

## HISTORICAL MONUMENTS AS TOURIST'S ATTRACTIONS IN EUROPE

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### **Abstract**

*A total of 187 people were surveyed regarding the choice of destinations, sources of information about holidays, the time spent visiting historic sites and the type of favorite monuments in Europe. Statistical correlations have been made between the various answers to questions and the results were expressed in graphs and tables. By statistical methods it was established which are the historical monuments that are preferred by the tourists when they go on holidays and if there is a correlation between them and the determining factor in choosing the holiday destinations. From the subjects interviewed, 54.6% preferred to visit medieval castles when they go on holidays, 57.8% used the Internet as a principal source of information when planning holidays, and 56.7% indicated that the main factor in the choice of destinations is the presence of the historical monuments in the area that will be visited.*

**Key words:** *tourist attractions, historical monuments, cultural tourism, correlations.*

**JEL Classification:** *A12, L83*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is synonymous with amusement and entertainment, but it also a cultural act, a cognitive and participatory moment related to environmental context concerned (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000).

A tourist destination is composed of attractions, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Tourist attractions consist of all those elements of a “non-home” place that draw discretionary travelers away from their homes (Wearing, 2002). People will engage cultural tourism attraction at different level, depending on their own interests, level of knowledge, time availability, number and type of travel partners, and other factors (McKercher & Du Cross, 2003).

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Cultural tourism includes visiting historic or archaeological sites, being involved in community festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for handcrafted art (Besculides et al, 2002). The concept of cultural tourism tends to be applied to trips whenever cultural resources are visited regardless of initial motivation (Hughes, 1995). This kind of tourism is the segment of rapid growth (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999). In the last 20 years culture has been promoted and adapted for tourism and cultural heritage have become an important attraction

drawing large numbers of tourists (Bucurescu, 2015).

Since 1995, Silrberg (Silrberg, 1995), has listed some of factors that led to the development of cultural tourism:

- Higher levels of education, since all studies show that persons in higher education categories are more likely to be culturally oriented;
- The increasing numbers of women in our society in positions of power and authority, since women tend to be more culturally oriented than men;
- Less leisure time but a greater emphasis on quality time experiences which cultural facilities and events offer;
- Even greater health and appearance consciousness, with concerns for the effects of ultraviolet rays causing travelers to seek out more indoor cultural opportunities (Silrberg, 1995).

In considering the growth of cultural and heritage tourism, therefore, it is not sufficient to look only at the development of heritage attractions. The question of who consumes these attractions and the manner in which they are consumed will also have an important influence on the production, form and location of these attractions (Richards, 1996). Cultural events tourism offer interpersonal and social benefits, for example collective experiences of social interaction with family, friends and other visitors (Light, 1996). By this type of tourism, the visitors have the opportunity for doing exploration, discovery and learning (which are increasingly identified as benefits of visiting heritage sites); aesthetic appreciation of art and culture; and discovery of local

culture and traditions (Light, 1996).

Thus, the cultural tourism has the benefits on local communities in areas with historical monuments. Increasing numbers of visitors soon led to the development of commercial lodging and food service establishments primarily in private homes, as well as service facilities sponsored by nonprofit groups (Nolan, 1992).

The development of cultural tourism as a generator of income and a recognized form of tourism has emerged as an objective of both heritage institutions and tourist operators (Silrberg, 1995).

Gunn (Gunn, 1989), identified a seven stage process in the travel experience:

1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences.
2. Modification of those images by further information.
3. Decision to take a vacation trip.
4. Travel to the destination.
5. Participation at the destination.
6. Return travel.
7. New accumulation of images based on the experience.

Historical monuments are the most popular attractions in the cultural tourism. Cultural tourism in urban areas represents the most dynamic aspect of increasing European tourism (Bucurescu, 2015). Despite an uncertain economy, it has been predicted that European city tourism has an upward trend, with an average yearly growth rate of about 6%. The emerging destinations have a rather important contribution to the growth of tourism: according to European sources, in 2012 the inbound travel within Europe had a 3.8% of growth (after a strong growth of 7% in 2011, despite the negative economic climate), with exceptional growths in Iceland (+20%), Poland (+13%), Lithuania (+12%) and Romania (+10%). Romania is also forecasted to be one of the top emerging destinations expected to experience a rapid growth in tourism (WTTC, 2008) (Bucurescu, 2015).

The present work seeks to establish correlations between the early stages of a cultural travel and the middle stages, respectively documentary sources used, the election of a tourism destination and preferred types of historical monuments and the time visiting these monuments.

**III.EXPERIMENTAL**

A total of 187 people were surveyed a total regarding the choice of destinations, sources of information about holidays, the time spent visiting historic sites and the type of favorite monuments. Statistical correlations have been made between the various answers to questions and the results were expressed in graphs and tables.

For statistical analysis it was used specialized software called IBM SPSS Statistics, version 23. The significance coefficient was  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**IV.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

First it was determined the sources for choosing a holiday destination and whether there is a correlation between the preliminary documentation and the determining factor in choosing a tourist destination. The centralizing of results can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sources for choosing a holiday destination\* the determining factor in choosing the holiday destination.

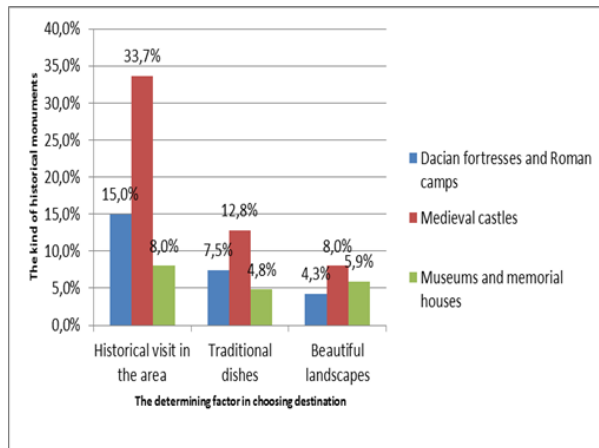
The determining factor in choosing destination \* Sources for choosing a holiday destination, Cross tabulation

Count		Sources for choosing a holiday destination			total
		internet	leaflets and travel magazines	referrals from friends and family	
The determining factor in choosing the holiday destination	Historical visit in the area	7	1	8	06
	Traditional dishes	1	0	0	7
	Beautiful landscapes	0	0	0	4
	Total	08	6	3	87

The data from Table 1 shows that 57.8% of the respondents used the Internet as a source of information when planning holidays, 23% of them relied on recommendations from family and friends and just 19.2% of the respondents took the info from leaflets and magazines from travel agencies.

Statistical analysis conducted shows that the value of probability of Pearson Chi-Square test -  $\chi^2$  (of the association) is  $p = 0.352 > \alpha = 0.05$ , from where it results that there is no association between the factor that determines the choice of holiday destinations and the way of information on the destination.

Regarding the main criteria in choosing the holiday destinations, the interviewed subjects had to choose between the presence of historical monuments in the area, the beautiful sceneries and the traditional cuisine. The centralization of results obtained can be seen in Figure 1.



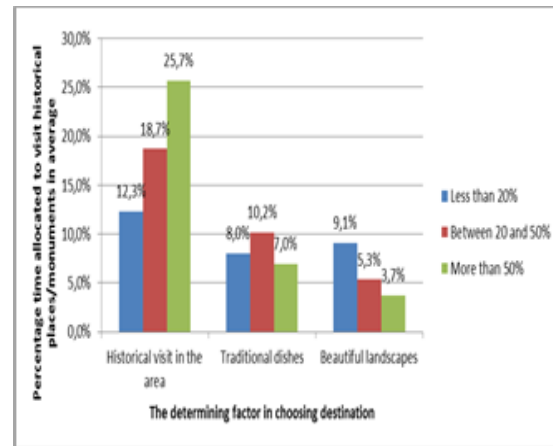
**Fig. 1.** The determining factor in choosing holiday destination \* the average percentage of time allocated to visit historical places/monuments. Cross tabulation.

The data presented in Fig. 1 shows that more than half of respondents (56.7%) indicated that the main factor in the choice of destinations is the presence of the historical monuments in the area, 25.1% of respondents are attracted to traditional foods and 18, 2% of them preferred to choose the destination holidays depending on the beautiful landscapes of the areas that will be visited.

By statistical methods it was established if there is any correlation between the determining factor in choosing the holiday destinations and the time spent visiting the historical monuments in the area. It was considered that the variable that represents the percentage of time spent visiting historical monuments is ordinal (below 20% <between 20-50% <50%). Then the Kendall's values of correlation coefficients,  $\tau_b$ ,  $\gamma$  (Gamma) and  $d_s$  (Somer's correlation coefficient) were calculated for ordinal variables and probabilities associated with these values. If the probabilities associated with these coefficients are  $p < \alpha = 0.05$ , it was admitted that there is a correlation between the analyzed variables.

Statistical analysis was carried out and the results showed that the Pearson's coefficient Chi-Square test of the association is  $\chi^2 = 13.573$ , and the probability associated with this value is  $p = 0.009 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Data presented showed that there is an association between the factor that determines the choice of holiday destinations and the percentage of time spent visiting the historic sites and that the most respondents considered historical monuments very important in choosing their holiday destinations.

Again, by statistical methods it was established which are the historical monuments that are preferred by the tourists when they go on holidays and if there is a correlation between them and the determining factor in choosing the holiday destinations. The centralization of results obtained can be seen in Figure 2.



**Fig. 2.** Correlation between types of historical monuments preferred to visit and the determining factor in choosing a holiday destination.

The graph presented in Fig. 2 shows that the most subjects interviewed (54.6%) preferred to visit medieval castles when they go on holidays, 26.7% of the respondents prefer Dacian Fortresses and Roman camps, and only 18.7% of the respondents preferred memorial houses and museums.

The statistical analysis shows that the probability value corresponding of the Pearson Chi Square test  $\chi^2$  (of the association) is  $p = 0.191 > \alpha = 0.0$ . It results that there is an association between the factor that determines the choice of holiday destinations and the historical monuments visited.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

By statistical methods it was established which are the historical monuments that are preferred by the tourists when they go on holidays and if there is a correlation between them and the determining factor in choosing the holiday destinations. The most subjects interviewed (54.6%) preferred to visit medieval castles when they go on holidays, 57.8% of the respondents used the Internet as a principal source of information when planning holidays, and more than half of respondents (56.7%) indicated that the main factor in the choice of destinations is the presence of the historical monuments in the area that will be visited.

This work can be considered an exploratory study that will be appreciated by local authorities as a valuable aid in the planning developmental tool for rural regions when designing regional programs, providing alternative sources of income.

Obtained data can be used by tour operators to design attractive programs and travel agencies to guide and promotional materials especially on the Internet.

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