

TOURIST DESTINATION - "BUCOVINA"

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Abstract

This paper identifies a number of possibilities for leisure in Bucovina, taking into account the tourist resources it possesses. In order to make the best use of these resources, it is necessary to develop and implement strategies that contribute to the creation of the image, the awareness of the tourist destination and the attraction of tourists throughout the year. From a methodological point of view, qualitative methods were used to obtain information on the elements of Bucovina tourism as well as the essential characteristics for choosing a new holiday destination. The information gathered during this work conveys to tourism decision-makers the idea that the new type of tourist chooses their future holiday on the basis of images, lived experiences (by themselves or other tourists), promises and emotional links between the visitor/tourist and the destination. Some studies show that Bucovina is a preferred destination for tourists even though they spend a relatively short time in the region. In order to retain them for more days, investments are needed to develop the area as a tourist destination on all levels.

Keywords: *tourism, tourist destination, elements of tourism, tourism resources, tourism strategy.*

JEL Classification: *L83, O13, P48, Q26, Z32.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Bucovina or Beech Country is the land where there are so many wonderful places defined by picturesque villages, green meadows, the fragrance of pine forests, isolated stables and flocks of sheep, traditional agriculture, folk costumes, customs and crafts, handicrafts, painted churches and monasteries (which have brought the fame of the place far and wide), the fortress of the chair, museums and memorial houses, monuments of nature, resorts of local interest (20 resorts of local interest in Bucovina)/national/international, mineral waters with therapeutic effect (40 mineral springs - their consumption has therapeutic effect), forest/floristic reserves, fauna, salt works, recreation/entertainment parks, ski slopes, ski lift, Tyrolean traverse, Ariniş - Gura Humorului hobbit park, year-round festivals and cultural events, accommodation and dining venues, Huţulca moccasin, Lucina and other herds, etc.

Therefore, Bucovina offers tourists the possibility to practice cultural tourism (museums, ethnographic, artistic), balneotherapeutic tourism, leisure tourism, transit tourism, agro-touristic pensions, religious tourism (monasteries of Voroneţ, Suceviţa, Moldoviţa, Humorului, Putna, Arbore, Slatina, Dragomirna, Pătrăuţi, etc.) and other tourist attractions. a.), sports tourism (mountaineering, paragliding, rafting, adventure park, airsoft, tourist

orientation, mountain biking, skiing, hunting, fishing, extreme sports, flying), ecological tourism (Şipote, Zamca) etc. All these together form the tourist product offered by Bucovina to the tourists who visit it.

Bucovina is in fact a vast open-air museum, in which a significant part of the hustle and bustle, dreams and endeavours of our ancestors is inscribed in stone, wood, colour and language. Tourism providers offer those interested access to the "Bucovina treasure", facilitating the exchange of opinions, ideas, thoughts and contributing to the intellectual formation of individuals. The locals also offer hospitality and pass on information about Bucovina customs and traditions.

In recent years tourism has seen a decline due primarily to the Covid 19 pandemic (ban on accommodation at more than 50% of tourist accommodation - during the pandemic period), increased unemployment among those in the tourism industry and beyond, the closure of many tourist establishments, the delay or cancellation of flights to various holiday destinations, the uncertainty of carrying out tourist activities in various tourist locations, etc.

At the same time, tourism is a factor of economic progress which also contributes to the development of society as a whole. From an economic point of view, tourism has many advantages (Bouaru C, 2006) (Figure 1):

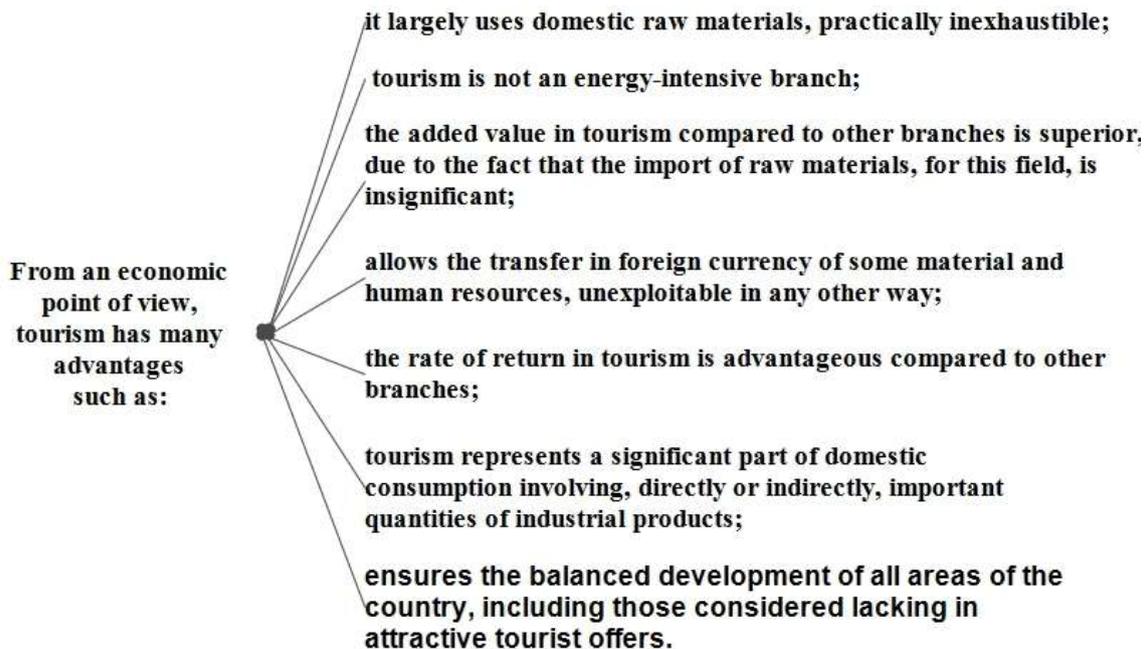


Figure 1. Advantages offered to tourists

We note that tourism is economically a consumer of goods and a beneficiary of services. The financial resources generated by the consumption of the goods necessary for tourism activities are distributed as follows: part goes to the direct generating factors in the tourism economy in the form of revenue, another part goes to the state budget in the form of taxes and duties, and another part is passed on to the various branches of the economy for previous services. We note that the effects of tourism on the economy can be: direct - increase in production, use of labour and indirect - investment in other sectors of activity (services, trade, etc.).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research is to highlight the tourism sources and resources of Bucovina and the ability of regional decision-makers to find and identify methods and techniques for the development of tourism in Bucovina.

Achieving this goal implies the assumption of specific objectives such as:

1. Identification of the characteristics of Bucovina tourism;
2. Identification of development strategies for Bucovina tourism.

For the realization of this work, we have studied specialized literature, informational materials of various specialized bodies of the public administration, organizations / associations in tourism, studies on the identification and exploitation of tourism potential of Bucovina. All this information has been useful in the preparation of this work.

The foundation of the research topic is based on a series of working hypotheses, the most representative of which are:

1. Promotion strategies are key elements for the development of Bucovina's tourism;
2. Promotion of Bucovina tourism is a priority need for Bucovina.

This study on tourism in Bucovina is a response to the need for information to flow from and to the tourism sector. Making the economy more efficient also means drawing up and implementing tourism development strategies, stimulating entrepreneurs who wish to invest in this sector, modernising equipment in tourist establishments, increasing the quality of tourist services, etc.

It should be mentioned that Suceava County is implementing projects for the development of tourism at regional level (Pilgrimage in Bucovina, Bucovina Time, Easter in Bucovina, Christmas in Bucovina, National Centre for Tourist Information and Promotion, Festival of traditional Bucovina dance and song, Greening and modernization of protected areas around monuments belonging to the national and UNESCO heritage - Monasteries Suceava, Bucovina 2000, Module for tourist promotion and information, etc (Consiliul Județean Suceava, 2022).

III. ELEMENTS OF BUCOVINA TOURISM

The defining elements of Bucovina's tourism are the natural wealth made up of the hunting diversity sheltered by the forest heritage (mountain area) which covers 53% of the county's area, the lowland area covers 30% of the county's area and the lowland area

represents 17% of the territory's area; the cultural heritage is made up of historical and architectural monuments, folk art, therapeutic factors, welcoming population, housewives and good keepers of centuries-old traditions.

It is also important for Bucovina's tourism that the following are to be found (Consiliul Județean Suceava, 2022).on the territory of Bucovina (Figure 2):

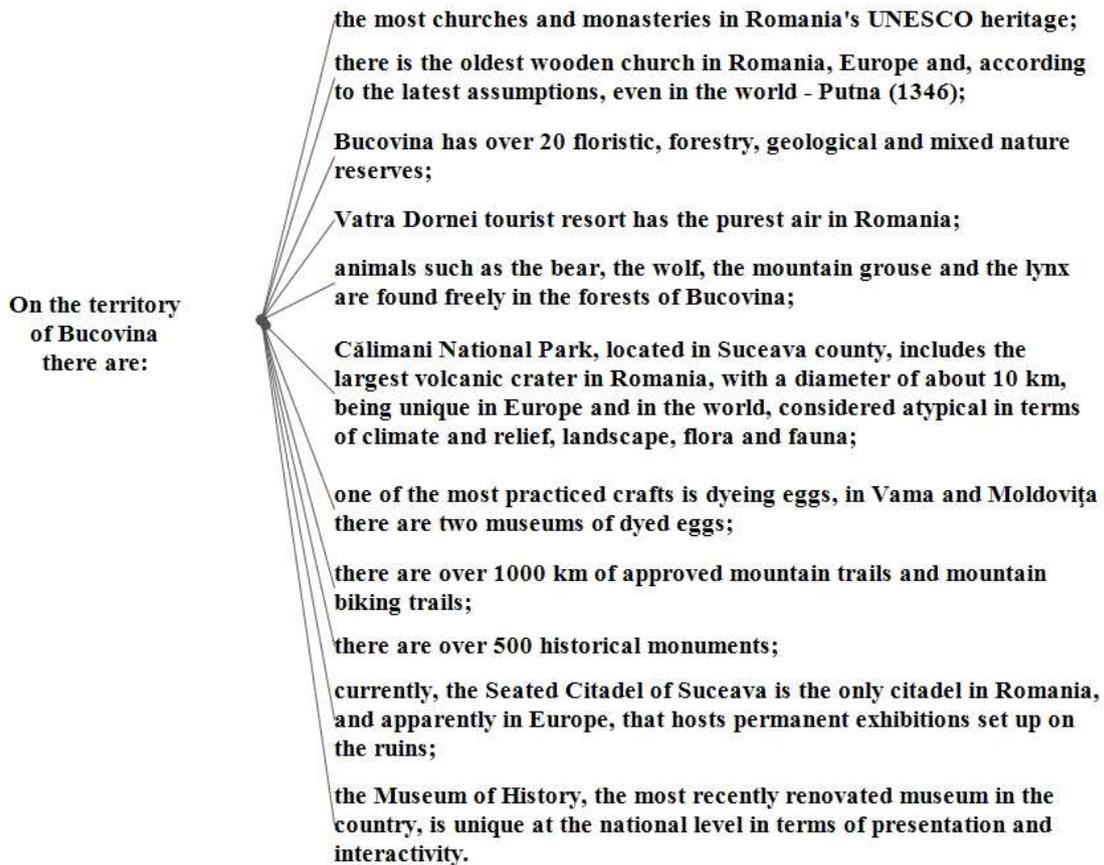


Figure no.2 - Tourism resources on the territory of Bucovina

Therefore, Bucovina maintains a permanent link between culture, faith, traditions and customs deeply rooted in people's souls. The simplicity and harmony of the living spaces, the natural materials used in construction, the traditional furniture offer the tourist the possibility to return to nature, to the place of origin.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM IN BUCOVINA

Success in Bucovina tourism also implies a proper management of the elements that help to make tourism a reality, as well as to build an image of the destination suitable for the target audience. We find in the image of the destination a strong correlation

between tourism promotion, available information sources and the quality of products and services available to tourists (Govers, R., et al. 2007).. These aspects are important because they either influence or affect the satisfaction and future behaviour intentions of tourists.

Therefore, the process of choosing a destination "for the next holiday" (I.Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. 1999) is influenced by the image of the destination (Gartner, W. C. 1994). We stress that the image of the tourist destination is based on the tourist attractions and activities, the satisfaction offered to tourists and the promise of a memorable holiday experience. Competition in tourism is based on strengthening the emotional link between the visitor and the destination. In this respect, Morgan and Pritchard (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. 2001) point out in their work that "the battle for customers in tomorrow's

tourism industry will be fought not for price, but for the minds and hearts of customers - in essence, brand (...) will be the key to success" (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. 2001). In other words, the attraction of tourists to certain destinations depends to a large extent on the tourist's previous experiences - characterised by a feeling of freedom, safety, relaxation, energy, etc., but also on specific features such as natural monuments, climate, infrastructure, art monuments, etc.,

The destination marketer must therefore consider both cognitive and affective skills. In doing so, he or she must determine the predominant forms of tourism and subsequently the appropriate tourism product or products. At the same time, it is necessary to identify, exploit and promote their competitive advantages in order to compete with the other tourism products on offer at national and global level.

For certain forms of tourism, the Romanian Government approved on 19.10.2022 investment projects in spa and balneal tourism, as well as in the ski area. These forms of tourism will receive funding from public funds for their modernization and rehabilitation works, as well as the construction of treatment bases with specific facilities in localities that are not certified as resorts, but which have natural therapeutic factors; modernization and expansion of ski areas (all the necessary infrastructure of the ski area), skating rink, toboggan run, as well as investments concerning the infrastructure for summer leisure, related to ski areas.

It should be mentioned that in Suceava county, in addition to the ongoing project "Skiing in Romania" (in the resort of Cămpulung), 9 other investment projects of local importance are planned, namely:

- ✓ the construction of an Aqua Park in the town of Gura Humorului;
- ✓ the creation of an artificial ski slope - summer skiing, tobogganing and tubing in the town of Gura Humorului;
- ✓ the development of an "Adventure" park in Sucevita commune;
- ✓ development of a ski slope in Sucevita commune;
- ✓ building an ice rink in Sucevita;
- ✓ a ski area in the Călimani Mountains, in the commune of Șaru Dornei;
- ✓ development of a ski area in the municipality of Vatra Dornei;
- ✓ increasing the activity of the Vatra Dornei tourist resort by optimising and increasing the artificial snow production network in the municipality of Vatra Dornei;
- ✓ increasing the quality of tourist services in the Dornelor Basin by setting up mountain rescue stations in Vatra Dornei municipality.

All these investments help to increase the attractiveness of tourism in Suceava county. It should also be taken into account that building the identity of Suceava County as a tourist destination focuses on the different forms of tourism that can be practised, on the specificity of the image perceived by the residents of the different tourist regions, by strangers (tourists or visitors, or temporary users), non-visitors (those who do not wish to visit the destination at least in the immediate future for emotional and rational reasons), returnees (those who keep certain images in their memory and then compare them with the existing image), professionals who observe, analyse and then create artistic or psychological images (Stăncioiu, A.-F., Părgaru, I., Mazilu, M. 2009)

Therefore, building the image of the tourist destination (with destination audit and marketing audit, with market segmentation and targeting, with SWOT analysis, with setting positioning objectives, with analysis of competitors - their tourism products, setting marketing objectives) goes through a necessary route for developing the strategy for tourism in Bucovina. This is necessary because the intention to sell a tourism product is influenced in most cases by the image of the destination.

In the same context, the studies that have been carried out in this direction should be taken into account. The studies used as tools the questionnaire applied on tourists (mainly online, but also printed versions), interviews with economic agents in tourism, interviews with representatives of public administration and locals, as well as reviews of various activities in Bucovina tourism.

The results of the surveys showed that the average length of stay (in the case of some holidays) is 2 to 5 nights (one of the papers) (Cozma A et al, 2021), but a significant percentage of respondents prefer to spend the weekend period (maximum 2 nights) in Bucovina.

This information was conveyed during meetings and debates between regional and central stakeholders involved in tourism and cultural activities, representatives of HORECA industry companies, local public administration, cultural institutions, academia, organisations and associations working in the field of tourism and cultural heritage throughout the region, as well as local, regional and national media.

We therefore believe that the development of tourism depends very much on the development and implementation of effective strategies. In this respect, the following aspects should be taken into account: (Table 1)

Table 1 - Necessary elements in the development of strategies for Bucovina tourism

Nr. crt.	Necessary elements in the development of strategies for Bucovina tourism:
1.	tourism resources are practically inexhaustible, and tourism represents one of the few sectors of the economy with real prospects for long-term development;
2.	the complex exploitation and valorization of tourist resources accompanied by an effective promotion on the foreign market, must be seen as a source of increasing the foreign exchange receipts of the state, thus contributing to balancing the balance of external payments;
3.	tourism represents a somewhat safe labor market and, practically, for the redistribution of people laid off from other heavily restructured economic sectors;
4.	tourism, through its multiplier effect, acts as a dynamizing element of the global economic system, generating a specific demand for goods and services that drives growth in the sphere their production, thus contributing to the diversification of the structure of the sectors of the national economy;
5.	the harmonious and somewhat uniform development of tourism throughout the territory contributes to economic and social growth and to the mitigation of imbalances between various areas, also constituting an important source of increasing the population's income;
6.	tourism represents a means of development of rural areas, by expanding the area of the specific offer and creating jobs in the rural environment other than the traditional ones, improving the living conditions and increasing the incomes of the local population;
7.	under the conditions of respecting and promoting the principles of sustainable development, tourism represents a means of protecting, preserving and capitalizing on the cultural, historical, folkloric and architectural potential of countries and regions;
8.	the adoption of a sustainable tourism development strategy of a region requires taking measures to protect the environment, the fundamental values of human existence (water, air, flora, fauna, ecosystems, etc.), tourism also having an ecological vocation;
9.	on a social level, tourism manifests itself as an active means of educating and raising the level of training and civilization of people, having a special role in the use of the free time of the population.

These elements confirm that the development of tourism in Bucovina must focus on the development, at an increasingly high level, of the available resources. The shaping of the strategy should also aim at enhancing all forms of tourism and the material base. Identifying a suitable basis for increasing tourism activity at regional level will bring cultural and socio-economic benefits to Suceava County as well as to the inhabitants of the area.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is one of the most important sectors of Suceava County's economy, a sector that is growing at local, national and international level. It should be noted that in recent years tourism has seen a decrease in the number of tourists due to the Covid 19 pandemic, military and political conflicts and energy and financial crises.

In this context, it is necessary to promote Bucovina's tourist destination as effectively as possible. Promotion together with coordination, investment and training of tourism 'actors' leads to sustainable economic development.

At the same time, we recommend the use not only of artistic images, but also "soul" images in which tourists can participate and "soul" images in which tourists can interact.

The development of Bucovina as a tourist destination also depends on the adoption of development strategies that help create an image of the tourist destination that can be promoted. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to create inter-destination links between localities with the same tourist destinations, as well as an integrated approach supported by the characteristic elements of the tourist destination.

The realisation of the tourist destination strategy for Bucovina inevitably contributes to the improvement of living conditions and to the valorisation of the existing natural resources in the region. We believe that the formulation of strategies responds to the need for the development of scenic places in the Bucovina tourist region and has an important role in promoting the coordinated development of tourism in the region.

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