

DIGITAL DETOX – STRATEGIC TOOL FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BULGARIA

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Abstract

The tourism industry has a significant importance on the economy and up until 2020, it generated huge cash flows. In the last years, we have been witnessing a massive implementation of technology solutions into tourism. Despite the amazing importance of digitalization into tourism that can be partially viewed as a boosting engine, the practice of overuse is disturbing and getting our attention. Since the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates the accelerated use of digital tools, numerous studies highlighted the various psychological challenges that come along with digitalization and the overload associated with it. The idea of digital detox can help us eliminate all the exceeding stress and improve our wellness and well-being levels. This topic is highly attractive to Bulgaria as a potential wellness destination, so this publication has the intention to explore in depths the concepts of digital detox and its effect on users, to presents the negative aspects of digitalization, to examine the current state of digitalization in Bulgaria and to try to position the country as a digital detox destination. The methodology of the research is based on systematic and holistic approaches, and it covers: analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, and descriptive methods. The main results of the article are related to the affirmation of the main thesis – identifying the potential of Bulgaria as a digital detox destination that can strengthen its positions on the global tourism market while boosting tourists' wellbeing.

Keywords: *digital detox; digitalization; development; repositioning;*

JEL Codes: *Z32, I31, Z33*

Introduction

The massive adoption and application of IT technologies is a prerequisite for a successful positioning in the tourism international market. Consumers are increasingly connected to the Internet and social media nowadays, which requires advanced connectivity provided to tourists. Innovative economic models and digital business are among the leading factors for the future development of tourism. The hurried lifestyle, the constant

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staring at the screens and monitors pushes the hotels to offer the opportunity of escaping from reality and the constant flood of information around us. In the past years we have seen unprecedented growth in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) economy that has fundamentally altered tourism. Technology innovations, in particular ICT, have changed tourism in many essential ways. The magnitude of these changes is not only evident in their degree of disruptiveness, upsetting long-established economic models, it is also unprecedented in terms of the speed at which it pushes forward tourism and hospitality innovations that influence the entire consumers' behaviour. ICTs predict their own complexities and conflicts, from "fear of missing out" to other fears such as mobile phone loss, digital dead zones, or low battery status, and conditions fluctuating from anxieties to depressions, all leading to technostress (Gossling, 2021, p. 849). Due to this reason the **object** of this article is the digital detox accommodations, and the **subject** of the research is how they can use this type of supply as a strategic advantage in their development. The set **aim** is to investigate the opportunities for Bulgaria to position itself as a destination escaping digitalization in the view of its wide-ranging entrance in our lives, especially after the Covid-19 crisis.

Negative aspects of digitalization

The **relevance and importance of the topic** is ascertained by the widespread negative aspects of digitalization that vast variety of users experience nowadays. Technology has become an integral part of our day to day life, thus we can say we live in a condition of digital revolution. Although digital developments offer many advantages to their users, researches show that the application of smart devices is swiftly turning towards an addiction, the so-called digital addiction, in every possible field. The daily use of technology creates pressure that can turn into stress and eventually lead to burnout syndrome (Haber, 2013). The main aim of technology is to improve and facilitate our lives, but the balance seems to be the key, as all escalations or deviations can cause difficulties. The excessive use of the Internet, smartphones, and all other gadgets have both **positive and negative impacts** on humans' life. Smartphones' use may become problematic if individuals constantly check and scroll the device for no reason. This behaviour can be considered as a sign of a new psychological disorder or fear of being deprived of smartphone and mobile Internet access (Ozdemir & Goktas, 2021, p. 21). Smartphone use can affect humans' wellbeing and is often related to depression and other clinical symptoms. Digital detox interventions have been suggested by the business and scientific society as a successful solution to reduce the negative impacts from smartphone use, improving well-being and/or social relationships (Radtke et al., 2021).

Over the years, the overuse of ICTs has been associated with technostress, anxiety, depression, sleeping disorders, and many other clinical symptoms. To reduce and even eliminate these problems, triggered by ICTs and digitalization overall, the concept of digital detox has emerged. Although digitalization can facilitate our daily life and tasks, it also may cause a feeling of being overloaded. From a psychological perspective, this perception can be defined as a state in which the informational input exceeds cognitive capacities (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Some authors also use the term information overload to describe the psychological consequences of being confronted with a massive and heterogeneous set of online news sources (Schmitt, Debbelt & Schneider, 2017), or being overloaded by functions and content on e-learning platforms (Chen, Pedersen & Murphy, 2011). Conversely, smartphone use can diminish well-being, a trend that has become extremely evident. For instance, analysis has shown that smartphone use affects health and well-being, performance, and even social interactions. Regarding health-related problems, studies have found that smartphone use is related to higher depression rates and anxiety, sleep difficulties, and musculoskeletal problems in case of smartphone overuse (Radtke et al., 2021). Furthermore, smartphone use also escalates in a negative way the stress and reduces the quality of interactions when individuals neglect the social face-to-face interactions and focus on their device instead. **Everything said so far, raise concerns about the smartphone overuse and hint on rebalancing and detox.** Digital detox emphasizes on the effort of raising awareness, alerts the excessive digital use and boost self-optimization process to reduce stress. In 2015 was conducted a study by Paw Research Center that explains in depths the disadvantages of new technologies. According to it, 89% of the participants stated that they use phones while socializing, and 82% stated that the phone usage harms their current social communication (Rainie & Zizkuhr, 2015). With the increased levels of virtual activities, the rate of using technological devices has naturally elevated.

Although the term digital detox has gained popularity in the recent years, until now it has been unclear whether its approaches are effective at promoting a healthy and conscious way of life in the digital era. A massive systematic literature review, conducted in 2021, aimed to answer this disputable question. In details, systematic searches of seven databases were carried out and all studies related to this topic were extracted. The results showed that the effects of digital detox interventions are controversial and varied across on health and well-being, social relationships, self-control, or performance aspects. *Thus, some studies found and evaluated the intervention effect as positive, whereas others found no impact or even negative consequences for well-being.* To summarize, all examined studies reported a significant drop in smartphone/app use with medium effect sizes during trial days or right after that compared to pre-intervention period (Radtke et al., 2021).

According to Dunican et al (2017) and Turel et al (2018) no significant effect was found on a cognitive and physical level. Nevertheless, Turel and Cavagnaro (2019) reported that participants who refrained from using Facebook platform for over a week had improved performance and needed less time to complete a survey or another task. In the similar vein, some studies examined self-regulation and found positive or no impact (Liao, 2019; Ko et al., 2015). Sleep was assessed in two other studies (Dunican et al., 2017; Liao, 2019) where both reported mixed findings on the topic. Continuing in this manner, the research shows all investigated fields, where digital detox can benefit on human's health such as: life satisfaction, affect, mood, mental and psychological well-being, boredom, anxiety, stress, depression, addiction, and social relationships. Generally, the review proves that the outcomes are diverse. Even though a few more studies revealed positive rather than negative consequences, bigger portion of all stated for no effect or mixed findings regarding the efficiency of digital detox approaches. All this led to difficulties in providing a clear answer or conclusion whether those timeouts are efficient or no. However, based on the same study, it is apparent and undeniable that digital detox interventions have positive effect on the following: decreasing the smartphone usage during the trial period and reducing the depression symptoms after a digital detox intervention (Radtke et al., 2021).

Considering all the listed reasons, our future forecast is that the number of accommodation businesses implementing digital detox as main strategy will increase, so does the demand, mainly because of the huge technostress that modern people experience. We expect a boom in digital detox sales, so the inventive entrepreneurs who have already implemented it as an option shall return a nice value. We expect to observe a growing number of digital detox locations, accommodations, and activities to flourish in the new marketplace.

Digital detox term

In general, digital detox is seen as a tool of awareness and self-regulation, helping to reduce stress. Both the public and scientific community use different terms to describe the break from electronic devices. Terms like abstinence, disconnection, detox, timeout, or unplugging are commonly used and we consider them all equivalent to digital detox (e.g., Brown & Kuss, 2020; Fioravanti et al., 2019). Etymologically, the word 'detox' refers to a process of minimizing or eliminating levels of hazardous substances. Even though, this term has lasted for more than ten years, it was first introduced in the Oxford Dictionary in 2013, which defines it as "a period during which a person refrains from using electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress or focus on social interaction in the physical world" (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). Likewise, the Technology Dictionary describes it as a period when an individual stops or suspends using

digital tools for a certain time to practise social activities and interactions. This allows the individual to relieve all negative consequences caused by the overuse of ICTs (Techopedia, n.d.a). The common assumption that lays at the bottom of this term and the urgent need for it is related to the current enormous use of ICT that can be harmful and lead to poor health. According to both Oxford (2013) and the Technology Dictionary (Techopedia, n.d.a), a digital detox is mainly an opportunity to improve mental well-being field by taking time to reduce one's dependence with ICTs and to enjoy the outdoor world. Digital detox is a growing phenomenon that offers a completely new opportunity to eliminate the information overburden and the negative effects that come along with it. The introduction of digital detox tourism and its positioning as a new alternative opportunity for relaxation, stress relief, and health improvement, some authors will define as a subcategory for health tourism (Smith & Puczko, 2015, p. 205-219).

In the US, the market for digital detox has been created in 2013, and this trend was transferred to Europe a bit later in 2015. *Several studies identified wellness resorts as the most suitable places for practicing digital detox tourism.* There are three different options of detox packages available on the tourist market:

- Those in which the individual is responsible for himself, meaning a person must restrain himself from using digital devices. Most often, the accommodation can provide digital devices upon request;
- Tech-free packages. Accommodation does not offer digital options, but it is possible to catch an ICT connection nearby;
- Completely offline packages in remote destinations with no connection to ICT.

In our view, digital detox is a form of wellness tourism, which helps individuals through offline approaches to have a break from the fast-paced world of technology, to spend time on their own, and to strengthen their state of health and well-being. Wellness tourism provides a great opportunity for tourists to choose what is the most suitable for them: a high-tech experience or an offline adventure. In both cases, individuals can achieve a state of complete health, pleasure, harmony, a sense of well-being, and inner peace. Various elements of wellness such as yoga, massages, and detox programs combine perfectly well with digital detox. For other wellness users, the same elements can be offered in a newer and more modern way, such as practicing yoga through SmartMat. A cutting-edge new technology, that combined with a mobile application, helps practitioners do the asanas correctly by applying audio and video control (Lomas, 2014). Even though, the idea of digital detox is to completely shut down all digital devices we are exposed to, we still can notice a partial disconnection trend. Wellness tourism is suitable for all individuals and

meets different needs, but the first and most important aim is to develop health awareness, responsibility, and even sustainability.

Behind the growing desire for detox experiences stand various factors such as **physical, psychological, social, technological and economic**. The excessive use and the followed addiction to digital devices can lead to immobility and reduced physical activity, respectively, to poor health. In addition, the constant and prolonged use of digital devices affects the quality of sleep. Moreover, according to a study by the American Optometric Association, individuals who spend more than 2 hours per day in front of a digital screen put their eyesight at risk and are more likely to develop dry eye syndrome (American Optometric Association, nda). Psychological factors linked to digital technologies are most often associated with addiction. One of the most encountered forms of digital addiction today is Internet dependence. It can cause various negative emotions such as anger, irritation, anxiety, depression, isolation, and others. As a sociological problem arising from digital dependence, we can identify problems in relationships (Donnelly, 2012). Furthermore, cases of online affairs and relationships leading to separation or divorce are becoming more frequent. The European Commission (EC) has sought to reduce the telecommunications charges for customers traveling abroad over a decade. Since 2007, roaming prices have been reduced by 90%, and since 2017 the same costs have been reduced to zero for people who periodically travel to the EU (European Commission, 2016). To a certain extent, this has led to extreme digital fatigue caused by the constant use of digital devices. Both psychological and sociological motivational factors of digital detox holidays include improving health and well-being, reconnecting with the inner self, living in the present, sustainability, mental well-being, balance, natural wellness, increasing self-awareness, face-to-face interactions, and engagement with the environment (Ozdemir & Goktas, 2021).

We can outline that various factor are affecting the choice of undertaking a digital detox vacation. According to a study from 2017, tourists have geographical expectations (nature surrounded and distant destinations), expectations for physical health (a spiritual place that allows them to practice or meditate), and technological factors such as technological fatigue that encourage this type of travel. Geographical location is important when booking a detox holiday. **Factors that are considered prominent when choosing a detox destination are climate, distance, environment, and offered activities**. Although respondents claim that geographical factors are not the main driver for digital detox, it plays a huge role when choosing a destination. After undertaking an offline trip, tourists report a desire to reconnect with the digital world again, mainly to catch up on missed business calls and/or notifying relatives that they have returned home. Other individuals reported no need for this, due to a fear of experiencing the feeling of digital saturation again. The motives

for undertaking a digital detox are limited to selective rejection or deliberate rejection (Hoying, 2017, p. 33).

Digital detox can be explained as a strategy for handling and controlling cognitive overload, besides this, it can work as a **sustainable tool** that raises health and nature awareness. Different researches point out positive effects of such strategies: A case in a point, self-control enhancement, switching off notifications, and powering off electronic devices at a reasonable time in the evening, seem to improve sleep quality and quantity and, thus, increase work productivity the following day (Lanaj, Johnson & Barnes, 2014). The use of digital detox apps (i.e., apps supporting users to monitor and limit their screen time) can also prevent the potential harmful effects of social networking space on well-being among young people (Schmuck, 2020). These findings indicate that timeout strategies and/or digital detox holidays may have an overall positive impact on health and wellness levels.

From what has been deducted so far, digital detox can be seen as a well-being booster that has a positive impact on tourists' health and wellness state, thus, implementing its tools can be beneficial for the destination. Currently one of the most discussable topics, especially after the Covid-19 outbreak, remains to be health. Helping tourists to achieve better health, wellness and well-being levels can have numerous effects on the destination and its image by attracting more tourists and even investments, generating cashflows, supplying the destination with innovative and heterogenous accommodation and packages, helping its sustainable development and gaining better popularity. On the other side, digital detox can be considered as a good health option for the tourists as it helps to release the technostress.

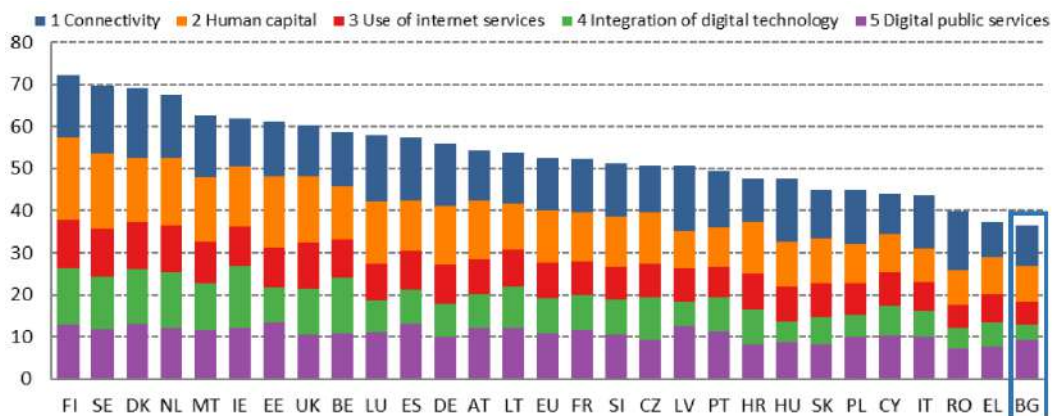
The current state of digitalization in Bulgaria

The first basic argument in support of the thesis of this article is the overall low level of digitalization in destination Bulgaria. The process of digital adoption in Bulgaria is a very topical field of interests, unfortunately, it goes sluggish, especially in the tourism sector. Recently, the Ministry of Economy advised for the coordination of a strategy preparation for the participation of Bulgaria in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). It aims to create the conditions for the modernization, automation, and competitive positioning of the Bulgarian economy in the medium to long term (2019 - 2027). One of its priorities is the stimulation of the use of artificial intelligence technologies in the industry, and particularly SMEs (European Commission, 2020, p. 15). Obviously, the initiative is taken, but the process is not instantaneous. Digital applications are becoming extremely complex. This means that Internet, large data, artificial intelligence, robotics, or 3D-pressure applications will not only change the industry but provide tourist services.

Many small and medium-sized companies face major challenges. Particularly in rural areas, there is a lack of the necessary infrastructure for the use of digital processes (Velikova, 2019, p. 253). The development of digital technologies and their penetration into all fields of economic and social life enforces a rethinking of the approach to exploiting their huge potential to increase the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy, increasing demand, supply, and efficiency of public services. The accelerated digital transformation is a prerequisite for an anticipated development of industry production, economic growth, and increased incomes.

The European Commission has been monitoring Member States' digital progress through the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) reports since 2014. The current COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important digital assets have become to our economies and how networks and connectivity, data, AI, and supercomputing as well as basic and advanced digital skills sustain our economies and societies by tracking the spread of the virus and accelerating the search for medications and vaccines (European Commission, 2020, p. 2). *Unfortunately, according to the above-mentioned reports, Bulgaria ranks 28th out of 28 EU countries in DESI for 2020. There is also a significant lagging behind the average European levels of digital connectivity, the use of digital skills online, the digitalization of enterprises, and digital public services.* The COVID-19 crisis has also reconfirmed the need of accelerated digital transformation in all economic and social sectors and proved that large-scale efforts for exploiting the potential of digital technologies are not only necessary but also mandatory (MTITIC Government, 2020, p. 3-4).

Figure no. 1 Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 ranking



Source: European Commission, (2020), Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 Bulgaria

Furthermore, according to a recent Siemens survey conducted in Bulgaria examined 76 companies in 33 different industries, including tourism, whereas it appears that, digitalization is by no mean an unknown concept for those companies. The results of the survey show that the Bulgarian companies have a clear vision of what benefits they can obtain from the introduction of digital technologies. The highest expectations and significance of digital solutions are in terms of optimized resources (89%), improved planning (89%), increased competitiveness (89%). Improved service (86%), improved quality (79%) and transparency of business processes (76%) are also among the main business motives on the road to digital transformation. The lowest expectations regarding the effects of digitalization are for increased profits and reduced environmental footprint, where a significant proportion of the respondents expect almost no impact (Siemens & German-Bulgarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, 2018, p. 1-20). Moreover, more than half of the respondents believe that the development and implementation of "smart" environments such as smart cities and smart factories are the most important trends in front of digital transformation. About 51% of the respondents emphasize on the importance of connectivity and the Internet of things. For 46% of the participants, the development and use of mobile applications that integrate business and production processes or optimize services, are also crucial. In the similar vein, digital transformation happens when the biggest portion of the companies accept and implement it. According to the aforementioned study, only 5% of the listed companies in Bulgaria have a long-term overall digital strategy, which exceeds the period of 10 years. Most of the companies are planning strategic digital actions in a short/medium term.

It can be concluded that the examined companies in Bulgaria are at different stages of digital implementation. Generally, those companies have already taken or are currently taking small steps in the right direction, but most of them are still in the initial or intermediate phase (Siemens & German-Bulgarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, 2018, p. 1-20).

We can summarize the following on the overall digitalization state of Bulgarian companies: investigations show that digitalization is a well-known concept but still at a **raw stage** due to various reasons such as lack of investments, large time frame, lack of necessary skills, etc. To a certain extent, this can be seen as a good opportunity for Bulgarian hoteliers, who do not initiate and use digital solutions yet.

The wide-range meaning and concept of wellness and detox tourism gives plenty of possibilities for a significant development of this type of tourist product throughout the entire territory of Bulgaria. Poor digitalization in the tourism sector of Bulgaria should be considered as a gap that need to be filled. Additionally, the current raw stage of certain aspects of digitalization and the competitive advantages of Bulgaria in terms of resources

can be pointed out as the main drivers to position the country as digital detox destination. Until we adopt the digitalization, the aim can be focused on the digital detox as Bulgaria has great potential for this new tourism niche.

Digital detox- strategic tool for tourism development in Bulgaria

Considering that digital detox is directed at improving individuals' well-being and overall health by eliminating the excessive technostress caused by digitalization, we can count it as a subcategory of health tourism and more specifically - the wellness tourism. It is a new tourism niche created as a response to technology fatigue all of us experience daily. Digital detox tourism has amazing strengths and opportunities as it is a market niche, customized directed, it combines well with different alternative forms of tourism, and last but not the least it is affordable, meaning it doesn't require huge investments. There are no official statistics on the share of wellness tourism in Bulgaria, both for shares in the total tourist product of the country and in GDP and as absolute values. According to experts, spa and wellness tourism has a share of 3% in Bulgaria's GDP by 2016 and the potential is to double or triple that share within the coming years, depending on the market positioning (Explica-Global metrics, 2019, p. 50-150). One of the most important prerequisites for the development of digital detox tourism in Bulgaria is the extremely **favourable natural resources** of the country:

- the favourable temperate-continental climate determines the development of digital detox with the inclusion of many outdoor activities and complementing the tourist experience with sports and other activities;
- The beautiful and diverse nature provides almost unlimited opportunities for physical activity and places for solitude and recovery from stress;
- Digitalization in our country is at a relatively early stage, so tourists who have chosen this type of tourism will find it easier to stay away from digital devices (Explica-Global metrics, 2019, p. 50-150).

The availability of natural resources is of fundamental importance for the wellness and detox tourism development in the country. Among the most valuable natural resources of Bulgaria are the diversity and abundance of:

- Hydrothermal mineral water;
- Healing mud;
- Sea access;
- Marine and mountain climate;
- Beautiful nature;
- Existence of over 1,600 springs, over 600 which are mineral, located mainly at the foot of the mountains;

- Dozens of lagoons and deposits of healing mud;
- Sources of peat with therapeutic effects (Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

The **hydromineral resources** of Bulgaria are numerous, diverse and unique. During the last years the usable capacity of the mineral springs has increased to 4500 l/s or 389 million l/day (24 hours). Other arguments in support of Bulgaria's competitiveness in terms of its positioning as a leading wellness and detox destination are:

- Bulgaria is ranked second in Europe after Iceland and is ahead of a number of other countries with proven traditions in balneology, in terms of mineral water resources;
- In Bulgaria over 600 sources of mineral water have been discovered and studied, grouped in nearly 240 deposits, with 1600 springs with a total flow rate of 4900 l/s, but a significantly small part of them are used for balneotherapy (only 0.4%);
- The mineral recourses have temperature of 10°C - 103°C and proven healing properties;
- In Bulgaria there are almost all types of mineral waters that are found in the world (Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

Bulgaria and its extremely favorable natural resources, give us the flexibility to purposefully develop digital detox interventions, and why not to combine it with wellness tourism. The **superstructure** is also a strong side of ours, as most of the accommodation and other facilities have been built relatively recently and as private properties, therefore owners have a clear interest in maintaining their good condition and invest in them regularly. The wide scope of digital detox allows us to position many profitable and suitable marketing combinations with traditional summer and winter tourism, as well as specialized or alternative forms of tourism. In Bulgaria, there is a clear system for accommodation categorization, which ensure the tourist they will receive a certain sustainable service quality (Explica-Global metrics, 2019, p. 100). Another strength of Bulgaria is the price-quality ratio, which is relatively high. *From what have been exposed so far, we can conclude that Bulgaria has many competitive advantages as a wellness and detox destination in terms of its available resources. In defense of the thesis that Bulgaria is a potential wellness and detox destination, and in addition to the mentioned resources of the country, we should consider other competitive advantages of ours, namely - traditions in healthcare and spa treatments, strategic geographical location, and macroeconomic stability. Bulgaria is a favorable country for development and investments in the field of all subsectors of health tourism due to the richness of its natural, anthropogenic, and human resources in the field, as well as due to the presence of economic, political, and geographical advantages. Finally, the competitive advantages of Bulgaria, specifically related to its tourism policy in the specialized types of tourism, must be considered, as well* (Ianeva & Basmadzhieva, 2021). To further analyse the opportunities for Bulgaria to

develop digital detox tourism we decided to use the SWOT analysis technology presented in Table 1.

Table no. 1 - SWOT analysis of Bulgaria as digital detox destination

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| Rich and diverse natural resources | Poor infrastructure |
| Relatively high quality of the tourist superstructure | Not utilizing the full capacity of the given resources |
| Price competitiveness of the destination | Poor destination management on a national, regional level and international level |
| Good geographic location | Lack of enough financial investments for small and medium tourism enterprises |
| Favourable climate | Insufficient information flow and insufficient advertising |
| Huge variety of outdoor/indoor options for tourist | Lack of sufficient staff competence in the field |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| Availability of EU funding for tourism | High chance for global economic crisis post Covid-19 |
| Increased welfare in the country | Positioning of Bulgaria mostly as a budget sea destination |
| Opportunities in generating new ideas in the digital detox field due to the wide scope of the term | High competition with other remote destinations, suitable for digital detox tourism |
| Relatively raw stage of digitalization in the tourism industry that in this case can be seen as an opportunity to develop new sustainable forms of tourism such as digital detox | Lack of sufficient advertising activity and active promotion of Bulgaria as a detox destination |
| | Poor advertising on social media |
| | Homogenous supply, devoid of modern ideas |

Source: Author

Digital detox alongside with wellness tourism must be a priority for Bulgarian tourism. Having a great variety of natural, anthropogenic, and material resources and amazing conditions reveals the potential country has. Digital detox as a new alternative form of tourism is extremely affordable, not requiring huge investments and satisfying the latest needs of travellers. Bulgaria is a country with great potential that can be utilized to a maximum level only with targeted advertising. Combining different marketing strategies,

we can succeed in repositioning Bulgaria on the world tourist market as a key detox and wellness destination. To prosper, we must pay special attention to the human resources hired in the tourism field, the current condition of the superstructure and infrastructure, and finally to attack with properly constructed targeted advertising.

To sum up, to position Bulgaria efficiently as a digital detox destination on the tourism market it is essential solving certain problems, mainly related to **proper and active advertising**. Another pending problem is the lack of qualified staff, which gives rise in a homogeneous supply, devoid of sufficient imagination and new ideas. In order to solve the listed problems, first of all, Bulgaria must invest in human resources and take small steps towards changing its current image, which in any case doesn't exhaust country's full potential.

Conclusion

In the article the thesis and the aims are proved, namely – investigating and identifying the potential of Bulgaria to position itself as a digital detox destination that can strengthen its positions on the global tourism market. The main results of the article are related to the prove of the main thesis, which can be summarized in the following way:

1. The negative aspects of digitalization that lead to technostress are exposed which cause the emergence of digital detox interventions and structure this new tourism niche;

2. The current state of digitalization in the country is examined and the analysis shows that Bulgaria is still at a raw stage of implementing digital tools. As the global trends keep focusing more and more on the digitalization, which have both negative and positive impacts on the tourists, we believe Bulgaria will benefit the most if in the current situation it develops digital detox interventions;

3. After a detailed analysis made in the article it can be concluded that Bulgaria has many competitive advantages as a destination for wellness and detox tourism in terms of its resources;

4. Bulgaria is a favorable country for sustainable development and investment in the detox tourism field due to the richness of natural, anthropogenic, and human resources, as well as the presence of economic, political and geographical advantages in the area.

In conclusion, we could note that Bulgaria has all the prerequisites to reposition itself from a budget sea destination to a major detox one. To reach this, the country must sort certain pending issues in front of the sector and must pay special attention to the marketing efficiency, brand and image of Bulgaria.

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