

# Marketing Strategies in Cross-Border Tourist Destinations: A Literature Review

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The basic principle of the operation of a tourist destination as a system of connected stakeholders is the creation of new value that is reflected in the creation of added value for participants in the business process. To create added value, stakeholders need to strategically plan and manage their marketing function. A systematic qualitative review of the latest current literature (last ten years) is carried out in the field of introducing marketing strategies into the wider strategy of developing cross-border tourist destinations. The selected databases were Web of Science and Scopus. We found that cross-border tourist destinations do not take systematic approaches to introduce marketing strategies, but rather identify themselves as a part of broader development strategies of cross-border areas. In rare cases, stand-alone brands are formed to help destinations consolidate their market position and exploit the potential of two or more cross-border destinations at the same time. Despite identifying different synergistic effects and understanding the importance and benefits of integration and cooptation, marketing strategies in cross-border tourist destinations are not yet standardized business practice. The review article contributes to showcasing the important role of cross-border marketing strategies in tourism and paves the way for more detailed research on the topic in the future.

*Keywords:* tourism, cross-border, tourist destination, strategy, marketing strategy



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## Introduction

A tourist destination is perceived by the tourist as a composite set of services, which is marketed in a uniform way. They expect to receive all the necessary information and organized elements of the offer within the tourist destination system in one place (Vodeb, 2010), regardless of where the tourist destination is geographically located. How the tourist destination work is organized is not relevant to the tourist – only the expected experience as a result of the expressed need or interest during their visit. Cross-border des-

tinations, even in those areas where administrative borders are no longer there, such as in the European Union, face many challenges concerning the uncoordinated operation of two or more different tourist systems in one tourist area, which is marketed as a cross-border tourist area or destination (Kozak & Buhalis, 2019). In general, border destinations face poorer economic efficiency and thus also lower competitive advantages than other inland destinations (Vodeb, 2012). Therefore, cross-border integration is an appropriate systemic development approach (Timothy & Tosun,

2003), including for those destinations that are connected across borders for various other interests. To make it easier for companies to overcome modern economic challenges, including economic volatility due to various unforeseen events, such as the recent major health crisis of the Covid epidemic (Šerić et al., 2021), wars, environmental disasters caused by climate change, etc., tourist destinations should develop marketing strategies (Tosun et al., 2005) with targeted branding.

Marketing strategies are all the more important for regions in cross-border areas, as they face many geographical, administrative and socio-cultural differences. These, in turn, raise specific challenges that can be managed with a variety of tools and approaches. Strategic planning in marketing helps regional development planners, management and decision-making bodies and other regional managers to facilitate marketing, management and promotion of economic activity (Gerlitz et al., 2021; Kozak & Buhalis, 2019).

Research and study of cross-border cooperation in tourism are largely subordinated to actual implementation practices and cross-border cooperation projects, as their occurrence is mainly the result of the activation of natural resources or infrastructure in an area that combines or links destinations into mutual partnership cooperation. Cross-border cooperation can be defined within at least four different scopes (Timothy & Saarinen, 2013): at the global level, at the regional level, in bilateral networks, and through cooperation at the local level. Each scope of cross-border (partner) networks has implications for tourist destinations. Different scopes of partnership cooperation require different intensities of integration depending on the level of influence of an individual institution in a certain cross-border tourist destination. This raises the question of how these organizations approach and conduct common marketing strategies and within what scope. Partnership cooperation brings a variety of experience and knowledge to stakeholders that can be revealed in a long period of monitoring the phenomenon in the formation of a pattern or trend that indicates the direction of development in the future.

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether cross-border tourist destinations plan and implement

marketing strategies and at what geographical scale. The authors performed a systematic analysis of relevant current literature examining approaches to the design and implementation of marketing strategies in cross-border tourist destinations. The research questions for the purpose of the review article are:

1. At what scope of cross-border cooperation destinations use marketing strategies as a part of the management and development of cross-border tourist destinations?
2. What are the opportunities and obstacles in building joint marketing strategies for cross-border tourist destinations?

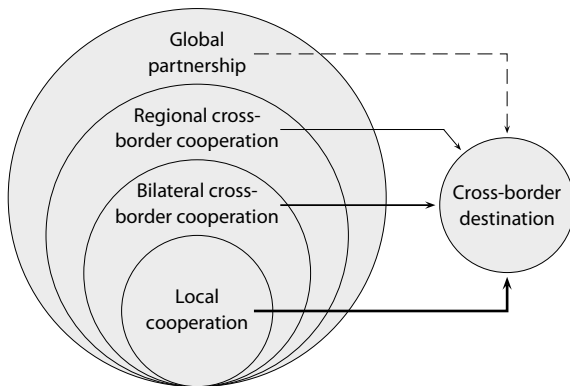
The objectives of the paper are to identify the characteristics of strategic marketing approaches of cross-border tourist destinations and to gain insight into the importance and prevalence of the topic in academic research of the tourism industry.

### Scopes of Cross-Border Tourist Destinations

The basic principle of cross-border cooperation is the establishment of cross-border connections and contractual relations in border areas to find common solutions to common problems (Vodeb, 2007, p. 37). However, cross-border tourist destinations do not necessarily cover only border areas, but also build cooperation through cross-border partnerships in different geographical and institutional scopes (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007) or historical scopes (Saarinen & Kask, 2008).

For this review article, we selected Timothy and Saarinen's (2013) concept of four main scopes of cross-border cooperation from a geographical and implicitly organizational perspective:

- global partnerships (e.g. almost all countries in Europe are involved in the United Nations, or under the authority of the World Tourism Organization and UNESCO, global partner chains);
- regional cross-border cooperation is implemented within the European Union through several different programmes and partnerships (e.g. Euroregion, Interreg, European Tourism Organization);



**Figure 1** Presentation of the Scope of Cross-Border Cooperation in Relation to a Cross-Border Destination by the Intensity of Integration and Direct Power of the Cross-Border Partnership's Influence on the Destination's Tourism Activity (adapted from Timothy & Saarinen, 2013)

- bilateral cross-border cooperation between two or three countries, not necessarily with countries sharing the same border. These have their own national tourism organizations but can perform together in the market (e.g. Elbe/Labe region);
- local cooperation between countries that share an administrative border, but the area is intertwined with cultural and natural resources. In this case, the border areas form a cross-border tourist destination.

The development of tourism in cross-border destinations is encouraged by various forces, interests and needs (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007), such as political, socio-cultural, economic, technological, competitive and safety (Timothy & Tosun, 2003; Saarinen & Kask, 2008; Wang & He, 2016). Therefore, how marketing relationships are established, and their intensity, can be aggravated by the fact that local tourism organizations operating in cross-border destinations carry out marketing activities with other stakeholders at different levels and dimensions, and not necessarily with uniform and homogeneous objectives.

Figure 1 shows the extent of cross-border cooperation in relation to a cross-border destination, geographically. The integration of a cross-border desti-

nation within an individual scope depends on the intensity of cooperation and integration and the direct power of the cross-border partnership's influence on the destination's tourism activity. Although the supply at the destination strongly depends on local integration, it cannot avoid integration at the global level (Tosun et al., 2005). Concerning stakeholders at the global level, given the influence of the local tourist destination outside the destination area, it can be concluded that its influence is less powerful within the global partnership than at the local level (intensity of arrows in Figure 1). The importance of local authorities in formulating a marketing strategy is crucial as it also represents a starting point for the establishment of new economic initiatives in the field of tourism (Kozak & Buhalis, 2019). Relationships between individual partners can be business or non-business, spontaneous or organized (Vodeb, 2007), which determines the heterogeneous partnership activities in between tourist destinations.

### Marketing Strategies of Tourist Destinations

In a traditional market economy, new value is created through a company's business process with two key parts of process planning: manufacturing and sales. In developed economies, value delivery is becoming important, bringing added value to different participants in the process, and is strongly influenced by consumer preferences and choices that dictate market demand (Kotler & Levy, 1969). Creating a strategic market presence is important for both businesses and other stakeholders operating at the country or regional level; it allows them to use new, tailored processes to achieve their objectives more effectively.

Strategic management models differ when applied to destinations as a collection of organizations from public, private, and civil sectors. Marketing of a tourist destination is one of the key development policies or sub-strategies of a comprehensive tourism strategy, on the basis of which it is possible to achieve the desired development of a tourist destination. But it needs to be planned, too. Strategic planning is one of the key aspects affecting the development and success of the tourist destination. Strategic planning in tourism conceptualizes a certain number of steps in the process,

where the output of the previous step becomes the input of the next, to the overall final concept of the strategy (Uran Maravić & Juvan, 2009). It is also important that tourist destinations develop marketing strategies with targeted branding. Brand management is the most important distinguishing feature of tourist destinations, as a result of aggressive marketing in competitive markets and information deluge (Šerić & Vitner Marković, 2011). In developing a common brand, it is therefore important to examine the various aspects of market positioning (Brezovec & Nemec Rudež, 2009; Kodrin, 2021), related to cross-border tourist destinations:

- geographical positioning, administrative boundaries and certain territorial diversity and specificities;
- social perception, exchange of information, sharing of experiences, norms in building and establishing relationships, marketing skills;
- understanding cultural characteristics which reduce social and organizational differences;
- creativity and receptivity towards open innovation.

Among other strategic prerequisites, political support, organization of local tourism organizations and tourism associations, management structure and mutual interests are important for successful cross-border tourism cooperation in the field of institutional cooperation, whereas branding, cooperation in the co-design of tourist products, access to the market and combined sales efforts are also important for strategic marketing (Kozak & Buhalis, 2019).

The marketing process is an important part of a company's business process that allows it to trade. Exchange as a part of trade, however, is a fundamental condition and purpose of the operation of companies, which, in basic economic theory, pursues the goal of making a profit (Foxall, 2020). To enter markets with created value, it is necessary that product supply transforms the marketing strategy into a marketing mix. In this case, we must consider also marketing expenditures for the implementation of the selected marketing mix. There are several marketing mix models. The most prevalent is the McCarthy model. It

divides the marketing mix into four elements, which it calls 4P: product, price, place and promotion. It later upgraded to 7Ps, which additionally includes people, process and physical evidence of the marketing mix (van Waterschoot & van den Bulte, 1992). The model can also be used at tourist destinations.

## Methodology

The methodological approach chosen is based on the appropriate selection of methodology and dataset in the chosen databases of scientific publications, based on keyword selection.

We used Cooper's Taxonomy (Cooper, 1988) of literature review which focuses on practices and applications. With a systematic literature review, we strive to synthesize researched evidence, identify main characteristics and issues relevant to the research topic and point out conclusions in a generalized manner. The perspective of the article is based on a qualitative review.

A four-step model (Babbie, 2016) was selected in the methodology selection for preparing the literature review:

1. selection of an appropriate literature base offering the largest set of academic articles and other literature in the field of study,
2. obtaining data based on selected keywords in the field of study,
3. an arrangement of data based on selected assessment criteria and analysis,
4. discussion and conclusion with findings.

The review of the databases covered the period from 1 January 2012 to 20 April 2022.

In the first phase, the methodological approach required an overview of the literature of academic articles and other scientific works within online databases. The dataset of selected keywords was collected in two of the world's most widely used web databases: *Web of Science* and *Scopus*. Validity and reliability of data were assured with several techniques: combining comparative tests of search strings to make a final selection of keywords, finding comprehensive literature to select relevant articles and using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to make a reliable data analysis (Paré

**Table 1** Search Results of Literature by Selected Keywords in Selected Databases

Item	Web of Science	Scopus
Keywords	Tourism, cross-border, marketing, strategy	Tourism, cross-border, marketing, strategy
Search Constraints	Topic (title, abstract, keywords)	Topic (title, abstract, keywords)
Type of Publication	All	All
Publication Period	1.1.2012–20.4.2022	1.1.2012–20.4.2022
Language	English	English
Research Area	All	All
Results	47	11

et al., 2015), with a double review approach in the data analysis stage. The first comparative test of choosing several combinations of keywords in both databases was done, as follows. The first selection of keywords was based on generic terms that best describe the field studied: *tourism, cross-border, coopetition, marketing strategy, travel, cooperation*. Since the number of hits was low, the first selection of keywords was refined to the selected keywords: *tourism, cross-border, marketing, strategy*.

When obtaining data from databases of scientific literature, the goal was to obtain all relevant scientific literature, regardless of the type of publication (publications in conference proceedings and other scientific meetings, research articles and book chapters).

For the Web of Science and Scopus databases, we searched for selected keywords in titles, abstracts, and groups of keywords. In addition, a search of the Google Scholar database was performed, but due to a disproportionately large number of results (17,300 hits) compared to the other two databases, the Google Scholar database was subsequently excluded. After the first search string, the most relevant results were found in the Web of Science as shown in Table 1. After reviewing all the search results according to the selected keywords, 8 articles were duplicated in both databases. The final set for further review (processing) of data was reduced to 50 articles.

The results of the selected keywords were studied from several aspects and particular findings have been revealed:

- by number of publications by year (Table 2): a significant increase in interest in the topic studied is evident from 2016 onwards;
- by type of publications (Table 3): both databases show a variety of publication types;
- by number of citations of the publications (Table 4): modus of numbers of citations in both databases is in a range of numbers of citations between 21 and 50.

In regard to the source of publications, we note that articles have been published in different publications and journals, that their number is diverse, and there are no cases when at least two or more articles were published in the same journal, indicating diverse treatment of the research field, despite the inclusion of the keyword ‘tourism.’

Among all publications, there are only four journals from the tourism research field, of which only two have an impact factor in the first quartile, namely:

- *Deturope: The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism* (impact factor: Q3),
- *International Journal of Tourism Research* (impact factor: Q1),
- *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights* (not included in the Scimago Journal & Country Rank database),
- *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* (impact factor: Q1).

The weak representation of the topic in research journals in the field of tourism indicates a lower presence of the research topic among researchers in tourism. In the analysis of selected articles, special attention is paid to those that record higher citations, as shown in Table 4.

In the third step, a selection of articles was performed based on the arrangement of data according to selected assessment criteria and in order to identify those articles crucial for our research questions to achieve the goal of this paper.

Table 2 Number of Published Articles from 2012 to 2022, in Web of Science and Scopus

Database	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Scopus	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	1	1
Web of Science	2	0	3	1	6	9	5	5	7	9	0

Table 3 Type of Research Publications, in Web of Science and Scopus

Type of publication	Web of Science	Scopus
Note	0	9
Conference review	0	9
Conference paper	23	9
Book chapter	0	18
Article	77	55

Notes In percent.

Table 4 Demonstration of the Importance of Articles by Citation, in Web of Science and Scopus

Number of citations	Web of Science		Scopus	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
>200	1	2	0	0
101–200	3	6	0	0
81–100	3	6	0	0
51–80	12	26	3	27
21–50	19	40	3	27
1–20	9	19	2	18
0	0	0	3	27

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of articles, (2) share among all articles (%).

After refining the broad set of literature, abstracts of 50 selected articles were read. Subsequently, 17 articles were selected for a literature review, based on the method of eliminating irrelevant articles, according to the following criteria (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005):

- the content of the article deals with cross-border cooperation, but the field of research is general, e.g. economically oriented and does not address a specific area of tourism,
- the content of the article deals with the field of tourism, but the content does not coincide with

the content of research questions and addresses other topics irrelevant to this literature review.

Of the 17 articles, 3 were not freely available, so the authors were asked for direct access via an application in the Research Gate database. Access to those articles was not confirmed by the authors and articles were subsequently excluded from further analysis. One article was published only in Chinese and was excluded due to ignorance of the language. Out of 13 articles, a detailed reading of the entire content of the articles was done. Three articles were subsequently excluded due to inadequate content that did not reflect our research questions. In the final selection of the literature review, 10 articles were discussed 7 of them dealing with cross-border regions or destinations within or along the external borders of the European Union. Most of the articles (7 of them) were published in the last four years, which indicated a greater presence of the research topic in recent years.

Table 5 contains all the articles discussed by author, year of publication, key concepts used, research methods/samples, scientific contribution and scope of cross-border cooperation.

## Results and Analysis

### Cross-Border Cooperation Scopes and Marketing

The studied articles provide a more detailed insight into the issue of planning and implementing cross-border destination, management and related understanding and approaches in their marketing. The authors largely recognize the importance of the competitive advantages of cross-border cooperation and the relevance of designing and implementing marketing strategies within the institutional organization, mainly as tourist destinations. The implementation of marketing strategies in cross-border destinations is in most cases difficult due to various administrative, political, infrastructural and logistical factors and limited

Table 5 Overview of Selected Articles

Author	Key concepts	Methods/samples	Scientific contribution	Scope
Qi, L., & Xiaoyan, Z. (2014)	Overview of cross-border mergers and acquisitions, brand strategies, and recommendations for China hotel industry, considering B2C and B2B perspectives.	Single case study – a worldwide hotel chain.	Article contributes in its comprehensive analysis of conceptualization of cross-border tourism cooperation and its significance in promoting economic development, international cooperation, and safety issues among border countries. Better understanding of impact on the brand image and using brand equity of the acquired brand to avoid customer loyalty loss, as an essential part of the marketing strategy.	Global
Makkonen, T. (2016)	Article explores economic impact of cross-border shopping on local tourism industry and destination marketing, analysing tourist demand and future cross-border cooperation potential.	Qualitative method. Case study: semi-structured interviews with 5 LTOS and 7 enterprises. Triangulation of data sources was done (webpage content, official tourism guides, personal interviews with managers).	Article builds upon earlier studies and validates existing models of Bygrå (2009) and Timothy and Butler (1995) of promoting and managing cross-border tourism destinations. The research confirmed that tourist visits are in positive correlation with low-price shopping at the border. Lack of a strategic marketing approach by individual border regions leads to weak cross-border collaboration.	Bilateral
Wang, W., & He, Y. (2016)	Establishing new cross-border cooperation in the Xishuangbanna-North Laos regions as a tourist destination considering opportunities and obstacles, and exploring spatial patterns (modes) like 'core-edge' or 'point-axis' development mode and network mode and their derivatives.	Case study, Xishuangbanna-North Laos Crossborder Tourism Cooperation Zone.	Conceptualization of cross-border tourism cooperation and its significance in promoting economic development, international cooperation, and safety issues among border countries. Highlights main attributes of strategic management: research, skilled teams, infrastructure, transport, communication (marketing strategy), and information networks.	Bilateral

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resources (human, financial, etc.). Following a better understanding of cross-border marketing, different scales of cooperation have been identified through reviewed articles, using the concept of the scope of cross-border cooperation in a tourist destination (in geographical and organizational terms). Most of the articles (7 of them) dealt with bilateral cross-border cooperation, of which 5 addressed cross-border cooperation within the Euroregion or Eurocities. The other three articles were equivalent in terms of the scope of cross-border cooperation: global (1), regional (1), and

local (1). All three dealt with both marketing strategies and branding. Only three articles of bilateral scope of cross-border cooperation addressed both marketing and the need for branding of cross-border destinations.

Through the authors' research work, they identify several opportunities as well as obstacles to further development of a cross-border tourist destination as a comprehensive tourist system, and in various ways, include the consideration of marketing strategies in marketplace strategies.

Table 5 Continued from the previous page

Author	Key concepts	Methods/samples	Scientific contribution	Scope
Liberato, D., Alén, E., Liberato P., & Domínguez, T. (2018)	Enhanced conceptualization of tourism in border territories beyond the transnational level, by analysing regional demarcation, geographical, legal, economic scope, and local identity.	Qualitative method. Case study, 11 semi-structured interviews in 2015, with expert stakeholders from various economic fields (including tourism). Includes the concept of data saturation.	Understanding of various dimensions of cross-border tourism, revealing complex relationships between tourists and local communities, capturing individual experiences, and contributing to sustainable tourism growth strategies. Study reveals that creating promotional channels with materialized, organized and implemented tourism marketing strategies in the context of promotion of Euroregions is a pre-condition for success.	Bilateral
Woyo E., & Slabbert, E. (2019)	Analysing Victoria Falls' cross-border marketing opportunities and examining motivations for cross-border partnerships, considering demand side of socio-demographic characteristics and supply-side factors.	Quantitative method, using a demand and supply-based survey questionnaire. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, factor analyses and one-way analysis of variance.	The article's findings contribute to the existing literature and results on four dimensions: experiences of tourists visiting shared border attractions, and potential growth opportunities, challenges and tourist motivations. It proposes a new destination marketing framework which employs all four dimensions from both demand and supply aspect of cross-border marketing.	Bilateral
Hrynokh, N. V., Dmytruk, V. I., Diachenko, A., & Kniazevych, A. O. (2019)	Article explores tourism development in Carpathian Euroregion, focusing on marketing strategy, cross-border cooperation, and key indicators of tourism flow, administrative and territorial distribution.	Desktop research based on existing strategic documents of both regions and official statistics. Data from 2011 to 2017 were studied. Empirical research was excluded.	A contribution of this article lies in the identification and analysis of socio-economic aspects of cross-border tourism destination. Article's key findings are that greater activation in strategic development is needed and an updated marketing strategy for managing domestic, inbound, and outbound tourism in Ukraine.	Bilateral

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### Opportunities for Cross-Border Cooperation

Cross-border cooperation can contribute to many new opportunities that need to be identified first. Cross-border tourist destinations tend to face poorer economic efficiency and have fewer competitive advantages (Novotny, 2020; Liberato et al., 2018). Woyo and Slabbert (2019) consider that the performance of tourist destinations is in most cases measured in terms of competitive advantages rather than cooperation, especially in the context of cross-border cooperation. Šerić et al. (2021), on the other hand, see cross-border cooperation as a basis for brand management

and consider cross-border cooperation as valorisation of existing tourism resources that contribute to greater destination competitiveness. Wang and He (2016) emphasize that building cross-border tourism cooperation strengthens relations and cooperation between cross-border regions, stimulates the development of tourism products, and encourages consumption in the cross-border area by visitors and further development of the tourism industry. They see tourism as a bridge and, at the same time, as a carrier for multilateral exchange and cooperation that strengthens trust and creates benefits for all participants.



Table 5 Continued from the previous page

Author	Key concepts	Methods/samples	Scientific contribution	Scope
Jurado-Almonte, J. M., Pazos-Garcia, F. J., & Cas-tanho R. A. (2020)	Research of geographical and institutional framework of regions at the Spanish-Portuguese border, Eurocities' strengths, cross-border cooperation, marketing strategies, and future trends.	Qualitative method. Survey with 34 questions, desktop research (statistics, cartography), by phone and in-person interviews, in 2018 and 2019.	The empirical study outlines the strengths and weaknesses of six Iberian Eurocities, identified by using several critical factors for cross border cooperation from a perspective of being autonomous cross-border cooperation entities, fostering common public services in cross-border areas (common equipment and services within existing infrastructure), and acting as territorial lobbies for obtaining funding for projects (promotion of a strong territorial strategy). Concerning infrastructure and management of cross-border regions a coordinated marketing plan and advertising are an important success factors.	Bilateral
Novotny, L. (2020)	The article discusses the importance of communication in cross-border cultural tourism supply, focusing on media, advertising, and social media, identifying deficiencies and barriers to visitors. It focuses on strategic marketing and concepts of destination competitiveness.	Quantitative method. A questionnaire among students on the Czech-German border (Labe/Elbe Euroregion).	Study synthesizes theories and principles for strategic marketing and management of tourist destinations in Czech-German Borderland. Article provides a deeper understanding of the various dimensions of cross-border tourism (motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, attitudes), explores complex relationships (tourist-local communities), captures the subjective experiences of individuals, and contributes to the development of contextually relevant strategies for sustainable tourism growth.	Bilateral

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Promotional activities as an essential part of marketing strategies are implemented in cross-border tourism destinations or cross-border tourism products in the form of building a single visibility that combines two or more destinations in one promotional message (Tosun et al., 2005). This way of cooperation brings many advantages:

- the costs of promotion per country or tourist organization are reduced due to the sharing of costs of mutual marketing activities (Liberato et al., 2018),
- the promotional effects multiply as each country further promotes the tourism product through its

own digital channels in its own country or abroad (Woyo & Slabbert, 2019),

- increasing business opportunities, including opportunities for additional investment, additional employment and innovation (Woyo & Slabbert, 2019),
- the possibility of joint financing of projects and joint search for sources of project financing by several cross-border destinations, for the same project (Jurado-Almonte et al., 2020),
- greater and more efficient exchange of information between countries, exchange of good practices and greater networking of other providers

Table 5 Continued from the previous page

Author	Key concepts	Methods/samples	Scientific contribution	Scope
Gerlitz, L., Meyer, C., & Prause G. (2021)	The South Baltic Sea region is experiencing a need for a sustainable transition. The article is seeking improvements, focusing on a tailored regional marketing and branding strategy connecting social paradigms with environmental ones and based on sociological theoretical starting points.	Qualitative method. A survey among 130 SME companies in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. Additional interviews and field research were undertaken. The research was conducted from July 2017 to December 2020.	The study focuses on research adopting a holistic and processual perspective and innovation-driven transformation perceived from an ecosystem of cross-border stakeholders, contributing to regional development and Blue Growth discourse in the South Baltic Sea Region. Research of marketing and branding strategies using existing resources and innovation opportunities in three pillars: resources, opportunities, and sustainable ecosystem.	Regional
Šerić, N., Bagarić, L., Jakšić Stojanović, A., & Keković, N. (2021)	Post-Covid, tourist behaviour changes, specialized products, and cross-border cooperation are influencing marketing and branding strategies. A new model of expanded content on supply aims to create new specialized tourism products, focusing on cross-border cooperation.	Qualitative method. Internal and external analysis of tourist provider, using SWOT, TOWS, Pestec, Mof and Recoil analysis models. Findings were tested through a survey of a sample of representatives of travel agencies.	A new model for creating specialized tourism products post-Covid by linking core, additional, and expanded content with brand creation using marketing strategy. It contributes also on what to rely on the marketing strategies in the post-Covid time: identifying characteristics of the micro-location, infrastructure upgrades (roads, recreational zone), partnerships with supply entities and resource concessionaires, including sustainable environmental standards, eco gastronomic offer, implementation of digital user platforms.	Local

indirectly involved in the cross-border tourism infrastructure (Makkonen, 2016; Woyo & Slabbert, 2019).

Gerlitz et al. (2021) believe that combining diversity is a potential for development that can be realized if a conceptual framework, financial resources and administrative support are present. Šerić et al. (2021) argue that it is possible to maintain competitiveness by diversifying products, expanding content and improving quality. These also need to be implemented in marketing strategies and communicated through brands, which will contribute to strengthening the global brand awareness of a specialized tourism product. The expanded contents of a specialized tourism product open up opportunities for new outbound tourist markets and attract new segments of tourists.

After cross-border mergers and acquisitions, the brand or tourist brand is more effective as part of the marketing plan because cultural barriers are also overcome (Qi & Xiaoyan, 2014). Connecting companies to clusters and networking creates better business visibility and more marketing opportunities. The principle of cooperation in cross-border regions, based on such integration, is important not only from the point of view of marketing but also from joint brand management. It enables the integration of different institutions into a single framework, including different stakeholders, setting common goals and highlighting key values and initiatives to develop common strategies. Sharing common goals and synchronizing them is key to shared marketing success and branding as a single cluster of interrelated stakeholders (Gerlitz et al., 2021).

The marketing and brand strategy should be based on three pillars and should be seen from the perspective of the ecosystem and processes, considering the following strategic measures (Gerlitz et al., 2021; Hrynokh et al., 2019):

1. the creation of tools for pooling, allocating and (re)combining resources that lead to knowledge excellence and, consequently, to the development of innovation, thus achieving a sustainable organizational (regional) ecosystem;
2. providing key tools related to entrepreneurship and creative discovery;
3. transforming cross-border regions into a brand with a common vision for the future and a common strategic positioning.

#### Obstacles to Cross-Border Cooperation

Novotny (2020) and Jurado Almonte et al. (2020) consider that the main barriers to effective cross-border marketing are inadequate infrastructure, organizational and information barriers, financial barriers related to visitor costs and logistical barriers. Woyo and Slabbert (2019) perceive the greatest challenges of cross-border cooperation in single marketing. The biggest obstacles are the fear of losing a unique national identity, greater seasonality, budgetary constraints, difficulties in measuring a country's performance, uneven development between destinations, different tourism policies and thus different marketing approaches, and a lack of economic links.

Wang and He (2016) point out that cross-border tourism also faces obstacles that hinder the development of tourism in these areas, such as:

- sensitivity to political influences along the border, from a geopolitical point of view, from international relations, and an economic point of view. It is a question of the free movement of labour, products and finance;
- infrastructure and support resources are usually weaker at the border than further inside the country;
- the problem of the flow of investment and profits across borders inhibits entrepreneurial activity;

- lack of uniform approaches and orientations in the implementation and control of standards in tourism;
- linguistic and cultural differences.

At the same time, stakeholders of tourist destinations involved in the marketing activities of a cross-border destination or tourist product face the challenge of finding a balance between competitiveness and partnership. Beritteli (in Liberato et al., 2018) considers that a principle of collaboration in the communities of tourist destinations is a prerequisite for their planning and development. This makes it easier and also more efficient to market destinations as single locales.

It is necessary to take advantage of both destinations, especially in the case of cross-border cooperation of a wider economic spectrum (Liberato et al., 2018).

Some authors (Woyo & Slabbert, 2019; Makkonen, 2016) find that research into marketing opportunities and challenges related to cross-border attractions is limited due to a number of administrative barriers. As a result, the topic is less researched, which is noted by this literature review. The authors (Jurado-Almonte et al., 2020) point out the following elements as critical factors for the success of cross-border destinations:

- the most critical (marketing and advertising, common equipment and services, access to European funds),
- medium critical (promotion of a strong territorial strategy, development of consolidated strategies, activation of the public),
- less critical (improved urban connectivity, promotional strategies against the flight of young and talented people).

#### Discussion

The marketing of a cross-border destination differs in comparison to other inland tourist destinations in several factors and restrictions that are conditioned by the administrative border or other economic, social, security, or institutional obstacles. Consequently, the unified management of a cross-border tourist destination is required as an optimal strategy. This marketing

approach demands several mutual coordination, legal, administrative and institutional adjustments of various stakeholders involved in the planning, development and implementation of marketing activities. The number of stakeholders involved in the development of a cross-border tourist destination and its products depends at least on the geographical and institutional scope, as shown in the model of Timothy and Saari-nen (2013). Global partnerships in cross-border destinations are less likely, and in tourism mostly present as a part of global (hotel) chains. The results of the review article indicate that most partnerships of cross-border destinations are bilateral where two destinations merge at a common frontier. Most cases in the review were located in the European Union.

There is an evident lack of cited references in reviewed articles that would give a clear overview of knowledge maturation on cross-border marketing strategies of tourist destinations. Instead, we tried to uncover some incipient reasons and events that brought a few insights into the genesis of marketing strategies in cross-border tourist destinations:

- Woyo and Slabbert (2019) detailed the first beginnings of cross-border cooperation in tourism back to the second half of the 20th century, mainly due to the overcoming of political barriers in Europe and trends in growing mass tourism. The development of marketing in cross-border destinations emerged at the turn of the millennium;
- Makkonen (2016) affirmed cross-border shopping as an important advantage in developing tourist destinations, already present in the 1990s in North America (e.g. between the United States and Canada). In several cases, they built a proposal for a detailed action plan at a destination marketing organization including a joint marketing strategy with other nearby destinations. He highlighted a model for cross-border shopping from Timothy and Buttler (in Makkonen, 2016);
- Jurado-Almonte et al. (2020) substantiate the development of cross-border cooperation between Spain and Portugal around 1986 with the integration of both countries into the European Union

and later on with inclusion into the so-called Schengen Area and the abolition of customs in 1995.

The review article confirmed that research interest in the topic studied increased in the last decade.

The main focus of the review article above all aims to contribute to a better understanding of scope, opportunities and barriers of collaboration in cross-border destinations and within its usage of marketing strategies. Liberato et al. (2018, p. 1355) show that border regions should move towards mixed 'new governance,' considering that cross-border, as well as interregional and transnational, cooperation only work if administrative levels with different structures and competencies cooperate across borders. They should develop common cultural proximity, mutual relationships and easy communication channels. They think that the identity of a cross-border destination is a key element when it comes to cross-border tourism. Identity is strongly dependent on governance structures and how it is incorporated into cross-border destinations. In such a manner it is an important part of branding. Several authors (Novotny, 2020; Qi & Xiaoyan, 2014; Šerić et al., 2021; Woyo & Slabbert, 2019) believe that the additional and expanded content which is usually promoted in a cross-border tourist destination, while merging individual tourist supply as one unified product (Makkonen, 2016), should have a greater significance in marketing strategy and brand as well. Marketing strategies are closely linked to branding. Brand integration should fully consider local cultural factors and should be in line with the company's other strategies, adjusted to new entering markets (Qi & Xiaoyan, 2014).

Gerlitz et al. (2021) confirm that better recognition of cross-border destination abroad could be achieved by addressing tourism-related and place branding or regional identity-building issues. Strategic positioning is more successful if it is underpinned by the European Union's programmes. Qi and Xiaoyan (2014) connect brand awareness as an image that should be spread through a series of marketing activities, which result not only in a positive product image but also in a quality awareness of the product and customer loyalty.

Some authors (Gerlitz et al., 2021) argue that for successful marketing strategies for cross-border projects aimed at greater market competitiveness, innovative approaches are crucial, which include key elements of the so-called 7Ps. Through the innovation process, individual development stages are formed in which stakeholders and beneficiaries combine different processes of innovation approaches and simultaneously design and place the marketing elements. In this way, an innovation ecosystem is created, from the inside out. Thus, innovation competencies and management skills are built for further growth, business transformation, competitiveness and differentiation, where marketing strategies play an important role. All reviewed articles highlight the significance of promotion and product as the main two elements of marketing mix; only a few give importance to the element 'place' as an important international and global integration of products (Qi & Xiaoyan, 2014) and as an important channel of communications to customers with suitable advertising to leverage a destination's attractions (Makkonen, 2016).

In addition to the 4Ps marketing approach, an extended 7Ps marketing strategy considers also *people, process and physical evidence*. Woyo and Slabbert (2019) consider the process as a big challenge since cross-border destinations often have different institutional structures, policies and marketing strategies and thus reflect that a tight management process will be needed. Makkonen (2016, p. 41) argues that the process of marketing is not without difficulties and depends on a large number of stakeholders involved in tourism destination marketing. Consequently, this distortion of process potentially leads to incoherence in the destination marketing materials produced by different actors, and it is difficult to quantitatively measure the results and return on investment. An additional element in marketing strategy, 'people' involved in the service, distribution, and selling of product are also essential (Kotler & Levy, 1969), providing as high a service quality as possible while achieving strategic organizational goals. Cross-border cooperation is also beneficial in solving challenges such as poor service quality (Woyo & Slabbert, 2019). Some cross-border destinations implement process integration through different Euro-

pean Union programmes and initiatives, such as Eurocities or Euro Regions (Gerlitz et al., 2021; Hrynokh et al., 2019; Jurado-Almonte et al., 2020; Liberato et al., 2018; Wang & He, 2016), with all the benefits of sustainable development and spatial cohesion. Tourism is emerging as an important part of this integration (Liberato et al., 2018). These integrations are followed with several positive outcomes: stimulation of the development of tourism products and improving the local economy (Liberato et al., 2018; Wang & He, 2016), increasing the competitiveness of the destination and creating new market opportunities (Šerić et al., 2021), including with regions beyond cross-border frontiers (Hrynokh et al., 2019), which are usually implemented gradually (Wang & He, 2016).

### Conclusions and Implications

Although there are several opportunities for cross-border cooperation found in the literature review results, still the disruptive site of cross-border destinations is evident compared to inland destinations. The study confirms that marketing strategies are implemented sporadically and gradually and are mainly dependent on additional (in Europe mainly the European Commission's) co-financing.

As marketing strategies are only successful in the medium or long term (Uran Maravić & Juvan, 2009), there is a perceived lack of longer-term strategic partnerships between stakeholders in cross-border areas, which consolidate the marketing position and provide a basis for designing and implementing marketing strategies.

Conceptualization of cross-border tourist collaboration and their importance in advancing economic growth, global cooperation, and safety concerns among bordering countries is crucial. It draws attention to the key characteristics of strategic management, including research, upskilled teams, infrastructure, transportation, communication (marketing strategy), and information networks. Understanding the diverse aspects of cross-border travel helps destinations develop plans for sustainable tourism growth. According to this review research, a prerequisite for success in the context of promoting cross-border tourist destinations is the development of promotional channels with material-

ized, structured, and implemented tourism marketing plans.

Through this literature review, it was found that cross-border tourist destinations do not use systematic approaches to the introduction of marketing strategies; these are identified in the context of broader development strategies of cross-border areas.

In rare cases, stand-alone brands are created to consolidate destinations in the market and exploit the marketing potential of two or more cross-border destinations at the same time.

The literature review reveals interpretable patterns of weak development of joint marketing strategies or their complete lack, and only a gradual understanding of the need for strategic marketing approaches in cross-border tourist destinations and calls for additional (financial) stimulation.

The theoretical value of the article is identification of different perspectives on cross-border tourist destination marketing strategies with additional characterizations in terms of defining the scope of cross-border cooperation, using a model adapted from Timothy and Saarinen (2013). One major insight of this review is also a need for theorization in cross-border tourist destination marketing, since some of the articles reviewed did not utilize theories, frameworks or models (e.g. Qi & Xiaoyan, 2014; Wang & He, 2016; Hrynokh et al., 2019). They were mostly used in articles of the latest dates of publishing, but with modest research of theoretical backgrounds.

Synthesis of reviewed articles could help researchers identify the research areas and methodologies in the future and compare them with past experiences and findings to address the research gaps and unanswered or new questions.

The research showed also a need for further research of the topic with additional keywords in different combinations, such as *brand(ing)*, *destination marketing* and *place* (as a synonym for destination).

All of the articles discussed faced similar limitations. Research in review articles mostly focused on only one cross-border area, so it is not possible to compare opportunities and obstacles between two different cross-border areas, to identify differences or the causes of these differences. The articles also ad-

dressed the concepts of marketing strategies weakly. These were mainly part of larger strategies or just one of many elements within the research concept.

Therefore, in general, further research should focus on efforts observing and addressing more cross-border regions in parallel with longer-term observation, and include more detailed concepts of addressing marketing strategies. Furthermore, this paper shows several directions of additional development and research of marketing strategies in cross-border destinations. First, from a geographical perspective, at local, bilateral, or regional and/or global levels, within or in comparison between them and their benchmark. The research focus could be on the perspective of relationship networks, the scope and intensity of ties between partners and their influence on the destination's tourism activities. Second, from a strategic perspective, the managerial aspect of implementing innovation processes and their adoption in the marketing of cross-border destinations, comparison of successful models of strategic management in tourist destinations, and feasibility of implementing those models in cross-border destinations. Third, from a marketing perspective, opportunities and barriers to implementing marketing strategies at cross-border destinations with deeper insight into possible usage of marketing mix elements that influence promotion and communication of cross-border destinations.

However, features and opportunities of marketing strategies in cross-border destinations should be discussed in parallel. In the context of research on marketing strategies, it would be useful to pay special attention to modern communication channels such as different social media networks, which bring different approaches to communication from traditional forms and thus significantly influence the design of marketing strategies. Namely, marketing in the last, especially post-Covid period is experiencing radical changes. It is mainly focused on digital communication channels and is successfully transmitted to social media channels.

Overall, this paper contributes to showcasing the important role of cross-border marketing strategies and paves the way for more detailed research into the topic in the future.

## Notes

In this research article terms 'tourist destination' and 'tourism destination' are used depending on the context of the content of articles and according to scientific terminology. The term 'tourist destination' refers to delineated geographical tourist areas, whereas 'tourism destination' reflects also the management of the tourist destination.

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