

APPROACH AT A REGIONAL LEVEL TO THE TOURISM SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Tourism is a sector of high importance, particularly considering its contribution to employment. The tourism industry is usually one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy, the services of this area involve several activities with contributions to other important economic segments. Tourism is an economic activity that has impacted the contemporary age, its spectacular dynamics representing a distinguishing feature, especially in the economic and social context of the last few decades. The purpose of this work highlights the assessment of tourism services development particularity in the Bukovina region, Suceava County. The research of the tourism services organization corresponds to a strong axis composed of the commercial policy and strategies developed by any enterprise. This research tends to mobilize many means and energies within tourism industry as the direct contact with the clientele, the services intangibility and customization are the major characteristics of this field.

Key words: *tourism services, management, strategy*

JEL Classification: Z3

1. Introduction

Over the years, tourism has known a continuous and thorough diversification thus becoming the branch of the economy that has gained the fastest economic growth around the world. Modern tourism is closely connected to a continuous development and comprises an increasing number of destinations. These dynamics have transformed tourism into a key-factor for the global socio-economic progress. The development and diversification of travel services are debated and supported by many specialists studying modern tourism, all the while being considered key elements for the capitalization of tourism potential. The need to develop and diversify travel services is also evident in the Bukovina area of Suceava County, the area selected for this study, primarily for the valuable tourist potential it has.

In agreement with a reputable specialist in the field, we believe that a country's economy consists of three major activity sectors: the primary sector, determined by agriculture and farming products production; the secondary sector, represented by industry with all its subcomponents and the tertiary sector, respectively services. Taken as a whole, the tourism activity eases meeting tourists' needs during their stay, and, in addition, travel services are designed to optimize the tourist potential of the chosen destination, thus becoming a catalyst for the tourism development (Jaba, 2007, p. 120).

The competitive development of travel products leads to the creation of new jobs, both directly - in the sphere of travel services creation and distribution - and indirectly, by the multiplier effect on related branches.

The launch of travel products will lead to special effects on the relations to be attained between hosts and tourists, relationships between the extent to which values are appreciated and standard of living between participants in the travel act, communication, exchanges of ideas, etc. The novelty within a competently designed travel product, the existing conditions, the culture of people and places, doubled by hospitality, interest, motivation and aspiration to a better future, will advocate the development of a truly sustainable tourism.

The localities where the subsequently created travel product will be unfolded will become spaces where all elements of the local sustainable development will be assembled. The interest to improve the infrastructure and support the spiritual life of the localities envisaged,

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will arise. This will generate the support for improving public services. We consider genuine the idea that the travel product exerts a complex influence on the general level of economic development of the localities considered (Stanciulescu, 2014, p. 56).

Therefore, the strategic objectives of ensuring and protecting the human factor, technical facilities and heritage conservation will be achieved and classified into three strands of action as follows:

- Stopping the migration of the population from certain disadvantaged environments (e.g. rural areas) and stimulating the return, at least partially, of the population to these zones.
- Ensuring the living and civilization conditions in those environments by stimulating the stability of the active population in these environments.
- Preserving and protecting the natural environment – element of attraction for the indigenous and foreign population.

By launching the travel product on the international market rural, mountain, ecological and cultural tourism will become a cultural-educational ambassador, a constant and inexpensive tool.

2. Study in specialty literature

In sustainable development, tourism plays an essential role in highly contributing to Romania's economic relaunching and revamping. The development and diversification of travel services are debated and supported by many specialists studying modern tourism, being considered key elements for the capitalization of tourism potential. A high-quality service is a way to ensure profitability as it endorses greater price stability under conditions of increasing competition, while a quality service is also a satisfaction as it constitutes the basis to build a culture in that firm (Minciu, 2014, p. 412). Another aspect to stress is that tourism, as phenomenon, but also as activity, is unique, precisely through that dependency that it manifests towards natural, social or cultural environment, but also towards transport. Due to this dependency, tourism has an undeniable interest in ensuring their sustainability.

For a long time the idea that the rail transport means the most exhaustive and best organized transportation system has been approved, yet through the explosive growth of the auto and air transport, things have been reconsidered without doubting the significance of the railways within the overall transport system. This significance imposes the present and future necessity to modernize the rail transport in order to handle the pressure of competition before the other transport means (Daneci-Patrau, 2013, p. 64).

From studying the positive economic effect of tourism on economic development at national, regional or local level we can infer that it leads to the idea that there are at least three important multiplier effects: the multiplier effect of tourism, the multiplier effect of travel investments and the multiplier effect of foreign trade (Cristureanu, 2018, p. 178).

Being a particular area of economic activities, travel services present a number of traits which, although characterize the tertiary sector in general, have specific peculiarities, mainly determined by the content of the offer and tourism demand, the forms in which materializes the meeting between the demand and offer. Thus, the consumption of travel services is characterized by a large gamut of peculiarities (specific traits) which separates it from the consumption of goods and defines its contents (Rezeanu, 2017, p. 153).

The research of the organization of tourism services corresponds to a strong axis of policy and commercial strategies developed by any enterprise. This research tends to mobilize many means and energies within tourism industry as the direct contact with the clientele, the services intangibility and customization are the major characteristics of this field. Of all the studies analyzed it results that Romania has considerable natural resources, with great potential for tourism development.

3. Analysis of the travel services specific to Bukovina region in Suceava County

Romania through the variety of natural elements, through multiple evidences of a millennial history and cultures, as well as the buildings acquired over the years, boasts a rich touristic potential capitalized to a certain extent. The exceptional touristic potential of Bukovina is marked by two essential components: the natural component, represented by spectacular landscapes, the diverse forms of relief, favorable climatic conditions, namely the anthropic component, embodied by the remnants of civilizations that prospered in this territory (Glavan, 2016, p. 217). Tourism is a sector with high potential to become a key factor in the future years which would considerably contribute to the socio-economic development of Bukovina, but also of all destinations with potential tourism in Romania. Bukovina is a region that was always shown interest by international tourists and within the country, thus being an important tourist destination in the list of travel destinations offered by Romania, being among the first 4 at national level. We will continue to present Bukovina's political, economic, social and technological environments, which support or prevent the provision and development of travel services in Suceava County.

The political environment within Romania brings to some extent an imbalance at economic level because the global economic crisis forces drastic reductions in various branches. This situation prevents attracting foreign investors in the tourism field. Suceava County is part of the north-eastern region of Romania and the most poorly developed region in Romania. Suceava County ranks third, after Iasi and Bacau counties as in number of SMEs, with 18.8% of the total number in the region.

The economic environment of Suceava County entirely reflects the specifics of the said area for the following activity sectors: extractive industry, glass industry is developed especially in the area of Suceava County, the metal manufacturing industry, plastics and chemicals industry, and others.

Table no.1. Employees in the three sectors of the economy in Suceava County

	2017	2018											
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total county	92208	93765	94058	94617	95021	95512	95690	95822	95851	95902	95901	95914	95712
Agriculture, hunting and associated services, forestry and fishing	2685	2776	2784	2801	2813	2828	2833	2837	2838	2839	2839	2839	2833
Industry and constructions	27665	30114	30208	30387	30517	30675	30732	30774	30783	30800	30800	30804	30739
Services	61858	60875	61066	61429	61691	62009	62125	62211	62230	62263	62262	62271	62140

Source: <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/arhivabuljud.ro.do>

If we analyze this table, we can mention that most employees operate in the sphere of services, therefore we can conclude that tourism in this region holds a particularly important role. The social environment influences the travel services offered at the county level. Thus, a significant share of the young population, but also of the older more experienced people, can help create new strategies to develop this sector.

The technological environment influences quite a lot the travel services delivery as the current consumers' requirements require proper endowment with all technical equipment to satisfy their needs and desires. The lands of Bukovina encompass pages of history, ancient traditions and customs, unique monuments and specific crafts. The area is sprinkled all over its vastness with churches and monasteries renowned for exterior and interior paintings, unique edifices in the world (they received in 1975 the "Golden Apple" award offered by the International Union of Travel Journalists and Writers).

In this region with major tourist potential there are many forms of tourism that can be practiced due to the monuments it owns: cultural, religious, balneal, hunting and fishing tourism, etc. Villages sprung from ancient times have preserved and still boast traditional aspects and manifestations, ancient data and customs, valuable ethnic and folk elements, etc., in which activities specific to rural tourism and ecological tourism are carried out. Calendar rich in traditional fairs and folk manifestations throughout the year. Between 10th and 12th August, at the Suceava Citadel (“Cetatea de Scaun a Sucevei”), the “Stefan cel Mare” festival of medieval art is organized; preservation of old elements of rural civilization and their transposition into everyday life.

Table no. 2. Overnight stayings in the main tourist structures with accommodation functionality

Types of travel accommodations	2017	2018											
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total county	48345	25831	22593	25389	33227	54446	62109	78056	83569	58088	51955	43127	43865
Out of which:													
Hotels	27061	13366	15331	16177	18242	35551	38729	44131	48687	38113	37725	28774	22356
Motels	475	346	287	438	407	1378	1363	1381	488	379	253	310	305
Touristic villas	1924	1068	774	670	915	1391	1396	1444	2108	1429	1038	1157	1884
Log cabins	981	570	129	309	401	872	1083	1539	1396	889	349	341	618
Bed and breakfast	5512	3875	2788	3809	5088	4760	5659	7660	8563	6120	4884	4367	6294
Farmhouses	10765	4801	2485	2981	6294	6991	9462	15910	18868	8644	6454	7136	10686

Source: <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/arhivabuljud.ro.do>

Due to this data we can indicate that most tourists who visited Suceava County opted to stay in hotels, which is proof that the services they provide are at the level of consumer expectations and present an advantage compared to other accommodation structures.

Table no. 3. Indices of net accommodation use (%)

	2017	2018											
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total county	20.9	13.2	13.7	14.5	16.8	25.0	26.6	30.1	32.4	25.3	24.2	22.3	18.5

Source: <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/arhivabuljud.ro.do>

If we analyze these indices, we can mention that the highest accommodation occupancy is recorded during the year 2018 in August, when many people enjoy holidays or short vacations, thus opting to get some rest in Suceava, and towards the end of the year we notice a continuous decline along with the cold period of the year. By concluding, we can confidently state that the travel units do provide good quality services to their customers and thus they opt for a holiday in Romania, as they observe a continuous increase in terms of quality and services delivery by qualified personnel.

The material basis is one component of the travel product, yet at the same time the specific material travel basis is not the only one to contribute to tourism circulation insurance, being endorsed by the general technical infrastructure of Bukovina. In this area tourism can be developed satisfactorily only under the assumption that there are enough possibilities for the accommodation, nutrition and recreation of visitors, yet within the material basis of tourism, accommodation (accommodation capacity) is the main element for the quality services rendering. In the practice of modern tourism, the accommodation service is the product of the hotel industry, which encompasses all the activities carried out within the accommodation space, those services offered to the tourists during and in connection with their stay in hotels.

In recent decades, the international hotel activity has increasingly approached the characteristics of a genuine industry.

The hotel industry envisaging the Suceava County brings together in a coherent system all the processes carried out within the accommodation units caused by the traveler's greeting, stay and departure. For this reason, there is a complex and in-depth interdependence relationship between the travel services of this area and travel activity. On the one hand, the development of tourism is determined by the existence of accommodation spaces, their degree of equipment, the variety and quality of the services offered, and on the other hand, the hospitality industry develops quantitatively-qualitatively as a result of travel movement. Thus, the hospitality industry allows superior exploitation of tourist heritage, by attracting in the touristic circuit of Bukovina; It creates the conditions for an increasing number of the population to benefit from the possibilities of enjoying time in such a tourist destination.

The level of hotel services development is also the measure of satisfying the need for tourism of the population visiting Bukovina. Instead, monetary income increase, urbanization, free-time growth caused mutations in consumer behavior, in the sense of intensifying their travel demand.

The increase in the number of tourists and their requirements for services provided in this area lead to increased accommodation capacity and modernization under the emergence of complex hotel units and diversification of the range of services offered. The modernized hotel services in the Bukovina area are characterized by the existence of a tendency to integrate the accommodation and food services rendering. At the same time, in many accommodation structures of Suceava county cultural-artistic and recreational activities, information services, intermediation and commercial services are organized for tourists.

If we analyze the services specific to Bukovina region, but more precisely those in the Suceava county we realize that in time we have witnessed a considerable development of tourist services, for example:

- *Cultural-artistic and recreational services* involving adequate facilities (swimming pools, saunas, gyms, sports fields, conditions for the organization of folklore festivals, meetings, performances, exhibitions, etc.) and a specific staff to ensure the training and/or supervision of tourists.

- *Information services* that facilitate the information on the travel offer, the possibilities to fully enjoy vacations.

- *Intermediation services* have in view facilitating the communication between tourists and specialized service providers: rental of personal items for leisure, reservation of seats in the means of transport or other accommodation units, etc.

- *Commercial services* are represented by the sale of necessary products during the stay.

Addressed in the light of its position as travel product component, namely of the basic services, the public food that exists in the said county determines the quality of the travel services as a whole, influencing the content and attractiveness of the travel offer with major implications over the size and orientation of tourist flows.

In this respect, the public catering services that exist on the territory of Suceava county have the following specific traits:

- Are present at all key times of tourism consumption.
- There is an entertainment of this type of services.
- The public food service is customized.
- Corresponds equally to the requirements of indigenous and foreign tourists.

Entrepreneurs in the field of public catering services of this region are constantly preoccupied about the quantitative-qualitative development of the services offered in order to meet the food needs of both resident population and tourists. From a quantitative perspective, emphasis is placed on the significant increase in the volume of activity and from a qualitative

angle it focuses on constantly adapting to demand requirements by modernizing and perfecting production, improving and diversification of marketing and serving forms.

The food services or gastronomic offer is of importance and characterizes the Bukovina area to a large extent, through its cuisine of a particular specific that has the role of attracting many customers.

In the balneal resorts, in the proximity of the accommodation, treatment complexes were developed. For example, Vatra Dornei, is a year-round resort in Suceava County that provides consumers with different treatment services for various diseases, and accommodation can be done in various establishments such as: hotels, bed and breakfast, log-cabins etc.

In the region we used as a reference to carry out the study on the tourism services development is characterized both by the development of the means of accommodation and treatment at the level required by the balneal tourism market, as well as the diversification of the travel services in each balneal resort, while also improving the recreation and relaxation possibilities. A scientifically substantiated strategy for diversifying travel services in balneal resorts takes into account the different clientele categories that favor the market segments to which these services are addressed.

The tourist transport service of the region also has a very important role in what concerns travel services rendering, as it eases the access to the Suceava county. If we refer to the types of transport available within the area, transport takes place by means of buses and van-taxis, which are quite well developed both in terms of travel conditions, tariffs and timeframe.

The accommodation service is a complex activity arising from the exploitation of accommodation capacities and constitutes a group of benefits offered to the tourist during his stay in the accommodation units. We can mention that in the Bukovina region the quality of tourist services is in line with the technical-material accommodation basis and the appropriate facilities. Accommodation structures: hotels, bed and breakfast, chalets, etc. have a qualified staff who can organize their work at the highest level in their respective units.

SWOT analysis for the travel services in Bucovina is presented in table 4.

Table no.4. SWOT analysis for travel services in Bukovina

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image of the area concerned in terms of tourism has improved both externally and internally • The number of foreign tourists visiting Bucovina has grown quite a lot • Nature, climate, relief are of importance to develop an environmentally friendly tourism • Special natural framework • Rich cultural potential • Accommodation services are increasingly pleasing to tourists • Affordable prices in accordance with the quality of services rendered • Service providers are very kind and generous • The potential of Bukovina is highly appreciated nationally and internationally • Cultural offer is diversified • Staff in the accommodation units present in the Suceava's tourism are characterized by kindness and high professional training • Romanian gastronomy often exceeds consumers' expectations • The quality of the food and drink is high, which are usually bio • The activity of the tour operators is appreciated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Not all the components proposed in the tourist offer are found at the destination • The quality-price ratio is not always fair • Lack of shops that would attract tourists • Tourist signaling is weak • Low number of tourist information points • Lack of events to highlight the traditions and customs of the area • Landscaping should be improved • Not all hotels respect the standards displayed • There are few 3-star hotels • Accommodation occupancy rates are reduced (approx. 30%) • Time to service tourists often exceeds the time limits • Romanian wines are not very well known • Transport and public services are often poor except those provided by travel agencies • Lack of signs and appropriate signaling • Insufficient materials to promote travel services • Price instability

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to finance tourism through public funds • Planning of the authorities in terms of tourism development • Implementation of local authorities' projects for the area infrastructure • Suceava is perceived as a safe destination • Foreign tour operators want to include in their tourist packages offers for Bucovina as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of travel offers proposed by other countries (Bulgaria) • Skepticism of international tourists regarding Romania • Continuation of the migration process of qualified travel personnel • Depopulation of localities • Many people choose to adapt to the urban life.

Source: Author

4. Proposed strategies to increase the quality of travel services

For the travel services development strategy in Suceava county, the concept of sustainable tourism development should be implemented in order for this region to manifest an economic balance. The reconstruction of the natural framework would be a stage in the development of the county, it would capitalize on the consumers' requirements meeting, but also ensure harmonious development.

Travel agencies must pay special attention to professionally presenting and launching offers that are attractive and well received by foreign tourists. These services will be transposed into practice and will certainly have the effect of increasing the number of visitors, especially foreigners, interested in getting to know this reserve and the potential of Romanian wines. The region of Bukovina must be promoted in fairs and exhibitions, where brochures and informative materials will be presented. Also, within these exhibits the national travel agencies and companies will actively promote Romanian wines abroad, organizing activities that are appreciated by foreign tourists.

The "Rural holidays" programme is considering the development of rural tourism in order to attract visitors from the country, in particular, but also from abroad. The programmes that have envisaged services in the rural area have diversified, with particular attention to youth programmes. As a result of this programme, the percentage of rural or agro-industrial tourism in the last three years has known an increased dynamic. Travel services in these areas and within this programme have benefited from advantageous prices and guides that have presented a number of aspects specific to the Romanian rural area.

As a result of this study, we propose a series of measures to increase the quality of tourism services and the economic and social impact of traveling:

- Increasing the level of training of staff working in tourism, especially of seasonal staff by organizing intensive courses, either at tourist establishments or the headquarters of county councils.
- Arranging in spaces intended for tourist movement recreation and camping facilities (parking lots, dining places, waste storage, smoking areas, etc.) with the purpose of preserving clean green spaces.
- For a clearer view of the tourism effects, faster communication of data and information on indicators reflecting tourism activity the creation of a national database encompassing all the indicators required to achieve Tourism satellite account is proposed, both in the CMR-OMT version and in the WTTC/OE version. In this respect it is necessary to establish the institution certified for the collection of data, as well as the information sources.
- Reducing taxation and bureaucracy in the tourism field and travel industry, as well as providing tax facilities in areas with unexploited tourism potential. Lower taxation will help increase private investment in tourism, increase the number of accommodations such as farm establishments, and increase revenues from travel activity.

5. Conclusions

Analyzing the travel services in the Bukovina region in Suceava County we notice a tendency for transport services development, better conditions and accommodation supply; the cultural services that are proposed to foreign tourists improved, quality workforce involved in tourism is growing. The travel services in Bukovina area have a great competitive advantage over other areas, thus Bukovina becomes one of the most visited areas in Romania and consumers remain satisfied because of services and staff qualification.

Further to documentation and personal interpretations and research, we have identified and analyzed the tourism activity indicators in general and the travel services quality indicators in particular. Considering the consumers' increasingly complex requirements, providers in the tourism industry have the task of fulfilling them with travel products satisfying their needs and expectations.

Several conclusions have been drawn from the analysis of tourism-specific characteristics:

- Quality characteristics can make the travel product more or less attractive, increasing or decreasing the tourist's degree of satisfaction.
- Tangible elements find applicability terrain in the travel and tourism industry, where the decision to accept a service or a travel product, consisting of a package of services, will be sensitive to the image that the potential purchaser forms over the quality, diversity and attractiveness of intangible components embedded in the suppliers' offer.
- Travel services imply increased consumption of resources, which increases costs and implicitly tariffs.
- Travel companies need to adapt to survive in the competitive fight, exercising their competitiveness with priority in the field of quality (i.e. preserving markets through quality).

The use of methodological treatments contained in this work, as well as methodological recommendations and practical proposals ensure the possibility to obtain complete, objective and reliable information about the real situation of the tourism in Romania, which allows timely monitoring of its potential. The use of the results obtained in this work will allow managers and specialists within the Romanian travel organizations to properly set an organization development strategy, organize an efficient tourism organizations' adapting process.

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