Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBYAN TOURISM SECTOR

The theses of the PhD Dissertation

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1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Libya is a Northern African country, with a population of 6.87 million, bordering Egypt to the East, Sudan to the Southeast, the Mediterranean Sea to the North, Tunisia and Algeria to the West, and Chad and Niger to the South. Since many decades, Libyan economy has been highly depending on oil and gas resources.

Libya possesses rich culture, diversified archaeological and historical places, desert and natural topographies, and long Mediterranean coastline of beautiful beaches extended for around two thousand kilometres. These resources could be a base for number of tourism business activities. In spite of these diversifications in tourism elements, the tourism industry in Libya is still lagging behind the neighbouring countries in North Africa.

Libya at the present is not a popular destination due to many reasons, although its characteristics (geographic features, historical sites, cuisine, seashore, etc.) could provide excellent opportunities for tourists. Nevertheless, the policies of the country and the lack of governmental interest in the tourism sector were weak points of the country for many decades before 2011 (KHALIFA 2010; NAAMA et al. 2008). The situation of the tourism in the country is reflected by the shortage of services such as airlines, hotels, tourism programs, local transport which still represents the country (ABUHARRIS and RUDDOCK 2005a,b; ELKRGHLI and ELGIMATI 2013; BIZAN 2013; LAFFERTY and YOUSSEF 2015).

The main goal of the research is to explore the possibilities of building the tourism sector as a pillar of the Libyan economy, as Libya, based on the country's geographical, historical and climatic features and could be a good touristic destination. The present lack of success in the tourism sector has multiple reasons – these reasons are to be outlined by the research. Besides exploring the opportunities of the tourism sector, a strategic thinking process is also described in the study, for which the stakeholders of the Libyan tourism sector should start to prepare. Building a new pillar of the Libyan economy is a long process, but without a determined strategy, the realization process cannot be successful. Presently, the Libyan political and economic situation is fragile, but the nation shall prepare for the end of the crisis period and the reconstruction process.

1.1. Research objectives

The problems and challenges of tourism industry of Libya were previously discussed by different authors (BIZAN 2009; KHALIFA 2010; ABUHARRIS and RUDDOCK 2005a,b; ABUHARRIS 2014; LAFFERTY and YOUSEF 2015; ELKRGHLI 2014, 2016; ELKRGHLI and ELGIMATI 2013; HBIESH 2017), who discussed Libya's tourism by exploring the opinion of tourists who visited Libya, based on their own direct impressions, and the players of the tourism sector of Libya (service providers, travel agencies, ministry representatives). All these authors agreed that Libya could be a good tourism destination, as the country has remarkable assets, but the strategic approach is still missing.

As the abovementioned researches discussed Libya's tourism *by exploring the opinion of tourists who visited Libya, based on their own direct impressions, and the players of the tourism sector of Libya (service providers, travel agencies, ministry representatives, etc.),* so I decided to find a different approach. Therefore, *I focused on a group that was not surveyed by previous studies, a*

random sample of international tourists. My goal was to explore the image of Libya through the eyes of an international sample, to know their opinion and knowledge about Libya as a tourism destination.

The general goals of my research are:
- firstly, to show that Libya's tourism industry represents an unexploited resource for the economy and it might be a second pillar for stabilization of the economy in money terms and social aspects as well,
- secondly, to identify main drivers that can contribute to development of the tourism sector in Libya and to provide a set of strategic actions for building the fundamentals of its future development process,
- thirdly, to draw conclusions and recommendations for policy makers as the practical utilization of the research results.

The main problem related to the general objectives is that Libya has a one-pillared economy due to the country's richness in natural gas and oil, and this one-pillared economy brings the dominancy of state-related employment and causes high unemployment rate and the lack of private sector services. As Libya has good potential for being an attractive tourism destination, but this potential is still unexploited. A future development of the tourism sector could build a new pillar of the economy. For a more detailed analysis of above research goals, I formulated 4 research objectives.

Research Objective 1: To identify and classify tourism resources in Libya (as cultural heritage and natural heritage) and to relate them to different types of tourism.

Research Objective 2: To conduct a tourism-related situation analysis for Libya by using STEEP analysis.

Research Objective 3: To identify the tourism segments and types, which are most likely to be successful for developing Libya's tourism, based on a primary research about the knowledge and perceptions of the international audience about Libya as a touristic destination. RO3 is to be completed through a questionnaire survey conducted among potential tourists.

Research Objective 4: To conduct strategic analyses and to recommend strategic actions for building the fundamentals and ensure sustainability of the Libyan tourism sector by using the methods of SWOT analysis and SOAR analysis.

1.2. Hypotheses

Based on my observations, experiences and the relevant literature I set my hypotheses as follows:
Hypothesis 1: Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination, tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya.
Hypothesis 2: Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya could be determined and categorized.
Hypothesis 3: There is a correlation between different groups of tourists and types of tourism.
The concept and process of the research is summarized by Table 1.

Table 1: Research concept and process

Research objectives	Hypotheses	Data	Methods
RO1		Secondary data	Document analysis, Literature review, Observations
RO2		Secondary data	Document analysis, Literature review, STEEP analysis
RO3	H1: Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination, tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya.	Primary data, Question-naire survey	Descriptive statistics
	H2: Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya could be determined and categorized.		CHAID, Binary logistic regression,
	H3: There is a correlation between different groups of tourists and types of tourism		Cluster analysis
RO4		Document analysis, Primary research results	SWOT analysis, SOAR analysis

Source: own construction

1.3. Limitations of the research

Political stability and safety issues

The political factors of Libya have undergone substantial changes in the past decade. After 2011, the political processes in Libya became more and more unstable, as there was not a clear roadmap after the power changes. Due to the lack of political stability and its consequence, the weak security conditions, Libya in the past decade could not be considered as a safe destination. On the contrary, there are promising political movements as finally, Libya's House of Representatives confirmed the Government of National Unity on 10th March 2021 as the country's interim administrative authority. The new elections will be held in December 2021.

A limitation of the study is that it did not target to analyse the political issues, the main focus of the research is to provide a general analysis of the situation and to lay down the strategic steps to be taken for developing tourism sector. It is very important to prepare the sector's stakeholders for the future steps, to define a scenario for developing the tourism sector, which implementation could be started immediately after the desired peace will come.

Relationship between public security, infrastructure and the level of tourism

The present study did not explore the deeper relationship between public security, the weakness of infrastructure and the level of tourism; it only focused on the introduction of Libya's unexploited and less known tourism resources. The main reason of this limitation is the lack or rare availability of statistical data about Libya. The study also did not deal with tourism services and tourism infrastructure, as the researcher could not manage meetings with such important stakeholders of tourism industry like catering industry, accommodation providers, tourism services, tourism officials, etc. For generating primary data, a parallel research (questionnaire survey) was

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conducted to explore the knowledge, aspirations and needs of the potential consumers (i.e. visitors) in order to define the required steps to be done for strengthening the tourism sector in Libya, which findings were used in the SOAR analysis. The primary research focused on the opinion of possible visitors about Libya and about general tourism-related issues.

COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2021

Another limitation of the study is that it does not address the situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on tourism. It should be noted, that the research work related to this dissertation was closed earlier then the COVID-19 pandemic appeared, so at the present stage of the research, it does not consider the new crisis situation generated by the pandemic, which brought a huge collapse of the tourism worldwide. The pandemic brought a very new situation for the tourism sector all over the world. Tourism activities have dropped significantly, pushing the sector into a serious crisis. Although at the present there is not much difference between the tourism sector of Libya and its neighbours, but this is only the result of the pandemic, the basic differences still exist. On the other hand, the post-COVID situation could bring additional opportunities for Libya if the sector's condition could improve.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Methodology

Based on the review of literature I overviewed different research concepts about tourism and tourism strategy development and fro research design I chose the model of the model of destination competitiveness (Fig. 1.) of RITCHIE and CROUCH (2003).
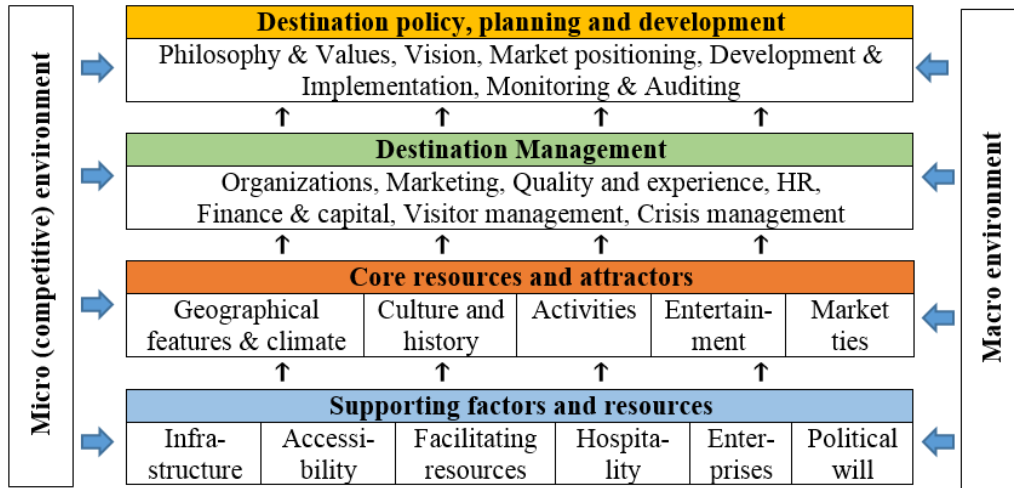

Figure 1: Ritchie and Crouch Model of destination Competitiveness

Source: own simplified figure based on RITCHIE and CROUCH (2003)

These models suggest that tourism-related researches should be considered and discussed in a comprehensive way, so in my researches I focused on the analysis of macro- and microenvironment (macro and micro), original resources (natural and heritage) created resources (different activities and entertainment) and the opinion of targeted visitor groups (questionnaire survey). For the strategic analyses, I applied STEEP, SWOT and SOAR models.

For primary research I applied a questionnaire on a randomly selected sample. The analyses of primary research were done by statistical methods.

Besides descriptive statistics, decision trees analysis and a logistic binary regression (logit) model were applied to explore the factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya. Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) was used to explore the combinations of socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes towards tourism products that best differentiate respondents based on their willingness to visit Libya. A binary logistic regression model was used to quantify the effect of factors on the willingness to visit Libya. Segmentation of tourists based on their requirements and preferred types of tourism was conducted using K-Means clustering. The cluster analysis was run on the binary variables, so the final cluster centers indicate the proportion of respondents for whom the specific factor is important.

A Chi-square test was applied to explore significant differences in tourism consumer behaviour among age groups and countries. The significant differences were obtained based on the adjusted standardized residuals. An adjusted standardized residual having absolute value that exceeds about 2 indicates a significant difference between categories.

2.2. Materials

This primary research was conducted to explore why Libya is less popular as a touristic destination. The questionnaire survey was started in the summer of 2018 in Budapest, among foreign and Hungarian tourists of different age groups. In the first round, I collected 354 evaluable questionnaires, so the survey was continued on during the holidays in winter of 2019.

As my special goal was to explore the knowledge and attitudes, the experiences and aspirations of tourists about Libya, I wanted to ask the opinion of a randomly formulated sample. My idea was to ask tourists, and of course, I was interested in the opinion of Hungarian citizens as well. Finally, the citizens of 65 nations participated in the survey.

I prepared the questionnaire in paper-based form and visited the most frequented places in Budapest, where tourists are present (Heroes' Square, Opera House, Saint Stephen's Basilica, Danube Corso) and I asked them to fill in the questionnaire.

The final number of evaluable questionnaires was 500. 58.8% of respondents was female, 41.2% was male.

The large proportion of respondents of age group between 18-30 years (51,8%) is partly because of the participation of Hungarian and international university students, but as they are very active in tourism activities during their study period, so they can be considered as potential visitors. Fig. 2 shows the respondents' age groups.
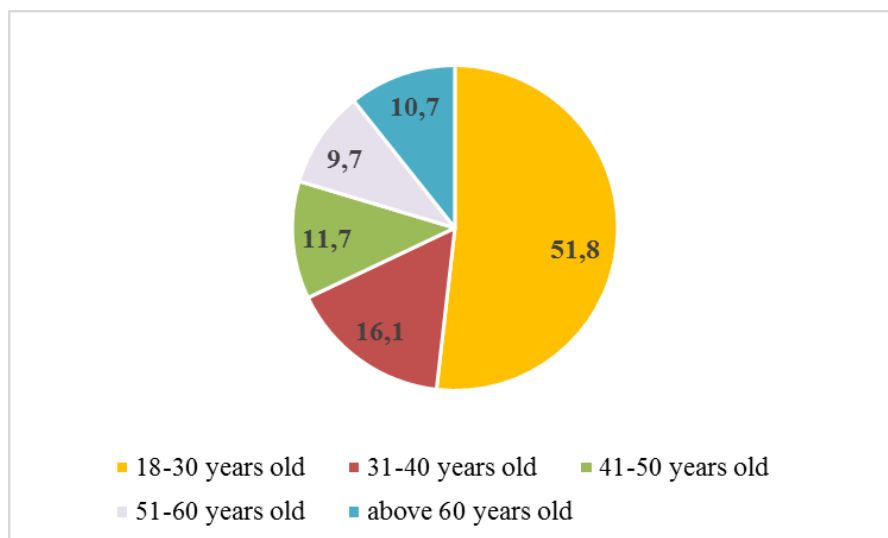

Figure 2: Respondents' age groups (%)
Source: own research

A large proportion of the sample represents employed people; the second large group is the group of students, which is also a determining player of tourism sector. Retired people represented only 9% in the sample.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Classification of tourism resources of Libya

Dissertation's **Research Objective 1** is: *To identify and classify tourism resources in Libya (as cultural heritage and natural heritage) and to relate them to different types of tourism.* To answer this objective, *tourism resources and types of tourism* in Libya is to be determined and categorized.

Based on my observations and experiences as Libyan citizen, and by analysing relevant documents and literature I collected and classified the tourism resources of Libya. For this work, I also used my own knowledge obtained at schools, my experiences obtained through my visits throughout my mother country, Libya.

I also built on the information of the given references and on the information provided by Libya-related websites as *Temehu* (WWW.TEMEHU.COM s.a.), *Cruise Libya* (WWW.CRUISELIBYA.COM s.a.*), and Atlas Obscura* (WWW.ATLASOBSCURA.COM s.a.).

3.1.1. Cultural resources – Cultural / Heritage tourism

Tourism refers to the numerous niches or specialty travel forms of tourism that have emerged over the years, such as cultural tourism, agro-tourism, eco-tourism, wild-life tourism, trekking, marine and beach tourism and many others. Culture is one of the most complex phenomena. Heritage is defined as the natural cultural and built environments of an area. Cultural tourism or cultural heritage tourism (or just heritage tourism) is a branch of tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring.

Historically, cultural tourism was the main theme of tourism, and also refers to visiting a location where visitors have family roots. Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural heritage and tourism are dynamic areas of development in everywhere in the world, cultural tourism is the part of the switch in emphasis from manufacturing to service industry. Libya has many, not widely known tourism attractions in the field of cultural heritage as it is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of identified heritage localities in Libya

Type of heritage	Number
World Heritage sites	5
Other Archaeological Sites	12
Monuments	50
Religious Buildings – Old Mosques	25
Religious Buildings – Old Churches and temples (including 2 synagogues)	11
Cemeteries	4
Museums	32
Libraries	17
Archives	1
Total	117

Source: The table is based on public accessible information primarily obtained through website of ICOMOS website (s.a.) and the observations and experiences of the author.

3.1.2. Sea and coastline – Beach tourism, Marine tourism, Leisure tourism

As it was mentioned before, Libya has a long coastline. The coastline from Tunisia is characterised by a lack of gulfs and bays, with very few bays at wadi mouths. The port of Tripoli's rocky headland and the sand to the west of the country. The beaches on this part of the coast are white sand, low, but in some areas reaching 10 m of sand dunes. the sea with continuous wave action on this sandstone/limestone coast.

The longest stretch of the Libyan coast is from Misuratah to El-Magroon (680 km), with domination of sandy shores: the Eastern and middle parts represented by flat sandy coasts, whilst the western part (near Misuratah) features higher sand dune beaches East from El-Magroon coastal slopes are dominating, with coastal lagoons and caves. The most elevated Libyan coasts are in the eastern direction, some limestone coastal formations reach more than 100 m (Ras Hilal and Lathroon), with the Green mountain running down to the sea. The beaches in this part of the coast vary from narrow sandy beaches to gravelly or rocky forms. The remaining coasts vary from low to medium height rocks to gravel coasts, with limited small sandy beaches, in some places less than 1000 m long.

Libya's warm Mediterranean climate makes the country as an ideal location for beach resorts and its sandy north coast beaches have significant tourist potential, of course, with appropriate infrastructure for beach and marine tourism, as a pat of leisure tourism.

3.1.3. Sahara Desert and Oases – Desert tourism and Mountain tourism

Libya has great potential for desert and camel trekking tours, which is an emerging tourism type. The south of the country is the Libyan Desert, part of the Sahara and it contains historic artefacts. The Libyan Desert is an area of outstanding beauty, with palm trees and oases and covered in vegetation in many areas. The desert possesses significant potential for adventure tourism, which has experienced increased global demand over recent years.

The Ubari sand sea and dunes (Idehan Ubari) has special blue coloured hypersaline lakes and fresh-water wells in southwestern Fezzan. The southwest part of Libya, a region called Fezzan is the heart of the Sahara, full of sand seas, wadis, mountains, plateaus, oases.

Libya has considerable potential for developing different types of desert tourism based on its scenery and the possibility of expeditions, trekking, camping, desert biking, camel riding. The development of desert-related tourism offers new opportunities like in neighbouring countries.

The identified and categorized tourism resources of Libya are summarized by Table 3 and mapped by Figure 3.

Table 3: A summary and categorization of Libya's identified tourism resources

Core resources		Examples in Libya	Activities, Tourism types
CULTURAL RESOURCES	Cultural attractions under World Heritage	World Heritage archaeological sites: - *Archaeological Site of Cyrene* - *Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna* - *Archaeological Site of Sabratha* - *Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus* - *Old Town of Ghadamès* UNESCO tentative list attractions: - *Archaeological site of Ghirza* - *Archaeological Site of Ptolemais* - *Haua Fteah cave*	Cultural / Heritage tourism
	Other cultural attractions	Medinas (marketplaces) Castles and palaces: - *Red Castle in Tripoli,* - *Castle Qasr Libya,* - *Murzuq Castle,* - *Villa Silene,* - *Sabha Castle,* - *Qasr al-Haj* Museums, open air archaeological sites	Cultural / Heritage tourism
	World War II sites	WWII memories - *Tobruk (Cemeteries, Rommel's operation room)* - *battlefields in the desert (WWII Trenches, Australian field hospital (Fig Tree Hospital)*	Military/War Tourism Cultural / Heritage tourism
	Religious places	- *Islamic (ancient and modern mosques)* - *Christian (cathedrals, Coptic churches, St. Mark's birthplace in Cyrene)*	Religious tourism Cultural / Heritage tourism
NATURAL RESOURCES	Geography, water (seaside)	Seaside Resort places Coastline	Beach tourism, Marine tourism, Leisure tourism
	Landforms, rural scenery, water	Sahara Desert (Libyan desert) Oases: - *Kufra,* - *Sebha,* - *Germa,* - *Ubari sand sea and lakes,* - *Zallah* Mountains: - *Jebel el-Akhdar (Green Mountains),* - *Gharyan,* - *Nefusa Mountains,* - *Volcano of Waw an Namus,* - *Acacus Mountains*	Desert tourism Adventure tourism Mountain tourism

Source: summary of own research
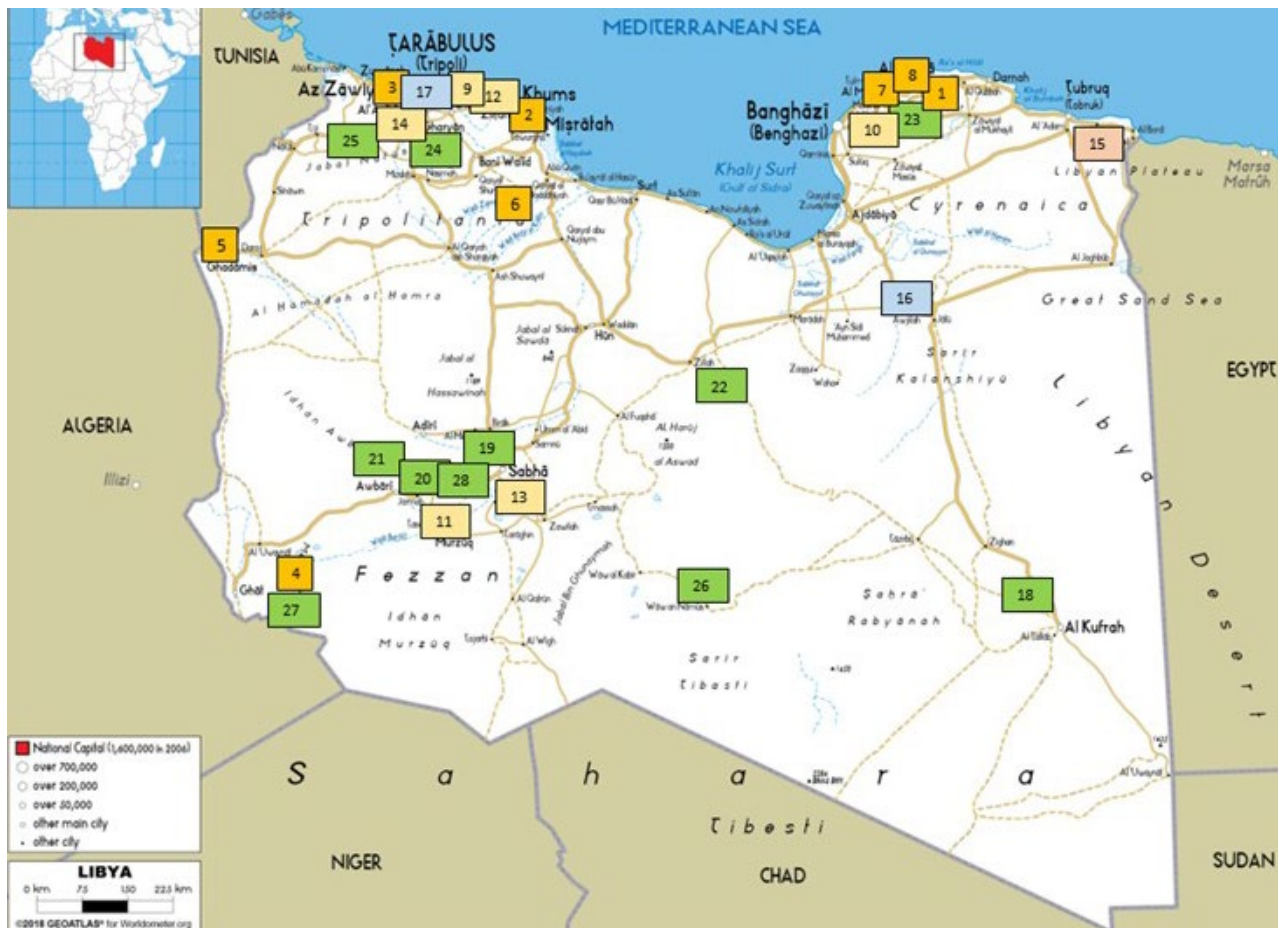
Legend:

1	Archaeological Site of Cyrene		15	Tobruk and neighbouring area
2	Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna		16	Atiq Mosque
3	Archaeological Site of Sabratha		17	Tripoli old town
4	Tradart Acacus		18	Kufra
5	Old Town of Ghadamès		19	Sebha
6	Archaeological site of Ghirza		20	Germa
7	Archaeological Site of Ptolemais		21	Ubari lakes
8	Haua Fteah cave		22	Zallah
9	Red Castle in Tripoli		23	Jebel el-Akhdar (Green Mountains)
10	Castle Qasr Libya		24	Gharyan
11	Murzuq Castle		25	Nefusa Mountains
12	Villa Silene		26	Volcanoes of Waw an Namus
13	Sabha Castle		27	Acacus Mountains,
14	Qasr al-Haj		28	Gaberoun Lake

Figure 3: Place of main tourism attractions (core tourism resources) of Libya

Source: The original map from WWW.WORLDOMETERS.INFO (s.a.)
https://www.worldometers.info/img/maps/libya_road_map.gif,
numbering and sights by own research and editing

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3.2. Libya's tourism –STEEP analysis

Dissertation's **Research Objective 2** is *to conduct a tourism-related situation analysis for Libya by using a STEEP analysis.* By this analysis, I collected and categorized the positive and negative factors affecting tourism sector of Libya, and their possible impacts (Table 4). These possible impacts made an appropriate base for conducting further strategic analysis (SWOT and SOAR), and these impacts were confirmed by the responses of the surveyed sample of my questionnaire survey.

Table 4: STEEP analysis of Libya from tourism-related aspects

			Factors	Impacts
S		+	- living traditions - diversity in culture - well-educated young people	- unique entertainment for visitors - diverse program opportunities - possible employees or actors of tourism sector
		–	- social insecurity - social differences - lack of entrepreneurial attitude - unemployment of young people	- fear of travel to Libya - lack of small businesses and local services - opportunity for new workplaces
T		+	- well-built infrastructure and transport facilities before the Arab spring	- good basic infrastructure, infrastructure development renovation/reconstruction
		–	- post-crisis infrastructure problems - lack of info communication - poor business information - lack of R&D	- infrastructure development, renovation/reconstruction is needed - need for foreign investments
E		+	- wealth in oil and non-oil mineral resources - wealth of archaeological resources - wealth in natural resources - growing GDP	- well-based economy - well-based financial sources - unique, not well-known tourism destinations may attract visitors
		–	- high unemployment rate - one-pillar economy (high dependency on oil and gas sector) - lack of small and medium sized enterprises	- new policy developments are needed - need for small business development
E		+	- good natural environmental features - long, sandy seaside - touristic attractions - good climate - special attractions (desert, oases, desert mountains, rocks)	- unique, not well-known tourism destinations may attract visitors - different forms of tourism may build the base of tourism industry
		–	- environmental impacts of crisis	- renovation/reconstruction is needed
P		+	- formation of Government of National Unity on 10th March 2021 - new elections in December 2021	- positive signs towards future political stability
		–	- political instability in recent years - regional conflicts - refugee crisis - terrorist attacks in recent years	- political factors were the main barriers of tourism development

Source: own summary

The positive impacts are those which should be considered when strategic actions are planned and implemented, while negative impacts are those which should be eliminated or avoided through implementing the strategy.

From the social aspects, the most important positive factor is the rich and less known Libyan cultural heritage. The diversity of culture is manifested in everyday life; tourists may find the modern life's values and the old traditions of the different tribes in cuisine, hospitality, cultural programmes, sport and entertainment programmes. Libyan people are friendly and they keep their traditions, culture, music and cuisine. The young generation is open for new cultures and many of the educated young people speak languages (mostly English and French). The high unemployment among young age groups may motivate young people to be motivated joining to the tourism and hospitality sector. The negative factors like social insecurity, social differences, and the presently weak entrepreneurial attitude may be solved by consciously planned policy measures in the field of development of entrepreneurship, through trainings, and special supporting measures. The increasing number of small businesses (handicrafts, catering, tourism services, etc.) could help in solving unemployment problems and the swift from one-pillared national economy to more pillars. Human resource training and education is an important task which must be strengthened in the private sector, to match customers' and industry need.

The technological background shows a diverse picture. On one hand, there are good infrastructure and transport facilities, which were built and still were not destroyed during the crisis years. Of course these good features may be found in the big cities and the coastline. The other parts of the country suffer from post-crisis infrastructure problems and lack of good infrastructure and communication. There are weak points in tourism-related infrastructure are the lack of accommodation in terms of both quantity and quality for international tourists close to the principal attractions (classical archaeological sites, coastal areas, desert sights), the shortage of airlines services, the shortage of excellent hotels. Moreover, the lack of tourism programmes and recreational services, the lack of reliable public transport services, lack of information centres at the site areas, the relatively low range f restaurants at international standards, and the lack of adequate entertainment or cultural activities organized for presentation to visitors, and the poor range of Libyan souvenirs and handicrafts also could be mentioned.

There is a lack of awareness and image, the tourism promotional tools are poor, and there is a negative image of the country as a tourist destination, Libya's brand as a tourism destination does not exist, it shall be built, there are good experiences in Egypt.

The economic factors were introduced in the previous part of the dissertation. Libya' economy is built on oil and other natural resources. This is reflected in GDP, employment data and the shortage of small enterprises. Tourism resources remained unexploited and were not was not preferred in the previous regimes. The country's wealth represents a well-based economy, the country has own, well-based financial sources and unique, not well-known tourism destinations that may attract visitors. Based on these new policy developments are recommended to use the still unexploited resources of tourism, and build a second pillar of the economy in the future. Of course, this process will need the political stability and peace.

The environmental factors are mostly positive: Libya has an extremely large land area, has a special natural environment with mountain areas, deserts and the longest seaside in the Mediterranean. The overall features of Libya would allow competing in the stage of international tourism. The most significant tourism constituents of Libya are the excellent natural resources (site, weather, climate, geographic nature, surface, waters and other natural resources); the good weather and climate; and the outstanding geographic features (mountains, rivers, sea, valleys, rocks and deserts, desert lakes, about 1700 km long seaside area).

The political factors are the most crucial barriers of development in the present days. The political instability and regional conflicts, and the refugee crisis are still present, but recently we can witness the new development processes towards the peace. Although Libya presently cannot be considered as a safe destination, but there are promising political movements such as the presently conducted Libya's Political Dialogue Forum, which opened on 1 February 2021 in Geneva. The Forum's goal was to choose a new temporary executive to lead the country through a transition until elections scheduled for December. Finally, Libya's House of Representatives confirmed the Government of National Unity on 10th March 2021 as the country's interim administrative authority. The new elections will be held in December 2021.

3.3. Primary research about Libya

Research Objective 3 of my dissertation is *to identify the tourism segments and types, which are most likely to be successful for developing Libya's tourism, based on a primary research about the knowledge and perceptions of the international audience about Libya as a touristic destination.* By the primary research, my goal was to explore the knowledge, experiences and image of respondents about Libya and to find some similar experiences about their knowledge of the neighbouring countries in North Africa.

3.3.1. Knowledge and experiences about Libya's tourism attractions (H1 hypothesis)

As an introduction, Q7 was a simple question related to the knowledge of the location of Libya. Slightly more that 75% of the respondents could give proper answer, the rest of respondents answered badly or indicated as unknown, or did not answer. Q8 was related to the information of the respondents about Libya. Only 3.2% of the respondents selected the answer "I have many information", 42.8% of respondents indicated that they have some information, and 54% answered that they have no information about the country. A large proportion of the respondents have no or have limited information about the tourism places of the country, although it has a frequented place in North Africa.

Responses for Q10 ("Have you ever visited Libya?"), revealed that only 1% of the sample has ever visited Libya, which may be rooted in that the country has never had tourism promotion in the previous decade, and the lack of tourism services. It shall be highlighted that the sample was a randomly selected sample of tourists, or potential tourists.

A more nuanced background was given by the responses for Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15 and the four sub-questions of Q16 (Table 5). Those respondents, who had information about tourist places

in Libya (Q12) mentioned the names of Tripoli, the capital, Benghazi city, Sabratha, Leptis Magna, Ghat, Acacus and the beaches.

Table 5: Percentage of "yes" answers of respondents for questions Q11, Q13, Q15, Q16

No.	Questions related to information and knowledge	(%)
Q11	Have you information about tourist places in Libya?	4.0
Q15	Have you known any place related to Christian religion in Libya?	4.4
Q13	Have you heard about UNESCO protected sites in Libya?	8.8
Q16	Do you know that in Libya there are attractive climate	17.2
Q16	Do you know that in Libya there are long beach	20.8
Q16	Do you know that in Libya there are oases and lakes in the desert	23.8
Q16	Do you know that in Libya there are ancient archaeological cities	33.6

Legend: yellow coloured blocks – cultural and heritage tourism, green blocks – natural tourism
Source: own research

A higher number of positive answers were related to the climatic features, beaches, oases, desert and desert lakes, which refers to natural resources and the related tourism types, as leisure tourism, beach tourism, marine tourism, or desert tourism

Based on the above presented results, according to the opinion of a randomly selected group of tourists and potential tourists, my first hypothesis Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination, tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya is approved.

3.3.2. Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya (H2 hypothesis)

For analysing the results related to H2 hypothesis I collected the questions by which the intention to visit Libya may be analysed.

For the question Q17 "Would you like to visit Libya in the future?" 17% said "yes", 32.5% said "no" and most of the answers (50.5%) were "maybe".

In Q18, the question was related to the reason of not visiting Libya. This question was answered by those who gave "no" answers about visiting Libya in the future. 59% of respondents indicated that lack of security is the main reason, 38% simply has no interest in visiting Libya, 10% mentioned as a reason that alcohol is forbidden 7% mentioned the too hot weather.

From these answers it may be drawn the most important barrier for tourists to visit Libya is the lack of security. No interest opinion may be derived from the lack of information and the poor image of Libya as a tourism destination.

Table 6 describes the factors influencing willingness to visit Libya.

Table 6: Investigating the effect of factors influencing willingness to visit Libya using a binary logistic model (Forward method)

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B) Lower	95% C.I.for EXP(B) Upper
Step 1	Country group(1)	-0.629	0.225	7.780	1	0.005	0.533	0.343	0.829
	Constant	1.181	0.183	41.590	1	0.000	3.256		
Step 2	Age			12.919	4	0.012			
	Age(1)	1.324	0.382	12.039	1	0.001	3.758	1.779	7.938
	Age(2)	0.852	0.434	3.850	1	0.050	2.345	1.001	5.492
	Age(3)	1.036	0.470	4.846	1	0.028	2.817	1.120	7.084
	Age(4)	0.937	0.494	3.597	1	0.058	2.553	0.969	6.724
	Country group(1)	-0.613	0.232	6.975	1	0.008	0.541	0.343	0.854
	Constant	0.120	0.374	0.103	1	0.749	1.127		
Step 3	desert tourism (ref. group: not preferred)	0.845	0.377	5.027	1	0.025	2.327	1.112	4.870
	Age (ref. group: above 60 years old)			12.459	4	0.014			
	Age (18-30 years old)	1.300	0.383	11.515	1	0.001	3.670	1.732	7.776
	Age(31-40 years old)	0.820	0.436	3.543	1	0.060	2.271	0.967	5.335
	Age(41-50 years old)	1.058	0.473	5.004	1	0.025	2.880	1.140	7.275
	Age(51-60 years old)	0.915	0.497	3.397	1	0.065	2.498	0.944	6.612
	Country group (ref. group: non-EU)	-0.640	0.234	7.476	1	0.006	0.527	0.333	0.834
	Constant	0.059	0.376	0.025	1	0.875	1.061		

Source: own research

Based on the above presented results, according to the opinion of a randomly selected group of tourists and potential tourists, my second hypothesis Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya could be determined and categorized is approved.

3.3.3. Correlation between different groups of potential tourists and types of tourism (H3 hypothesis)

Another important information for tourism planning is related to the expectations and requirements of tourists in relation with tourism types. Tourism resources and related tourism types were previously analysed by RQ1, and this aspect was investigated by Q28 of the questionnaire. The information related to the preferred tourism types is among the most important steps of building the tourism image of Libya and the tourism strategy building for the country.

Based on the results of clustering process, four clusters were formulated based on the requirements concerning tourism: 1. "Seaside vacationers", 2. "Cultural tourists", 3. "Adventurers", 4. "Mixed (Mix of cultural tourism & seaside vacation with visiting friends)".

The comparison of clusters based on willingness to visit Libya is shown at Fig. 2.

Based on the results of the chi-square test (Chi^2 = 7.322, df=3, p = 0.042), a significant difference can be justified between the clusters formed on the basis of requirements and preferences concerning tourism in the proportion of those who would or would not visit Libya.

Those belonging to the „adventurous" cluster would visit Libya in a significantly higher proportion (adj. Std. Residual = 2.5) compared to the other clusters.

The results of the Chi-square test (Chi^2= 6.664, df=12, p<0.001) show a significant difference among the age groups in the ratios of clusters completed based on the attitudes towards tourism products (Fig 4.).
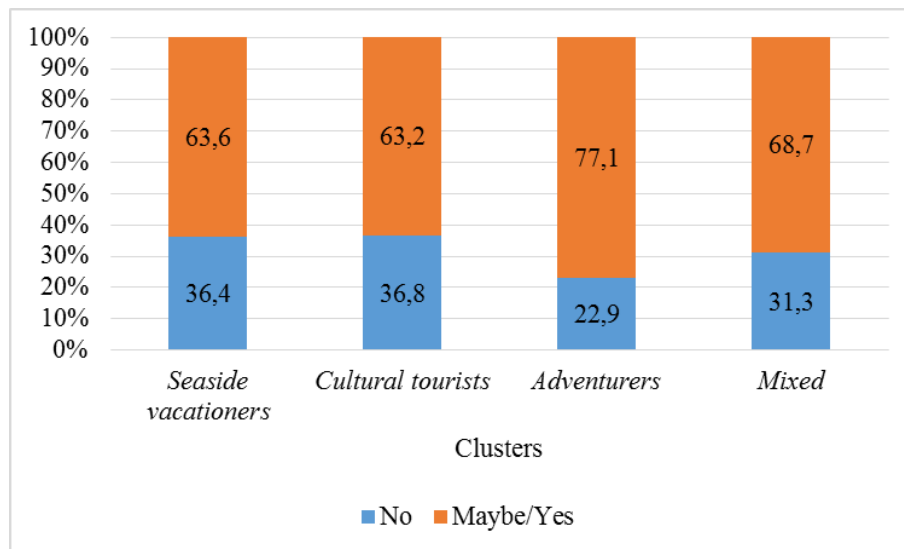
Figure 4: Comparison of clusters based on willingness to visit Libya (No, Maybe/Yes)
Source: own research

Next step of the analysis was to find the relations between the age groups on and the different clusters (Fig. 5). 18-30 year olds belong to the group of adventurers in a significantly higher proportion (adj. std. residual = 3.9), and significantly lower (adj. std. residual = -5.9) in the specifically interested in cultural tourism cluster. The age groups who are interested mostly in cultural tourism are typically in the 60+ age group and 41-50 years old group. Seaside recreation is almost equally represented in all groups.
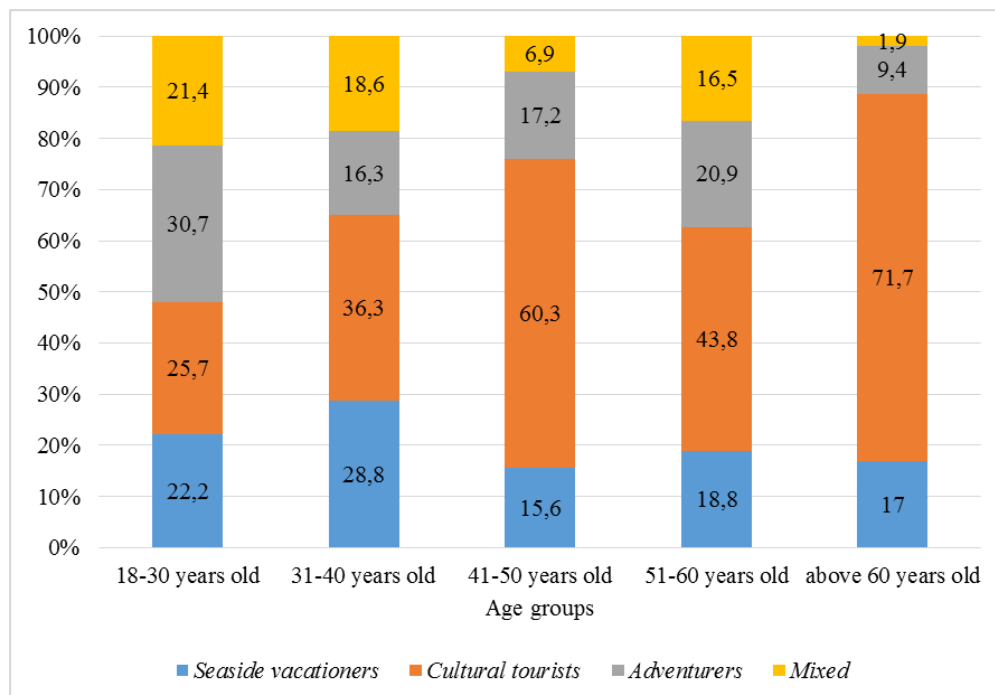
Figure 5: Percentage distribution of the number of respondents by clusters for age groups
Source: own research

Based on the above presented results, according to the opinion of a randomly selected group of tourists and potential tourists it is confirmed that tourists may be categorized according to different clusters based on the different influencing factors. I created four clusters based on the sample, which represent the requirements and interests of the tourists towards, Libya as a destination. The four clusters are: 1. "Seaside vacationers", 2. "Cultural tourists", 3. "Adventurers", 4. "Mixed (Mix of cultural tourism & seaside vacation with visiting friends)".

I also confirmed that the significant correlations are between the willingness to visit Libya, age groups and country groups of origin. Therefore, my third hypothesis: There is a correlation between different groups of tourists and types of tourism is approved.

3.4. Strategic analyses of Libya's tourism sector

Dissertation's **Research Objective 4** *is to conduct strategic analyses and to recommend strategic actions for building the fundamentals and ensure sustainability of the Libyan tourism sector by using the methods of SWOT analysis and SOAR analysis*.

3.4.1. SWOT analysis of Libya's tourism sector

The first version of the SWOT analysis about Libya's tourism sector was already published (ALAMMARI et al., 2016), which was reconsidered, broadened and updated for the dissertation. In the SWOT analysis, I used the information gained from literature sources, my own experiences and observations. In the beginning of 2021, positive signs appeared in the political situation, which hopefully will support the development process.

Strengths

- Strategic location (close to Europe, the potential main market)
- Part of Mediterranean culture
- Beautiful nature (long coast-line, untouched deserts, unique desert and oasis cultures, natural attractions)
- Climate is suitable for tourism in the winter and summer season
- Many archaic, historic and cultural heritages of more than ten thousand years
- Five sites on UNESCO World Heritage list
- Existing road, sea-port and airport infrastructure in the whole country linking the cities and smaller settlements
- English is spoken
- Rich culture, traditions and cuisine
- Young population
- Government's policy started for diversification of the economy – one priority can definitely be tourism sector

The strategic location close to the Mediterranean a, the natural and cultural resources are the most important strengths of the country as a tourism destination. The infrastructure is available, but needs improvements. The tourism sector could be a good employment option for young Libyans, as many of them try to find their fortune abroad. There are promising intentions from the policymakers side to diversify economy – if tourism will be a supported sector in the future, a successful development process might start.

Weaknesses

- Lack of security
- Lack of tourism infrastructure
- Lack of quality accommodation
- Bureaucratic barriers for FDI
- No detailed tourism strategy of state and no regulatory frameworks
- Still bad international image of Libya
- Few information about Libyan tourism opportunities
- Heritage and archaeological sites are not protected or maintained well
- Most focus on oil, no effective management of tourism sector
- Lack of accurate information and statistics about tourism activities, workforce, number of international tourists or tourism businesses
- No well-trained human resource in tourism sector
- Few small businesses in the country and especially in tourism and tourism-related sector
- Alcohol is forbidden
- Strict rules for tourists

Knowing and detecting weaknesses is a first step of problem solution. The most important weaknesses are related to politically stable state, safety and related problems (like bureaucratic barriers), by diminishing past decade's political problems the new development process may start. If tourism strategy is formulated, the weak image about Libya may be improved, a new country brand could be built. For this, a well managed tourism-information board should be formulated, which should create and launch promotion and informational campaigns. Boosting the tourism sector will attract and accelerate the involvement of small businesses, which may bring important social benefits. Religious and traditional restrictions will still exist, but by a conscious management and information it will not stop visitors.

Opportunities

- Increasing tourism marketing and creation of a brand that identifies Libya
- Diversification of tourism products
- Better use of strategic location of the country (e.g. for short holidays)
- Better conservation, maintenance and development of cultural, historical and natural attractions
- Investments in tourism infrastructure, attracting FDI into the sector
- Financial situation of the country is better than competitors, thus the financial background is stable
- Sponsoring international events (e.g. conferences, meetings, sport events)
- SMEs can be supplier of/partners in bigger tourism projects
- Cooperation with neighbouring countries
- Post-COVID opportunity for development

Opportunities represent a wide range of optional development activities. The most important is tourism-related marketing strategy, which is totally missing at present. Tourism products shall be determined according to tourism types, (cultural/heritage, historical, religious, beach/marine, leisure tourism etc.) by formulating special "packages". The other side of development opportunities is related to building a proper infrastructure for the tourism sector by involving and improving tourism services' sector. Cooperation with neighbouring countries would be an important strategic decision, as COVID pandemic stopped tourism sector everywhere.

Threats

- Ongoing fragile political situation
- Migrant crisis from Sub-Saharan Africa
- Competition with neighbouring countries and other Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Greece, etc.)
- Not enough skilled labour in the industry
- Outbound migration of young people

Threats are partly related to the fragile political situation of the past decade and the refugee crisis, which is a serious problem of all Mediterranean countries. The competitors of Libya's tourism sector are the neighbouring countries, which advantages are hard to be reached in short term, but by cooperation and creating the unique brand for Libya may bring success in long-term.

3.4.2. SOAR analysis for Libya's tourism sector

For finding the best directions of the Libyan tourism sector, I chose the so-called SOAR analysis, which is a strategic planning framework with an approach that focuses on strengths and seeks to understand the whole system. In this framework, the focus is on positive thinking of stakeholders of the tourism sector by initiating ideas, inquiring or analysing the current strengths, then imagine or dream about opportunities, and creating innovative ideas for our dreams, aspirations. The next two tables (Table 7 and 8) summarize the answers for the questions formulated for the SOAR framework which initiates further strategic actions.

Table 7: SOAR analysis of Libya's tourism (1st part)

STRENGTHS **What are our most important assets?** **What can we build on?**	OPPORTUNITIES **What are our stakeholders asking for?** **What are the market possibilities?**
1. Archaeological sites from ancient Roman, Greek, Phoenician and Islamic era). 2. Coast with a length of 1900 km 3. Large area of desert with oases and desert lakes, mountains, and rocky areas. 4. Good climate with hot, dry summer, warm and rainy in winter, moderate in spring and autumn. Climate is varied with a Mediterranean climate in the north, and a continental desert climate in the south. 5. Favourable geographical location, as it is in the middle of the north of the African continent and its proximity to Southern Europe. 6. Natural environment with undisturbed natural values and areas. 7. Infrastructure network of long paved roads, several seaports and marine harbours, and airports. 8. Health status: the country is free of infectious diseases.	1. Libya's natural and geographic features, historical sites are favourable for being a new tourist destination for foreign tourists. 2. Tourism sector's improvement would bring economic growth for the country. 3. Tourism sector's improvement would increase employment opportunities, particularly youth employment. 4. Tourism activities would strengthen and improve the local population's identity and traditions. 5. Niche market opportunities (eco-tourism, adventurers, halal tourism, historical tourism). 6. Tourism activities may boost rural entrepreneurship. 7. Development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises 8. Additional services (manufacturing, hospitality, local travel services) would be able to enter into the market. 9. COVID situation changed the tourism sector's structure worldwide, which may bring new opportunities for attracting future possible visitors.

Source: own compilation

The *strengths* are considered among the internal factors. Libya's tourism sector has not been properly exploited by officials in the past and present, despite the state's possession of material and human capabilities to take an interest in this sector in order to help develop the economy.

Libya's touristic sites as destinations are unknown to tourists, although the country enjoys its proximity to and opposite to southern Europe. It has a long coast with places for swimming and diving, and a vast desert in which there are lakes and oases that encourage the establishment of tourist activities such as car rallies and sand skiing. The archaeological sites are unique. There is a network of road roads that bring closer access to these places comfortably and at the lowest costs, and many airports with the possibility of reducing travel tickets for tourist groups to encourage them to undertake tourist trips. The climate also represents a process of attracting tourists because it includes the desert climate as well as the climate of the Mediterranean, which is generally represented as a hot, dry, warm summer, rainy in winter.

Opportunities represent external factors and conditions by which the state can improve the tourism sector when taking care of it. Opportunities are given from the different viewpoints of various stakeholders such as tourists, Libyan citizens, entrepreneurs and enterprises, the nation itself and the state.

Table 8: SOAR analysis of Libya's tourism (2nd part)

ASPIRATIONS **What processes are needed to be done?** **What are our dreams or wishes?**	RESULTS **What are our important and measurable outcomes?** **What do we want to be known for?**
1. Building image of Libya as tourists' new, exotic destination. 2. Wide collaboration between different stakeholders. 3. Building marketing and promotion strategy for the country's tourism. 4. More public facilities for the foreign visitors 5. Investment in human capital (training, education, entrepreneurship). 6. Investments into infrastructure. 7. Supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas by establishing small and medium enterprises for them and granting long-term youth bank loans with a grace period. 8. Increase the commitment of government and local authorities towards tourism activities and services. 9. Making Libya be a well-known tourism destination. 10. Reducing the high unemployment rate in the country. 11. Reducing the proportion of workers in the public sector. 12. Reviving the economy, increasing the GDP, and reducing the public debt. 13. Mission: introducing tourism-related considerations into the general reconstruction plan of the economy. 14. Trying to get rid of dependence on oil export.	1. Improve the overall public's knowledge about Libya's natural and cultural heritage through a an intensive promotion program. 2. Establishing information and cultural centers for Libya's tourism. 3. Increase in the number of visitors. 4. Increase in tourism-related revenues. 5. Increase in the share of the tourism sector in GDP. 6. Diversification of tourism products (for various groups like age, family status, interest). 7. Competing with the neighboring countries. 8. Improving and maintaining facilities for visitor sites. 9. Decrease of youth unemployment. 10. Improve the livelihood of local people and the nation. 11. Increase of safety measures. 12. Increase the level of infrastructure. 13. Decrease of economic migration of young age groups.

Source: own compilation

Aspirations are wide, it is important to generate ideas and work for their realization. The main task is to build the image of Libya as a tourist destination, in order to avoid delays of implementation when the present unstable political situation will be stabilized. In image-building, the role of

cultural attachés in the Libyan embassies abroad would increase the situation of tourism sector's acceptance (conferences and seminars as required and related to the tourism and cultural activity) in countries where they are represented as representatives of cultural missions to introduce the cultural heritage and the tourist attractions in which the country is rich.

The state currently aspires to advance this sector due to its economic importance. A first tourism conference was held on September 27, 2017 under the slogan "Tourism: Impact and Challenges", and the second conference on April 18, 2019 under the slogan "Libya is a tourist interface that requires discovery". The results of these conferences confirmed the state should take all necessary measures to advance the tourism sector to revive the economy and reduce the unemployment rate, to reduce the proportion of government sector workers by supporting small and medium projects related to tourism activity. The state should also seek for the collaboration of investors, like in the neighbouring countries, Egypt and Tunisia, where the tourism sector is active and shows a continuous developing trend.

Measurable *results* are important for evaluating the development process, the firs numbers that could show the development process are a number of visitors and the revenues generated by tourism, wider results are related to changes in national economy by decreasing the unemployment rate, particularly for young people, improving the proportion of tourism sector in revenues and GDP. These changes may lead to restructuring the presently one-pillared economy of Libya. The changes in the attitudes, motivations, and well-being of people both in rural and urban areas cannot be measured directly, but a decrease in the migration of young people would refer to this development.

The inspirations and suggestions given in the conducted SOAR analysis give the framework of building a realistic scenario for tourism-related developments in Libya.

As a conclusion, the main problems of Libya are connected to political and security factors, which should be considered as the first task to be done. Economic actions cannot be done without providing the necessary political environment, which requires cooperation between the various local and foreign parties to end the current conflict. If the strategic thinking process described in the study is started, and the preparation stages are accomplished in time, then the realization process may start immediately after the crisis ends.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to show that Libya could be a successful future tourism destination, by which the one-pillared economy that is based on oil production could became a multi-pillared economy. This development is for long term, of course, but its economic and social effects may be seen in shorter terms as well.

The first step is to build the political stability and safety in the country. This is closer and closer, as one could see the positive development process in Libyan politics.

The next step – as it was clearly seen from this study – is to build the image of Libya as tourism destination, taking the consumers (i.e. visitors') needs and requirements into consideration.

Together with image building, the tourism infrastructure should be built or renovated, and the tourism product types shall be determined. Tourism product is a very complex product, which is composited by the attractions, the tourism-related services, hospitality, culture and atmosphere. Based on my researches I determined the following conclusions.

4.1. Conclusions

Research objective fulfilment & Hypothesis justification are summarized as follows:

RO1: Done. Based on a wide document analysis and literature review and own observations, I listed and categorized the tourism resources of Libya.

RO2: Done. Based on a wide document analysis and literature review I conducted a STEEP analysis for Libya's tourism sector and summarized the Libyan tourism sector's main positive and negative influencing macro-environmental factors and their impacts.

RO3: Done. Based on the analysis of the results of my primary research, I identified the tourism segments and types, which are most likely to be successful for developing Libya's tourism and I justified my hypotheses:

- *H1: Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination, tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya.*
  Based on my results, according to the opinion of a randomly selected group of tourists and potential tourists, **my first hypothesis is approved**.
- *H2: Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya could be determined and categorized.*
  The main reason of not visiting Libya is the lack of security. There is a significant difference between age groups: 67,2% the people in the 60+ age group do not want to visit Libya, while in the other age groups the result of negative answer was 29%.
  The results of binary logistic model confirmed that citizens of EU member states are less likely wish to visit Libya, while those who are interested in desert tourism are more open towards visiting Libya.
  Based on the above presented results, according **my second hypothesis is approved**.
- *H3: There is a correlation between different groups of tourists and types of tourism is approved.*
  My results confirmed that tourists may be categorized according to different clusters based on the different influencing factors. Four clusters were formulated: 1. *"Seaside vacationers"*, 2.

"Cultural tourists", 3. *"Adventurers"*, 4. *"Mixed (Mix of cultural tourism & seaside vacation with visiting friends)"*. These clusters may summarize the interests of possible visitors. I also confirmed that the significant correlations are between the willingness to visit Libya, age groups and country groups of origin. Therefore, **my third hypothesis is approved.**

RO4: Done. I conducted a SWOT and a SOAR analysis to prepare Strategic actions concluded from the results of strategic analyses.

4.2. Recommendations

For Government's commitment and involvement

Government's commitment is a significant perspective of tourism development, according to the results of the SWOT and SOAR analyses. The most important issues are:

- Political stability and safe environment,
- Building image of Libya as a new tourism destination, building marketing and promotion strategy,
- Investment in human capital (training, education, entrepreneurship),
- Reducing the proportion of workers in the public sector,
- Investments into infrastructure,
- Reducing the high unemployment rate in the country,
- Supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas by establishing small and medium enterprises and granting long-term youth bank loans with a grace period,
- Wide collaboration between different stakeholders is needed by the cooperation between government and local authorities towards tourism activities and services.

For tourism product diversification and their promotion

- Physical infrastructure improvements and marketing activities should be planned and implemented together
- Diversification of the Libyan tourism products – mass tourism or niche tourism – is needed according to the needs of tourists. In fact, the image of Libya as a tourism destination is entirely based on historical places, desert and culture. The new image of Libya should focus on the cultural heritage, the natural beauties, the chequered, picturesque and diverse local culture; and the archaeological monuments of the country.

As a summary, the recommended strategic actions are as follows:

Have a vision
- Taking ownership of Libya's general reconstruction plan, including the development of the tourism sector.
- Developing a vision and a development plan for the tourism sector that meets the consent of the citizens and matches the values, possibilities and needs of the country.
- Developing the necessary administrative and quality assurance systems for a planned, coherent and controlled development of the tourism sector.
- Aiming to distinguish Libyan tourism for its well-planned, sustainable and novel nature.

- Creating a unique and high-quality tourist experience by means of the country's vast economic resources.

Stop the deterioration of cultural and natural heritage
- Preventing any further depletion and destruction of national and world heritage, both natural and man-made.
- Implementing conservation and rehabilitation projects to reverse any damage that has occurred in the past (e.g. environmental clean-up, endangered plant/animal species protection, archaeological and intellectual heritage conservation).

Develop and support infrastructure
- Promoting forward-looking, sustainable and innovative ways of nation-building through all administrative, legislative and economic means.
- Developing modern and high quality civic, transportation and telecommunication infrastructure in Libya, including tourist areas.

Cooperation with local communities
- Ensuring that tourism development takes place in close coordination with all stakeholders and related sectors.
- Educating and inciting citizens to embrace forward-looking, sustainable and innovative ways of thinking in the country's reconstruction process, including tourism development.
- Educating citizens about Libya's cultural heritage and raising awareness of the potentials of the tourism sector.
- Holding conferences and tourist activities, and encouraging traditional craft industries.
- Granting bank loans for entrepreneurs, especially young people, to establish a variety of local initiatives related to the tourism sector.

Acquire and grow talent
- Valuing and incorporating local talent, knowledge, expertise and initiative in reconstruction projects, including tourism development.
- Attracting external expertise for a modern, forward-looking and innovative tourism development plan.
- Appointing qualified and experienced professionals to manage the tourism sector.
- Educating and empowering citizens to take a leading role in developing and managing an internationally renowned tourism sector.

Attract investors
- Creating international confidence in Libya by guaranteeing political stability in the country, and hence the safety and security of tourism experts, investors, companies, organizations and tourists.
- Inviting foreign investors to participate in the advancement of the tourism sector in accordance with internationally applicable controls (e.g. transparent administrative and quality assurance systems).

Start marketing, build the tourism image of Libya
- Introducing Libya to the international tourism industry with a clear vision, innovative ideas and high quality services.
- Promoting the Libyan tourism sector through participation in international tourism conferences and fairs (e.g. raising awareness of the cultural heritage and tourism industry products the country offers).
- Identifying potential consumers and reaching out to them directly by publicizing Libya's credentials as a tourist destination through a variety of channels.

6.3. Further research

In the light of the favourable political events, it is expected that the tourism of Libya will be a more highlighted sector of the national economy in the future. Therefore, a complex tourism strategy should be established based on the opinion and requirements of a wider group of stakeholders of the Libyan tourism industry: representatives of governmental offices, local officials, NGOs, tourism organizations and operators (travel agencies, airlines, destination management organisations, SMEs, hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions), transport companies, investors, communities and a wider range of domestic and international tourists. They – as the most important players of tourism industry – shall be explored and their background and aspirations

For planning future research, I would put focus on my research limitations. As present study did with tourism services and tourism infrastructure, it would be the base of continuing my researches, to make a summary or a list of other core tourism resources and stakeholders of tourism industry such as catering industry, accommodation providers, tourism services, tourism officials, etc.

Another limitation of the study was that it does not address the situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on tourism. The pandemic brought a very new situation for the tourism sector all over the world, but the post-COVID situation could bring additional opportunities for Libya if the sector's condition could improve.

5. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

My research work focused on Libya's tourism sector based on two approaches. My desk research was based on literature sources, available secondary data, and official documents. My primary research focused on exploring the opinion of potential tourists. Although there were different previous studies discussing the problems and challenges of Libya's tourism, I have not found evidence in the literature for my approach, to evaluate Libya as a tourism destination through the opinion of a randomly selected group of potential tourists. The results of my desk research and the findings of primary research were used to prepare strategic analyses, which may give a good base for finalizing the tourism strategy of Libya. Based on my researches I concluded the following new results:

1. **Based on a wide document analysis, literature review and own observations, I listed and categorized the core tourism resources of Libya (cultural and natural resources) and the related tourism types. By this summary, I created the map of Libya with its core tourism resources. These core resources represent the 13th (Natural resources) and 14th (Cultural resources) pillars of Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Indexes** by SCHWAB et al. (2015). The map (illustrated by Figure 19) and summary (Table 19) may be a tool for the tourism strategy of Libya.

2. Based on a wide document analysis, literature review and secondary data **I conducted a STEEP analysis for Libya's tourism sector and summarized the Libyan tourism sector's main positive and negative influencing macro-environmental factors and their impacts.** Based on the results of STEEP and findings of my primary research **I prepared the SWOT and a SOAR analysis of the tourism sector of Libya in order to formulate strategic actions for building tourism strategy.** The results of the strategic analyses formulated the base for my conclusions and recommendations. This was the first attempt of using SOAR analysis in this topic.

3. Based on the analysis of the results of my primary research, according to the opinion of a randomly selected group of tourists **I confirmed that Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination. Tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya.**

   According to my research results, only 3.2% of the respondents indicated that they have proper information about Libya, 42.8% had some information, and 54% have no information about the tourism attractions of the country. People has mostly stereotypical image of Libya, mostly about the unfavourable political events in the past, and the general natural sights like the desert, the seaside and hot climate.

4. **I determined and categorized the factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya.** **Based on the results of binary logistic model, it is confirmed that the main reason of not visiting Libya is the lack of security.** The results of binary logistic model confirmed that older (60+) has the less intention to visit Libya, while in the other age groups the result of negative answer was only 29%. The results of binary logistic model confirmed that **citizens of EU member states are less likely wish to visit Libya**, while **those who are interested especially in desert tourism are more open towards visiting Libya.**

5. My results – based on the analysed sample of tourists – confirmed that **tourists may be categorized according to different clusters based on the different influencing factors. Four clusters were formulated: 1.** *"Seaside vacationers"*, **2.** *"Cultural tourists"*, **3.** *"Adventurers"*, **4.** *"Mixed (Mix of cultural tourism & seaside vacation with visiting friends)".* These clusters may describe the interests of possible visitors. **I also confirmed that the significant correlations are between the willingness to visit Libya, age groups and country groups of origin.**

6. SUMMARY

The main goal of the research was to explore the possibilities of building the tourism sector as a new pillar of the Libyan economy. Presently, Libya's economy is built on oil sector, which plays important role not only in economic, but also social aspects as well. On the contrary, based on the country's geographical, historical and climatic features Libya could be a good touristic destination. The present lack of success in the tourism sector has multiple reasons which were discussed by the dissertation.

At the beginning of my research process, I created the four research question, which took me through different steps to the final results. This process is summarized by Figure 6.
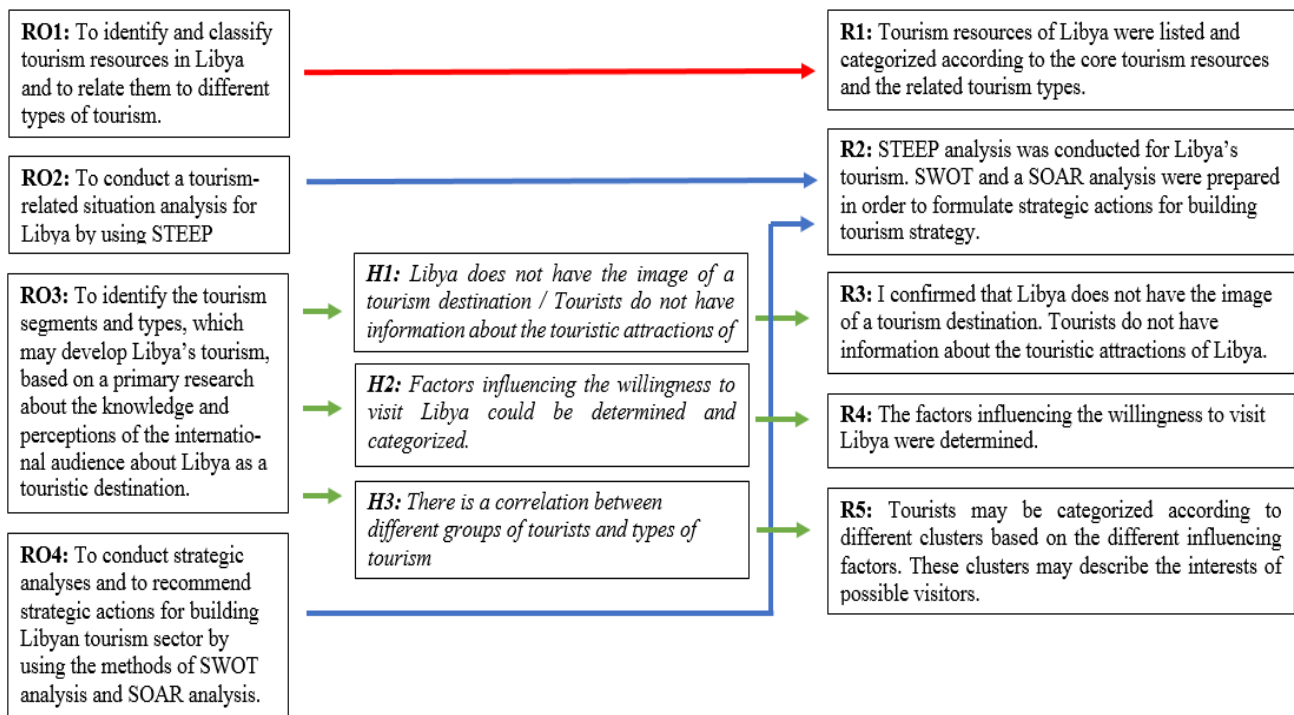

RO1: To identify and classify tourism resources in Libya and to relate them to different types of tourism.		R1: Tourism resources of Libya were listed and categorized according to the core tourism resources and the related tourism types.
RO2: To conduct a tourism-related situation analysis for Libya by using STEEP		R2: STEEP analysis was conducted for Libya's tourism. SWOT and a SOAR analysis were prepared in order to formulate strategic actions for building tourism strategy.
RO3: To identify the tourism segments and types, which may develop Libya's tourism, based on a primary research about the knowledge and perceptions of the international audience about Libya as a touristic destination.	H1: Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination / Tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of	R3: I confirmed that Libya does not have the image of a tourism destination. Tourists do not have information about the touristic attractions of Libya.
	H2: Factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya could be determined and categorized.	R4: The factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya were determined.
RO4: To conduct strategic analyses and to recommend strategic actions for building Libyan tourism sector by using the methods of SWOT analysis and SOAR analysis.	H3: There is a correlation between different groups of tourists and types of tourism	R5: Tourists may be categorized according to different clusters based on the different influencing factors. These clusters may describe the interests of possible visitors.

Figure 6: Relations between Research Objectives – Hypotheses – New Scientific Results

Source: own

In the author's opinion, tourism could be one of the key industries of Libya as it provides multiple opportunities for economic growth and improved livelihoods. The results of developments in tourism are multiple, from job creation and economic development, improvement of infrastructure, increasing domestic consumption and export diversification, preservation of cultural heritage and environmental values to even empowerment of women and marginalized people.

In my dissertation, I prepared the strategic analyses which are needed to start building the tourism strategy of Libya. In my STEEP analysis I summarized the macroenvironmental factors and their impacts on tourism sector of the country. Based on my experiences and primary research results I created the SWOT analysis, and I applied SOAR analysis for the first time in this topic. The findings of these analyses made a good foundation for making recommendation for improving the tourism sector of Libya.

In my primary research, I determined and categorized the factors influencing the willingness to visit Libya. Based on my primary research results it is confirmed that the main reason of not visiting Libya is the lack of security. My results confirmed that tourists may be categorized according based on the different factors related to their interests, requirements and motivations towards tourism destinations. Based on my cluster analysis, I confirmed that an important segment of visitors (as a flagship project) could be the tourists interested in cultural tourism. Libya's outstanding and rarely known cultural attractions (World Heritage sites, religious places, other cultural attractions) would formulate a perfect destination for tourists. Another important group of future visitors could be those, who are interested in adventure tourism, as the mountain region, the Libyan Desert with desert lakes and oases could be an attractive destination for them. It is also important finding, that based on these results the different tourism packages and promotions may be determined.

Building a new pillar of the Libyan economy is a long process, but without a determined strategy, the realization process cannot be successful. After years of fragile political situation, presently, the Libyan political conditions seems to be solved as Libya's House of Representatives confirmed the Government of National Unity on 10th March 2021 as the country's interim administrative authority. The new elections will be held in December 2021, and now the nation shall prepare for the end of the crisis period and the reconstruction process.

Tourism sector may be a new pillar of the national economy, as the unexploited resources of Libya may formulate a new, attractive destination for visitors. By following the tourism crisis management experiences of other countries, by building a strong tourism strategy, by a wide international promotion, the tourism sector of Libya may be an emerging sector of the country.

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