2010). Have low-cost carriers influenced tourism demand and supply? The case of Alghero, Italy. *Tourism Analysis*, 15(6), 617–635.
- Qiang, M. (2020). Does climate drive tourism seasonality in cultural destinations? A comparative study. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(22), 2756–2761.
- Rey, B., Myro, R. L., & Galera, A. (2011). Effect of low-cost airlines on tourism in Spain: A dynamic panel data model. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 17(3), 163–167.
- Richards, G. (2018). Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 36, 12–21.
- Robinson, P., Heitmann, S., & Dieke, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Research themes for tourism*. CABI.
- Sarılgan, A. E. (2016). Impact of low cost carriers on Turkish tourism industry. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 6(4), 176–188.
- Šćuric, A. (2021). Zadar 1,5 milijuna EUR za 44 linije Ryanaira. *Zamaaero*. <https://zamaaero.com/30/12/2021/novosti-iz-regije/zadar-15-milijuna-eur-za-44-linije-ryanaira/>
- Smith, A. (2009). Effects of low cost airlines on efforts to develop cultural heritage tourism. *Anatolia*, 20(2), 289–306.
- Statista. (2022). *Low cost carriers' worldwide market share from 2007 to 2020*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1586677/global-low-cost-carrier-market-capacity-share/>
- Stepchenkova, S., & Zhan, F. (2013). Visual destination images of Peru: Comparative content analysis of DMO and user-generated photography. *Tourism Management*, 36, 590–601.
- Tkalac Verčič, A., Sinčić Ćorić, D., & Pološki Vokić, N. (2013). *Priručnik za metodologiju istraživačkog rada u društvenim istraživanjima: kako osmisliti, provesti i opisati znanstveno i stručno istraživanje* (2nd ed.). MEP.
- Tsui, K. W. H. (2017). Does a low-cost carrier lead the domestic tourism demand and growth of New Zealand? *Tourism Management*, 60, 390–403.
- UNWTO. (2018). *Report on tourism and culture synergies*. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284418978>
- UNWTO. (2019). *International tourism highlights*. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284421152>
- Vanhove, N. (2012). *The economics of tourism destination* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Vergori, A. S., & Arima, S. (2020). Cultural and non-cultural tourism: Evidence from Italian experience. *Tourism Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104058>
- Vidić, G., Krce Miočić, B., & Žnidar, K. (2019). Tourist satisfaction with a destination: Evidence from low cost carrier users in Zadar County. *Acta turistica*, 31(1), 35–68.
- Weiler, B., & Hall, C. M. (1992). *Special interest tourism*. Belhaven.