

Article

# In Tourism Seasonality Reason and Consequences

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the causes and consequences of seasonality in the tourism sector. Seasonality affects the economic, social and environmental state of the tourism sector. Based on the research of various scientists, ways and strategies for reducing seasonality are considered. Measures such as diversifying tourism products, developing infrastructure and organizing off-season events are important in reducing the negative consequences of seasonality.

**Keywords:** tourism, seasonality, economic impact, social consequences, environmental factors, tourist products, infrastructure, cultural events, sports tourism.

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## Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important industries with a positive economic impact worldwide. However, this sector is primarily characterized by seasonal fluctuations, which lead to very high and very low seasons of travel and leisure. Seasonality is a decisive factor affecting the tourism industry. This phenomenon is not easy to eliminate or change.

Indeed, seasonality is such an important aspect of tourism that Butler and Hartman describe it as a phenomenon that is difficult to control or change. For this reason, this aspect is considered one of the main problems of the industry by tour operators around the world and is studied with significant attention. One of the biggest challenges that seasonality poses to the tourism industry is that it causes many operators to lose revenue.

In this regard, much attention has been paid to the issue of reducing or eliminating seasonality. Many investors, as well as institutions responsible for controlling and coordinating tourism in different regions of the world, are seeking to introduce various strategies and methods that will help ensure "year-round" tourism.

in tourism is observed all over the world. This situation negatively affects the production and service processes in the tourism sector. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), due to seasonality, many tourism companies are left without income at certain times of the year, which creates a big problem for hotels, restaurants and other service sectors.

Factors affecting seasonality in tourism include:

**Citation:** Fayazov M. In Tourism Seasonality Reason and Consequences . Academic Journal of Digital Economics and Stability 2025, 38(1), 290-296.

Received: 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

Revised: 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

Accepted: 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

Published: 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025



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1. **Climate and weather conditions** – While tourism is active year-round in tropical regions, tourism in polar regions is only active in the summer. In addition, spring and autumn are also considered to be the peak seasons in many tourist areas.

2. **Holidays and vacations** – Tourists often prefer to travel during the holidays. For example, in European countries, summer is the holiday season, and tourism increases significantly during this time.

3. **Regional infrastructure** – In some regions, infrastructure improves during the seasonal period, which affects the flow of tourists. Roads and railways, as well as airports, also adjust their operations according to seasonality.

4. **Cultural and sporting events** – International festivals and sporting competitions are one of the main factors shaping seasonality. For example, in regions hosting the Olympic Games or World Championships, the number of tourists increases significantly at the same time.

However, many of the methods proposed to address or reduce seasonality have not been as effective as hoped. This failure is partly due to the focus on the supply or destination side of tourism rather than the demand side. Destinations can make various changes to attract tourism, but the success of these efforts largely depends on the ability of the market to visit these destinations outside of the traditional off-season periods. Unless demand and participation increase significantly during the off-season, such efforts will not lead to significant changes.

All forms of tourism are affected by seasonality to some degree, and this impact can be variable – sometimes mild, sometimes severe. This limits the amount of investment that can be made in the industry and slows down economic growth.

**Literature review on the topic** . There is a large body of literature that has analyzed seasonality in tourism in depth. This literature presents a set of models and theories that have been considered and used to address the seasonal fluctuations of tourism business. However, there is still no consensus on which theory or model form is the most accurate or effective for describing seasonality in tourism.

In other words, while tourist destinations may be crowded with high activity at certain times of the year, at other times of the year this activity may be almost zero.

Seasonality is widely defined as the fluctuation of demand or supply in the travel and leisure sector. This volatility is usually associated with factors such as weather conditions, holidays, and vacations. As Butler points out, although there are many characteristics of tourism, most research has focused on the following issues: how changes in tourism demand affect travel, the impact of seasonality on tourism regions and employment, and the implications for investment and policy. [1]

R. Hartmann, many researchers have not delved deeply into the theoretical aspects of the issue. For example, M. Bonn et al. have analyzed seasonality in terms of visitor numbers and seasonal fluctuations. Pioneers in the field of seasonality, such as R. Baron, have argued that seasonal fluctuations in the entertainment sector led to a full and unbalanced use of the resources available to the economy. This is similar to an unbalanced business cycle, reflecting phases in which the economy is either overheated or, conversely, operating below its potential. [2]

Economists have proposed various approaches to the issue of seasonality. For example, Butler, in his study, analyzed seasonality based on natural and institutional factors and made recommendations on ways to reduce it.[3] Hall and Page, studying the

socio-economic consequences of seasonality, emphasized that diversifying tourism products is an important tool in reducing seasonality.[4]

Baum and Lundthorp studied the impact of seasonality on the labor market and found that seasonality leads to high employee turnover in the hotel and restaurant industry.[5] Higham & Hinch studied the impact of sports tourism on seasonality and found that major sporting events can generate tourist traffic even in the off-season.[6]

The negative effects of seasonality include: increased prices during peak seasons, instability in investment, costly seasonal hiring, under- or over-utilization of resources, and excessive pressure on the transportation system.[9]

The positive aspects of seasonality were mainly related to post-seasonal recovery, where environmental resources have a chance to recover after the peak season and part-time work. Seasonal tourism also serves as an additional source of income for local residents.[8]

Tourism is one of the important sectors of the economy, which makes a significant contribution to the country's economy. However, there is a problem of seasonality in tourism, which seriously affects the development of the tourism sector. Seasonality is characterized by a high level of tourism activity at certain times and a decrease at other times. This article analyzes the causes and consequences of seasonality in tourism and discusses ways to reduce them.

**Research methodology.** The scientific article uses the following methods of conducting scientific research: systematic analysis, historical and logical, induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, comparative and selective research, monographic analysis and grouping.

**Analysis and Results.** The study of the causes of seasonality in tourism was conducted to identify the causes of high and low seasonality in the travel and leisure sector. Secondary data were collected in the analysis of this research topic. Secondary data on the causes and effects of seasonality in tourism are widely available in various academic literatures and do not require a special method to collect data from them. This data can be obtained from internal and external sources.

Seasonality data were obtained from internal reports, including destination sales reports, company data, tourism operator (dealers, retailers and distributors) reports and feedback, and financial statements. In addition, business magazines, government publications on tourism registration, reliable articles on the Internet, and other sources providing information on global tourism trends were also the main sources of information for this study.

Also, information published in social books and related to the topic was collected. These various sources allow for an in-depth study of the causes and consequences of seasonality in the tourism sector.

It is important to note that data collected through secondary data can be qualitative and quantitative. While qualitative data presented in industry reports is typically obtained from transcripts and interviews, quantitative data is collected by studying trends in the tourism sector across a wide range of geographical areas, analyzing financial statements of various tourism organizations, and examining statistical reports on the industry.

The secondary data collection method has several advantages. One of the biggest advantages of this method is that the required data is usually readily available and it takes

relatively little time to collect it. It also allows for the effective use of a large amount of existing data, which is necessary for a more in-depth analysis of tourism trends.

For natural reasons, the Earth's rotation around the Sun has a significant impact on tourism. The location of the planet Earth in relation to the Sun has major consequences for the concept of tourism. The four traditional seasons in the solar system - spring, summer, autumn and winter - are directly related to tourism and seasonality.

For many, spring is synonymous with new things and new beginnings. New shoots bloom in the fields, animals (wild and domestic) wake up, and the earth seems to come to life. Temperatures gradually begin to rise and the environment becomes warmer. The seasons of spring and autumn alternate: while the Northern Hemisphere experiences the joy of rebirth in spring, the Southern Hemisphere enters the autumn season.

During the winter, people tend to travel to warmer regions, which creates tourism flows. The destinations visited benefit economically from the incoming traffic, but this can lead to the loss of economic opportunities for other areas.

As C. Shih and S. Nicholls point out, traditional seasons bring about changes in sunlight, rainfall, day length, and cloud cover. Most importantly, seasons always affect climate and ambient temperature. Climate changes, in turn, affect the growth and maturation of many plant species, as well as the condition of land and marine animals. These factors are usually considered key features of tourist attractions.

In addition, natural phenomena affect elements such as air temperature, humidity, water temperature and wind. These factors play an important role in choosing destinations in terms of cities, alpine areas, coastal areas and peripheral regions. Natural weather conditions create large temperature differences between regions, which significantly affect tourism flows.

The activities offered to tourists vary depending on the climate, meaning they are adapted to hot or cold climates. Tourists usually have their own preferences, such as hiking, swimming or skiing. Tourists who want to enjoy the sunshine and water sports prefer beach resorts on sunny days. Conversely, those who like skiing choose mountainous areas with beautiful scenery.

This shows that tourist regions have different resources and opportunities. Therefore, destinations with more outdoor opportunities are more likely to face problems related to seasonality in the tourism business.

In addition to natural causes, institutional factors also significantly affect seasonality in tourism. According to R. Cannas, these human factors are related to behavioral or institutional aspects. Different religious groups have different religious events and calendar holidays, which are celebrated at different times and in different ways. In addition, some groups celebrate All Saints' Day, while others hold events for solar eclipses or the Solstice. Muslims go on a pilgrimage to Mecca once a year, while other groups perform their religious pilgrimages at specific times.

N. Vanhove notes that these events define the seasonality of tourism, as they are accompanied by markets, feasts and trading activities that correspond to the calendar periods. Some purchases are made as souvenirs, gifts or symbolic items associated with special events.

In addition, school holidays also have a significant impact on seasonality. School holidays are usually associated with leisure time, which is accompanied by extensive

travel, excursions and various visits. These factors cause sharp fluctuations in seasonal demand in the tourism sector.

According to K. Dyson and D. Huppert, during low seasons, tourist destinations may be forced to lay off some workers due to low returns on invested resources. This, in turn, leads to a lack of career opportunities for people working in the tourism sector.[ 12 ]

In addition, during the peak season, companies are forced to hire new employees, which leads to increased training costs. This process creates additional losses for many companies and makes it difficult to maintain economic stability in the industry.

Seasonality should not lead to a decline in business activity in the tourism sector, which is considered very profitable. It is possible to smooth out fluctuations in seasonality and reduce its negative impact in various ways. Typically, each tourist destination seeks to reduce or eliminate the negative consequences of seasonality. However, it should be understood that other unexpected changes in tourism may also occur under the influence of seasonality.

**Table. Causes and effects of seasonality in tourism**

Factor	Impact description
Climate and weather	Climate change affects tourism activity
Holidays and vacations	Tourists prefer to travel during their vacations.
Regional infrastructure	Seasonal service available in some areas
Cultural and sporting events	Festivals and sports competitions shape seasonal tourism

Based on the factors and impacts listed in the table, ways to reduce seasonality include:

1. **Organizing off-season events** – Getz's research has highlighted the role of tourist events in reducing seasonality.[13]
2. **Developing climate-adapted tourism** – Butler's research suggests developing a climate-adapted tourism strategy. [3]
3. **Infrastructure development** – Koimov, in his research, has shown the importance of investing in infrastructure.[14]
4. **Diversification of tourism products** – Hall & Page, in their research, stated that increasing the variety of tourism products would help reduce seasonality.[6]

One way to combat seasonality is to extend the tourist season. Destination management may consider changing prices for accommodation and other services before or after the peak season. This method aims to attract and retain tourists through attractive offers, and price reductions play an important role in this process. The idea of extending the season may encourage tourists to plan trips during off-season periods.

Extending the seasonal approach does not require physical changes to the facility; it simply requires offering enough attractions and services to cater to customers during the off-season . Services may include providing transportation services from the port of entry to the facility and to destinations desired by customers.

According to M. Kozak and D. Martin, another way to combat seasonality is to offer different attractions before and after the peak season. Typically, important tourism features are available during a certain period of the year, which is called the “peak season”. During the high season, activities such as swimming in the sea, optimal air and water temperatures, and temporary wildlife viewing are the main factors that attract tourists.

However, such activities are not available in winter, so tourist destinations should offer other attractions for tourists during this period. Attractions offered during the off-season should be weather-resistant. These are activities or activities that take place indoors and can be enjoyed by tourists regardless of the type of weather.

According to M. Jaafar, A. Abdul-Aziz, R. Maideen, and S. Mohd, hotel managers active in the tourism industry may consider organizing festivals, exhibitions, or even competitions as an effective strategy to attract tourists during the off-season.

At the same time, the management of a tourist destination may choose to modernize the destination in order to effectively manage the off-season. Such a modernization process can sometimes include complete renovation of the destination, reconstruction requiring significant investments, as well as advertising and promotional activities. In rare cases, changes in legislation may begin to allow previously prohibited activities at a designated destination, creating new opportunities for the destination.

**CONCLUSION.** In general, seasonality is one of the major controversies and problems in the tourism and hospitality industry regarding travel and leisure. It is a real obstacle for hotels and tour operators around the world. However, some tourist destinations have successfully overcome the obstacles of seasonality and have been able to attract tourists and travelers to visit their properties throughout the year, without seasonal restrictions.

There are a number of effective strategies that can help to change the schedule of visits to tourist destinations. These tips focus on extending the peak season or offering new attractions during the off-season. In this regard, entrepreneurs in the tourism sector can consider policies to mitigate or correct the negative effects of seasonality. However, eliminating seasonality completely may not be practical.

Simply put, there are some types of economic activities associated with seasonality, which generate economic benefits during peak seasons, but these activities are not able to provide economic efficiency throughout the year. Any strategy to eliminate seasonality, while focusing on the demand side (i.e. tourists), also requires adjustments to the destination or facilities.

However, the main problem in the industry is not always seasonality. The problem can often be the lack of effective solutions that offer tailored and attractive attractions for tourists during peak and off-season periods.

To reduce seasonality in the tourism sector, measures should be taken to improve infrastructure, equalize tourist flows, develop climate-friendly tourist destinations, and change marketing strategies.

Research also shows that organizing sports and cultural events can help reduce seasonality. By developing tourism strategies in the right direction, it is possible to reduce the negative effects of seasonality and ensure sustainable tourism development.

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