



YOUNG CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS TOURISM PRODUCTS

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Abstract: *Tourism is considered to be an important branch of the Romanian economy. However, its contribution to the GDP is extremely low. Inbound tourism is reduced, the sole indicator which is constantly increasing being the number of Romanian tourists who travel abroad. We assume that a good way of increasing domestic tourism in Romania would be to get the young population practice various forms of tourism. Conducting a market survey in consumer behavior towards tourism products among pupils and students in Bucharest could offer us useful information which could give birth to a higher interest in educating young people for practicing tourism. This represents an investment which is able to produce multiplier effects in time, at both individual and social-economic levels.*

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1. Introduction

Tourism is an economic field which has multiple effects for the national economy, and which actively contributes to developing and modelling cultural and social components. The development of tourism destinations in Romania has an impact on the general economic growth, at both regional and local levels. As far as the individual is concerned, tourism helps the individual spend his/her time in a pleasant and useful manner, get more knowledge about the world and acquire positive experiences.

According to national statistics, the number of resident tourists who travel in Romania is fairly low, and information about the young population is missing. In the present study we aim at conducting a market survey about consumer behaviour towards tourism among the young population, taking into account the youth from universities and high-schools in Bucharest.

For the future adult it is crucial to practise the tourism ever since his/her childhood, when they practise it together with his/her parents and educators. School plays a very important part, both in education and in the increase of interest in knowing the world, in travelling and in building social relationships.

2. The part played by tourism in the development of young people

We live in a modern world which is continuously evolving, in which mobility, due to the informational and communication advances, puts time and space in a different perspective. It is well-known that the current promotion system regarding pupils, from a certain

school level to another, requires a lot of intellectual effort, on which the professional and educational itinerary of the graduates is based. "Tourism and sports activities, depending on their objective and duration, have multiple effects on the participants: they make the time pass pleasantly, they are instructive, they represent a means of acquiring knowledge about the world, as well as a means of complementary education; thanks to them, people regain their intellectual and physical capacity. By practising domestic tourism the natural beauties of our country are valued, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours – elements which contribute in a significant way to the formation of modern people - are thus created." (Nicolae R. Scarlat E. 2004. P.5)

By structuring the tourism activities the objectives are: to develop the civic spirit, to educate for self-control, to cultivate discipline, to stimulate teamwork, to take on different roles, to educate for the saving spirit and for environmental protection. Thematic programmes aim at making young people acquire specific skills and explore the various topics studied at school further, especially in the field of the arts and sports.

The tourism for youth has an educational role, as well as the role of contributing to the emotional balance of the young people. „From an emotional point of view, from the point of view of wellness, tourism may play a significant part in our transformational process, by balancing us and calming us down.” (Reisinger Y., 2013, p.59)

It is preferable that young people should benefit from tourism programmes specially designed for them. Their main component is educational " More often than not, the activities are educational from several perspectives, even though some of them have a certain degree of priority. The most frequent types of education which can be achieved in the tourism activities one can mention: the education regarding the environmental protection, the education regarding the fight against noxious factors, the education regarding physical exercise and sports, the education for disciplined behaviour". (Nicolae R. Scarlat E. 2004, p.29.)

Youth camps represent the most complex tourism product in which various and complex activities can be achieved. The beneficiaries of these services acquire new knowledge, maintain and improve their health, can get new insights, acquire new survival techniques and learn how to provide emergency care.

The national youth camp offer is rich and various, providing young people with the possibility of travelling, of building social networks and of acquiring new skills. The National Agency of Camps and School Tourism, which reports to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, organizes camps for young people between the ages of 14 and 35 years, such as: the national youth camp „the Goden Compass”, organized in August in the resort Arbănași, having the theme „hands-on orientation activities in tourism”; the national history camp and the national camp „The tourism in Galati between the fascination of nature and the Christian monuments”, which take place in the resort Gârboavele in August, the national camp of speleology and photography at the end of August in the resort Arieșeni (ANTTS). These are but only a few examples of thematic camps which have an important educational role in the development of young people.

3. Researching the consumer behaviour towards tourism among the pupils and students in Bucharest

3.1. The reference community

In Bucharest there are 24 academic educational bodies among which there are 12 belongig to the state and 12 private institutions. The pre-university educational network is organized based on the district where they are located, in accordance with the data illustrated in tables 1. and 2.

Table 1. The primary and high-school educational network in Bucharest

District	Number of units	
	State	Private
Total	149	17
District 1.	24	6
District 2.	28	2
District 3.	29	2
District 4.	22	
District 5	24	3
District 6	24	4

Source: The Schools Inspectorate of the City of Bucharest

In Bucharest, in the school year 2013-2014 there is a number of 166 functional schools with classes I-VIII, comprising 149 state schools and 17 private schools, having a total number of 17074 of pupils. (ISMB).

Table 2. The high-school and post high-school educational network in Bucharest

District	Number of units	
	State	Private
Total number	117	16
District 1.	27	5
District 2.	26	2
District 3.	19	6
District 4.	16	
District 5	11	
District 6	18	3

Source: The Schools Inspectorate of the City of Bucharest

The high-school educational system in Bucharest comprises 133 schools which represent 117 state schools and 16 private schools. In the school year 2013-2014 this educational level included 74.612 pupils (ISMB).

3.2 How the market survey is done

The market survey aimed at getting to know the youth behaviour in Bucharest towards the practice of the tourism. Thus, our conjectures are as follows:

- most of the trips are made during the secondary school and during the high-school years
- young people travel most of the time unaccompanied
- they prefer trips by train and by car,
- they prefer the internet as a source of information about tourism destinations.

The community surveyed comprised pupils from 3 high-schools, among which there is an economic high-school, as well as students from two universities of economic studies, one owned by the state and the other one a private institution.

Data was collected with the help of teachers from those institutions, which became interview operators. The

objectives of the research were presented at the class/group levels, questionnaires were handed in and the persons who were interested in the interview responded individually to the questions. The market survey was conducted between the 15th of March-15th of April 2014. The resulting sample of costumers included 399 persons. The questionnaire comprised 18 closed questions with suggested answers.

3.3. The Analysis of the Data

The sample of customers is made up of 64% females and 36% males. Out of the total number of persons surveyed, 64% have the age between 15-18 years, 14% have the age between 19-25 years and 22% are aged above 26 years. As far as the number of family members is concerned, the situation is as follows: 11% come from two-member families, 34% come from 3-member families, 37% from 4-member families, 13,5 % from 5-member families and 4,5% from families with over 5 members. After analyzing the distribution according to revenue groups, the results are as follows: 2,3% of the persons come from families with revenues of below 1000 lei a month; 38,3% have an average revenue between 1001 and 2000 lei, 27,8 % have an average family revenue between 2001-3000 lei; 14,3% have an average family revenue between 3001-4000 lei; 6,8% have an average family revenue between 4001-5000 lei and 10,5% stated that their average family revenue is above 5001 lei, while 11% of the young people have their own revenues. Out of the total number of persons surveyed, 34% do not own a personal or a family car.

A large proportion of the young population who responded to the questions in the questionnaire prefer trips in a very high proportion (97%), 2,25% prefer to travel a little, while 0,75% stated that they do not like to travel.

Regarding the question referring to the age at which they made their first trip, the following answers resulted: 7,5% of the persons interviewed made their first trip before the age of 2 years, 50,4% travelled for the first time at an age between 3 and 6 years, 23,3% made their first trip between the ages of 7-10, 9,8% travelled for the first time at the ages between 11-14, and only 9% benefited from tourism services for the first time at an age above 15 years.

As far as the young people's preferences are concerned, the situation is as follows: inbound tourism is practised by a large proportion, the seaside being their favourite destination (75,9%), 18,8 % of the interviewed people preferring the mountains, 57,2% prefer to visit relatives and friends, 14,3% practise tourism in their summer residences, while only 6% choose hydropathic tourism. Just a part of the persons

surveyed travel abroad, 60,6% prefer the Western Europe, 33,1% prefer the Eastern Europe, 4,5% travelled to the United States, while 1,8% chose other destinations.

54,9% of the young people prefer mixed holidays (stay + sightseeing tours), 35% prefer stay holidays, 5,3% stated that they prefer sightseeing tourism and 12,8% prefer youth school camps. Out of the total number of the people interviewed, 34% went to a camp at least once. Out of this number, 54,1% went to rest and leisure camps, 19,5% went to sports camps, 10,5% chose hands-on orientation camps, 9,8% went to art camps, while 6% went to foreign languages camps and 6% went to survival camps.

As far as the trip is concerned, the means of transportation used are as follows: 63,2% went on holidays by car, 24,1% used the plane, 19,5% travelled by train and only 6% travelled by coach. The main source of information as far as the trip is concerned is the internet - 39,3%, 37,1% chose the destination upon their friends' recommendation, 13,3% upon their family's recommendation and only 10,3% consulted travel agencies. 62,4 %, of the young people prefer to travel unaccompanied, 31,6% travel with their parents, 4,5% travelled accompanied by their teachers and 1,5 % are accompanied by their coaches. Regarding the question related to the frequency of the trips made during the schooling period the following results have been obtained: before the primary school 56,4% of the persons interviewed stated that they went on 1-5 trips on average, 20,3% went on over 10 trips during that period, 9,8% made between 6-10 trips and 13,5% did not make any trip in that period of time. During the secondary school years, most of the young people made between 1-5 trips (36,8%), 27,1% made between 6-10 trips, 24,8% made over 10 trips in that period of time and 11,3% did not make any trip. Out of the total of 399 persons only 43 persons took part in tourism programmes organized by schools. With regard to the frequency of the tourism practice during the high-school period 61,6% of the the persons interviewed made between 1 and 5 trips, 15% made between 6-10 trips, 13,6% made over 10 trips and 9,8% never practised tourism in the period in question. Out of the total number of the surveyed persons, only 37 persons benefited from programmes organized by schools. 77% of the students surveyed stated that they never went on a trip during the faculty years, 11% made between 1 and 5 trips, 12% travelled in that period between 6 and 10 times and nobody made more than 10 trips. Out of the students interviewed no one took a trip organized by the institution he/she attended.

To the question „When did you last go on a trip?“, 35,3% responded that they went on a trip a month

before, 27,1% responded that they had not travelled for 6 months, 20,3% travelled a year before, 12% travelled a week before and 5,3% stated that their last trip had been more than a year before. The total number of days in 2013 on which young people practised the tourism is distributed as follows: 8,3% never practised tourism, 21,1% travelled less than a week, 38,3% went on trips between 7 and 14 days, 12% travelled between 15-30 days and 20,3% made trips for more than 30 days.

Analyzing the correlation between the distribution on sexes and the general consumer behaviour towards tourism we conclude that there are no differences between males and females as far as the practice of tourism is concerned. Thus, both categories travel unaccompanied, they have the internet as their most important source of information and upon their friends and families' recommendation prefer the seaside as the tourism destination and travel to relatives and friends.

The average family revenues do not have a significant impact on the frequency of tourism practice, however, they determine in a significant way the duration of the stay. These persons prefer as destinations first the seaside and second secondary holidays residences. The persons coming from families with revenues of over 4001 lei stated that they had travelled in 2013 for more than 30 days.

The fact that some young people have personal revenues does not have an influence on the frequency and the duration of the stay.

As regards the correlation between the number of the family members and the frequency of the trips there is no significant influence on each other. The persons belonging to families with over three members prefer to travel to relatives and friends more often. The car is the favourite means of transportation for all categories, including those who do not own one.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the data has confirmed our conjecture, more specifically, that 97% of the young population enjoy travelling. Most of the trips are made during the primary school and during the high-school. Around 74% of the young people went on a trip for the first time between the ages of 3 and 10. The frequency with which young people practise the tourism shows that most of the trips (over 50%) represents 1-5 trips a year - made before the primary school, and during all school cycles, but not during the faculty years, which witness a decrease in the number of trips. Young people prefer to travel individually, without their family or other persons (62,4%) and their main information source when they choose a product or a destination is the internet (39,3%). A second information source is

represented by their friends (37,1%). The seaside is considered to be the main destination location by 75,9% of the respondents and 54,9% of the people prefer mixed holidays which combine the stay with sightseeing tours. Only 12,8% of the young people surveyed went on a youth camp at least once and only an insignificant number of pupils benefited from tourism programmes organized by schools. This situation clearly shows that schools are not involved in the education of young people as far as the practice of organized tourism is concerned. The average revenue realized by the family has an impact on the duration of the stay, but not on the frequency of the trips.

After having analyzed the degree of involvement of educational bodies in the formation of the future tourists we can conclude that these institutions play an insignificant part in modelling the consumer behaviour of the young population.

In order to get a right picture of the tourism phenomenon as far as young people are concerned, it is important to know and assess the point of view of the representatives of the educational bodies and of the organizers of youth programmes. This can be done by future research.

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