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CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES AND  
CHALLENGES OF TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

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# **TOURISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA: FROM SPIRITUALITY TO EMOTIONAL ECONOMY**

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## **Abstract**

While everyday behaviors leave less and less room for critical thinking, mediated emotional expression is inevitably staged today by the instinctual reactivity of each believing or unbelieving person when imagining, proposing, appropriate a tourism project through Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Pinterest, Plus.Google, Flickr, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn. Under these conditions, the rational perspective of the communication of this project must be revisited and enriched with the individual anthropological perspectives of the spiritual person. More precisely, the relationship between tourism and social media makes an operational sense and can allow a joint theorization in the current context of the affective capitalism by considering three observations: a) the strongest and most irreducible economic link between tourism and social media is based on the human need to experience; b) the conversion of the emotional capital contained in this human need into market value constitutes the major economic stake for the tourism conquered henceforth by the generalized digitalization; c) this conversion is conditioned by the mediatization of the spirituality which imposes itself as a place of production of meaning for the economic success of emotional tourism. For example, highlighting social media's focus on spiritual tourism will show that the dynamic of this perspective is not that of dispersing or spreading a religious message whose outcome can not be but rather that of the attraction exerted by the certainty of a lived experience, and therefore by the obvious economy of the requirement to believe and all that it implies.

## **Keywords**

Social media, spiritual tourism, emotional capital, affective capitalism.

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# **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is a major force in the world economy. It contributes with more than 10% in the world GDP, creates 1/11 jobs, and ensures 30% of exports. Tourism stimulates many other industries, increases regional integration and promotes international understanding through dialogue between cultures and religions. It is, as well, an important vector of tolerance and peace in the world. However, at the dawn of this third millennium, tourism industry has been facing numerous challenges: climate change, environment degradation and last but not least, the scourge of the century: regional and international terrorism.

International awareness. At the end of the last century, we witnessed an awareness campaign within the international community about sustainable tourism. The upmost of this campaign was when the United Nation adopted the year 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development recognizing thus the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. UNWTO as a specialized United Nation agency followed the steps undertaking thematic studies and organizing international events.

1. Economy. On the economic level, all studies and figures confirm the opportunities that tourism offers to the economy and the growth of development due to their reinforcing relationship.

2. Social. Despite of its economic performance, the role of tourism is still unclear in social inclusiveness mainly in terms of regional economic integration and poverty reduction. Sustainable tourism should profit to the local communities.

3. Environment. In terms of tourism, diversity is part of a dynamic that promotes sustainable tourism. Tourism should respects, preserves and durably enhances the natural, cultural and social wealth of a destination. Diversity should be cultural and ecological to include nature, civilizations and people. In other words: cultural diversity and bio-diversity.

## **Keywords:**

Sustainable tourism, UNWTO, economic development, local communities, cultural diversity, bio-diversity.

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# **THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CHOLPON ATA RESORT AND THE MUSEUM OF PETROGLYPHS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

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## **Abstract**

No studies have been conducted until now, whose aim is to analyse attractiveness of historical or archaeological museums in Kyrgyzstan. The aim of the paper is to verify whether the resort Cholpon-Ata along with an open air petroglyphs museum in Kyrgyzstan is an attractive tourist destination, what are the components of its attractiveness and of possible lack of attractiveness. Field work and documental research has been conducted in order to analyse the following components: attractiveness of natural resources and natural beauty of the destination, cultural heritage, accessibility, infrastructure covering the following factors: visa regime transport, accommodation, restaurant and catering industry, and access to information. Sixty two oral interviews with Kyrgyz residents were conducted, also documental research has been done, including photographic documentation of the museum and of the town.

Conclusions: Cholpon Ata and the museum of petroglyphs have big tourist potential. The arguments which make the destination attractive are: nature, cultural heritage, relatively good infrastructure. Still, the museum lacks proper mechanisms, whose aim is to attract tourists and become more competitive, several strategies, regarding access to information and educational activities, should be undertaken, in order to become more attractive and competitive comparative studies should be conducted, in order to verify, what strategies are used by other museums of the same character.

## **Keywords**

Tourist destination, museum, natural resources, cultural heritage.

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# **MOTORCYCLE TOURISM IN KYRGYZSTAN- CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to analyse whether and to what degree motorcycle tourism is an opportunity for rural tourism development in Kyrgyzstan. An exemplary trail was established and examined, in order to analyse the following components: visa regime, safety and security of the region, infrastructure, attractiveness of natural resources and natural beauty of the destination, cultural heritage, safety. Two series of interviews were conducted, the first series included sixty two oral interviews with Kyrgyz residents, the second series thirty two interviews with motorcyclists, who have visited Kyrgyzstan. Also documentary work were made, including photographic documentation. Different types of motorcycles have been analysed in order to verify which type suits the best to this kind of trip. The results of the fieldwork and material analysis demonstrate that Kyrgyzstan has great tourist potential for motorcycle tourists, however, a significant drawback is the lack marketing strategies, whose aim is to attract tourists. Until now, such research has not been conducted.

## **Keywords**

Motorcycle tourism, Kyrgyzstan, rural tourism, Cholpon-Ata

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# ROMANIAN BRANDED HOTELS: ARE THEY WORTH THE EFFORT?

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## Abstract

The presence of branded hotels in Romania remains relatively modest after two decades since the first Sofitel (Accor Hotels) entered the market. Thus, the number of branded hotels increased since 2005 when they were first investigated. The present study investigates the RevPAR of the Romanian hotels that have joined an international brand, either hard (franchising and management contracts) or soft (affiliation), and the hotel operators' net financial results over a five year period 2012-2016. The results of this exploratory study reveal that the most notorious brands operating in Romania are also those generating the highest RevPAR. Further, the results show that operating a brand outside Bucharest (mainly a hard brand) proves to generate constantly net profit for most of the respective hotel operators, despite a RevPAR below the European average. This finding suggests that the brand notoriety generates an increased occupancy rate. The results indirectly point out that most of the branded hotels' operators seem to struggle on the crowded Bucharest hotel market enhancing the idea of internal inefficiencies. Given the structure of the Romanian hotel industry, the partnership with an international brand seems to be worth the effort mainly if the brand is appropriately chosen, taking into consideration the hotel location and size.

## Keywords

Hotel, international brand, affiliation, RevPAR, financial results.

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# **TOURISM DESTINATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF COMPETITIVENESS AND REGIONALIZATION**

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## **Abstract**

Unfortunately, the regionalization project, although fashionable and frequently used by politicians, is already an outdated project...especially in the Brexit context, an event that will also affect the tourism industry, as Great Britain, with its capital city, is one of the most visited touristic attractions in Europe. Tourism regionalization aims to delineate geographical areas with proper grounds for tourism, considering the quality of tourism resources, as well as the functional profile of various areas. Based on the location and spatial concentration of tourism attractions, as well as their capitalization and functionality, several taxonomic categories have been detailed in the literature. Most of Romanian researchers and stakeholders generally use the term region, which in turn includes several functional subdivisions. Recently, the European Commission has published the latest competitiveness report, the index of regional competitiveness for the 263 EU regions offering an insight to the reality on the field. The aim of the report is to help regions improve their economic performance, but unfortunately, our country ranks last in the classification, five out of the eight Romanian regions scoring less than 10 points in a total of 100. The paper aims to highlight the real situation of the regional tourism from the competitiveness point of view, offering a real diagnosis, based on methods specific to tourism geography, proposing valuable solutions for policy makers and those willing to listen and consider them.

## **Keywords**

Destination, regionalization, tourism, strategy, sustainable development.

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# **SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ACTIVITY OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS. THE CASE OF BUCOVINA REGION**

**Mihai Costea\***, Cristian-Valentin Hapenciuc and Ruxandra Bejinaru  
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## **Abstract**

The changes intervening in the information technology field, especially in the Web 2.0 terms, have activated the communication, promotion and collaboration between suppliers, business partners and consumers of touristic services alike. All these changes led to the development of new marketing practices oriented on the online area, which represent nowadays a cornerstone in designing an economic activity of a tourism organization which aims to consolidate its position in the section market. The necessity of existence and operationalization of a clear guidance of online promotion is a trend that, at least for now, has not been adequately exploited by the tourism units from Bucovina region (situated in North of Romania). The online growing competition – as it breaks the conventional barriers at a local, national and international level – constrains the tourism operators to develop a coherent policy of Social Media Marketing (SMM). Therefore, the major aim of this study is to highlight the level of the reception structures in Bucovina through the online visibility filter and, implicitly, their acquaintance with the techniques, strategies and promotion methods specific to the Social Media.

In order to analyze the level of development and evolution of the accommodation in Bucovina in terms of their visibility on Social Media, in July-August 2012 period, we undertook a survey that targeted 518 tourist accommodation units. For the purpose of highlighting the evolution of the phenomenon studied, namely the impact of the internet and hence the Social Media on the marketing activity of the receiving structures concerned, the initial study was repeated annually, in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The analysis conducted reveals that managers of tourist reception units in Bucovina have minimal knowledge about Facebook and Twitter and their use. Therefore, they do not yet have a well-grounded strategy of promotion in these environments.

## **Keywords**

Social Media, Bucovina, Accommodation units, Website, Facebook, Twitter.

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# **THE PLACE OF HERITAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE MARKETING STRATEGY OF DESTINATIONS: A WORLDWIDE APPROACH BASED ON DMO SLOGANS**

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## **Abstract**

In the tourist industry destinations are competing against each other to attract visitors. In this race to seduce visitors, cultural tourism (based on heritage and identity) appears as a very popular form of tourism used by destinations. Because branding plays a major role in attracting visitors, this paper therefore examines the slogan of 139 destinations around the world. Findings reveal that slogans tend not to use heritage but instead adopt a neutral position, this is to be explained by the fact that destinations want to appeal to maximum of visitors and also because they appeal to the emotions (as opposed to a cognitive strategy).

## **Keywords**

Branding, DMO, World, Heritage, Identify.

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# THE FAIRNESS OF PRICING TACTICS FOR HOTELS: PERCEPTIONS OF ROMANIAN CUSTOMERS

Claudia-Elena Țuclea<sup>1\*</sup>, Diana Maria Vrânceanu<sup>2</sup> and Carmen-Eugenia Năstase<sup>3</sup>

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## Abstract

Price fairness perception is taken into account by customers when it comes to make a buying decision. This study focuses on analysing the perceptions of pricing tactics the hotels from Romania use, and also on the degree of influence these perceptions have on buying intentions.

In order to achieve this purpose, a national survey was carried out on Romanian customers of hotel services. The main objectives refer to: a) the fairness of the price setting methods; b) the perception of price fairness in relation to certain factors of influence; c) the perceived fairness of different pricing tactics, and d) the evaluation of price fairness for the latest experience in a hotel and the influence on the purchasing intentions.

The main findings emphasize that the price setting method oriented on competition is considered the fairest method for setting prices. Customers believe that the most frequent situation of unfair price is found in accommodation services. Among the unfair pricing tactics are to be: on one hand the difference of prices based on the nationality of the customers (higher prices for tourists from abroad), and on the other hand the 9-ending prices. Offering lower prices for longer periods and for larger groups represents the fairest pricing tactics that hotels can use. The manners in which Romanian customers use to rate price fairness for hotel services mainly relies on the comparison of the current price to a previous one, and on his own believe of what fair price has to be.

The managerial implication of this study is linked to the setting prices decisions in order to be perceived as fair prices.

## Keywords

Price fairness, hotel services, pricing tactics, revenue management, Romania, price setting method, price comparison.

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# **INTERNATIONAL TOURISM DEMAND AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is widely considered as driver for economic growth, and many studies has approached the “tourism-led-growth hypothesis”. However, there is very limited literature investigating how economic growth impacts tourism, even that is common sense that the development and extension of tourism as services-based sector are affected by general economic level of one country. Aiming at addressing this issue and also performing an investigation not only one economy but several homogenous economies, in this paper we examine the impact of the economic growth on the number of international tourism arrivals and also on the international tourism receipts during 1995-2015, in Central and Eastern European economies, by using Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model. The bounds F-statistics for cointegration test gives evidence of a long-run relationship between the international tourism number of arrivals and GDP per capita only for Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Romania and Slovakia. Between the international tourism receipts and GDP per capita we find a long-run relationship only for Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania and Czech Republic. We also explore causal relationship between the variables by using error-correction-based Granger causality model (short-run Granger causality and long-run Granger causality), finding different types of unidirectional/bidirectional short-run/long-run relationships between international tourism demand (measured by two proxies, i.e. international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts) and economic growth (measured by GDP per capita), in different countries. The paper contributes to better understand the nature and the direction of the relationship between tourism sector and economic growth, and to investigate whether there is a bidirectional relationship between them.

## **Keywords**

International tourism demand, economic growth, Granger causality, ARDL model, Central and Eastern European countries.

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# **TOURIST DESTINATIONS AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABILITY. A MODEL OF DESTINATION PLANNING IN BIHOR – HAJDU-BIHAR EUROREGION**

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## **Abstract**

For a long period of time, tourism has been considered a viable solution for most of the economic and social problems of disadvantaged or peripheral regions, but endowed with attractive natural or cultural resources. This approach, classified as traditional and expansive, focuses on reducing obstacles and encouraging market interest, considers tourism as an "industry" that needs to be supported through considerable public and private investment, in order to generate income and jobs, and boost local development. However, it often ignores the sustainability requirements of touristic activities in social, environmental or cultural issues for host regions. A solution to reconcile economic objectives with sustainable development can be integrating tourism in local planning, embedding the economic, institutional, social and cultural (touristic) agents into local production systems, seeking for positive relations between all region's resources. This idea is also shared by the sustainable regional economic development policies and programs supported through European Union (EU) funds, where tourism is considered as a way to develop cross-border cooperation between local communities located in border areas. Starting from these premises, we carried out a territorial analysis of the main tourist destinations of the Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion (Romanian – Hungarian border) and we have suggested an adapted model of tourism development that takes into account the contemporary approaches of tourism development, the particularities of the cross-border regions and, last but not least, the challenges for a sustainable development of touristic activities in this area. Based on this model, we have proposed corrective measures and a plan for touristic development in the next period of time, questioning the initial assumptions underlying the tourism development programs in this border area. Our paper emphasizes the heterogeneity of the forms of tourism and tourist destinations within this Euroregion and criticizes the holistic approach of this area as an undifferentiated tourist destination. We suggest and propose a less complex but more homogeneous development model, and consequently an easier way to manage cross-border progress, in order to increase the effectiveness of using the EU support in this sector.

## **Keywords**

Sustainable tourism, destination planning, Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion, local governance.

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# ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL COMMUNITY TOWARDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

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## Abstract

In the last years tourism encountered a large development world-wide, especially in the developing countries. Tourism is a multi-faced activity with negative and positive impacts on the destinations, linking the economic, social and environment components of sustainable development. The attitude of the host community is an important factor for future tourism planning, management and development of a tourism destination. In this paper are analysed the attitudes and perceptions of the local residents from Kurdistan Regional Government, located north part of Republic of Iraq. To achieve the main purpose of the research a survey based on questionnaire was conducted in Sulaimani and Halabja Governorates. A number of 320 questionnaires were applied during March-May 2016. The questionnaire had more sections: perceptions of tourism development support for tourism development, socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The collected data were analysed using the descriptive statistics and principal component analysis. The results indicate that tourism is seen as a development sector during the last years. The positive impacts of tourism development are better perceived than the negative, mainly because it offers more recreational opportunities due to the development of new recreational parks. The tourism development increased the pollution, this being the most negative aspect mentioned by the respondents, but even this they are proud of the progress from the last years and they support the future actions for tourism development.

## Keywords

Sustainable tourism, tourism impacts, residents' attitude, tourism planning, cluster analysis.

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# PERCEPTION ON RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AND QUALITY IN NORTH-WEST REGION OF ROMANIA

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## Abstract

Tourism represents a viable alternative for economic activities in the rural area. The North-West Development Region of Romania includes 6 counties and 386 communes. The tourism in the rural area of the region has developed in the recent years. Due to the physical and cultural characteristics of the each county there were noticed disparities in the rural tourism development in the region. This paper analyses the perception of the rural residents regarding the tourism potential of their region and the quality of the tourism destination. To achieve the purpose of the research both secondary and primary data were used. The research method used to collect primary data was the survey based on the questionnaire. In total a number of 433 questionnaires were validated. The collected data can be divided into three main categories: socio-demographic characteristics, perception of the development potential and perception of the tourism destination quality (natural and anthropic factors, tourism services). The descriptive statistics and correlation were used to analyse the data. The results show that there are differences regarding the perception of tourism development potential among residents from one county to another. In the same time the majority of the respondents consider that the hospitality of the host community and the traditions are a strong point in assuring high quality services and attracting tourists in the area. The decisions makers should deeply analyse the attitude and the perception of the local community for the future tourism development strategies.

## Keywords

Tourism quality, tourism development, rural tourism, local's attitude.

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# WAYS ATTRACTING EXTERNAL STREAMS OF TOURISM IN UKRAINE

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## **Abstract**

Ukrainian tourist attractions for any taste – mountains, forests, seas, lakes, rivers, artificial ponds, reserved areas, monuments of architecture, historical, cultural and religious facilities, arboreta and landscape gardens, green tourism facilities, recreational and resort zones etc. - may well be found all over the territory of our country. Despite that, unfortunately, Ukraine has not become a tourist stronghold for the foreigners yet. Moreover, the worst is that the poor quality of the product and the excessive prices of the national travel market operators make Ukrainian tourists redirecting their attention towards the respective foreign markets. As a result, the national economy loses working positions, currency resources and image of a recreational zone attractive for tourists.

The article examines the current state-of-the-art of the tourism industry in Ukraine. It highlights its high resource potential and capacity to have a strong influence on the development of the national economy. Based on the international comparison, it is possible to say that the concerned Ukrainian economy sector is currently in the state of depression. We should mention the main internal reasons. It is uncontrolled development of travel services market and the related concerns due to inefficient state regulation policy in the sector. Poor quality and excessive prices for the services provided by the national tour operators. Poor condition of the national transport infrastructure, insufficient construction productivity and improper structure of tourist lodging in terms of the types of accommodation. However, there are several scientific methods to solve these problems. After all, the most important source of sustainable tourism industry, we believe the intellectual potential of our country.

## **Keywords**

Tourism industry, development risks, state regulation, price, quality, accommodation, food and meals, road construction, rational infrastructure.

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# **ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN TOURISM UNDER THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM AND OF THE WAVES OF REFUGEES**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is an extremely complex phenomenon marked by major factors like the terrorist attacks and the refugees' invasion (the recent waves of migrants). Lately, these factors have influenced tourist activity with implications at the level of the entire European Union (EU). This paper includes a comparative analysis between the countries strongly affected by terrorism, and those little or not affected by terrorism, also of the countries with a higher number of refugees, compared to those with a lower number of refugees, in order to quantify the impact of these phenomena on the economic growth in tourism. The techniques used to evaluate the inferences between the variable in tourism and the dynamics of international tourist arrivals under the impact of the number of terrorism victims and the number of refugees are  $\beta$  and  $\sigma$  convergence tests, combined with the deterministic sensitivity analysis. The sample consists of 26 EU countries studied between 2000 and 2016 for the convergence analysis, and between 2000 and 2015 for the sensitivity analysis, according to the available data. The results prove the prevalence of divergence, on the background of the existence of some countries, in the structure of the groups analysed, with different contribution of gross domestic product in tourism (GDPT) at the overall economic growth. At the same time, a higher reaction of GDPT per capita is identified under the influence of the number of terrorism victims, compared to the incidence of the variation of the number of refugees. However, it cannot be stated that the general tendency of this variable is to decrease due to the two phenomena. On the contrary, one can see an occasional decrease of GDPT per capita, which can be correlated with the crisis situations caused by the two factors, or a slower economic growth in tourism.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, convergence, deterministic sensitivity analysis, EU, terrorist attacks, refugees' invasion.

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# **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE – SUCCESS FACTOR IN IMPROVING HOTEL BUSINESS QUALITY AND ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. ITALY – A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE**

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## **Abstract**

The present paper analyses the measures adopted in hotel industry with the purpose to identify the best practices for achieving environmental performance as a success factor in improving hotel business quality and ensuring a sustainable future. Taking into account the information offered by the European Commission regarding ISO 14001 standards (Environmental Management Standard), EMAS (European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme), and EU ECOLABEL, where Italy appears among the countries with the highest number of ecological certifications or registrations, we considered adequate to present in this article the results of a research on Italy, and we proposed this country as a model of excellence in hotel businesses regarding their concern for improving environmental performance. In order to reach this objective, we used the questionnaire as a research instrument, with the help of which we collected the primary data, which were processed with SPSS programme. The results highlighted the most commonly applied measures in the tourist units investigated for environmental performance. Consequently, we identified the measures taken by hotel managers regarding the improvement of hotel business quality by environmental performance through efficient waste management, reduction of pollutant emissions, of energy consumption, of water consumption, purchase of environmentally friendly products, equipment, and technologies. The results of the research confirmed the alternative hypothesis, according to which environmental performance is a success factor for improving hotel business quality and ensuring a sustainable future.

## **Keywords**

Environmental performance, certification, EMAS, EU Ecolabel, the best practices, efficient management, reducing consumption, green procurement.

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# ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL OF CLUSTER BUILDING IN THE ROMANIAN TOURISM

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## Abstract

The relevance of clusters for raising productivity and innovation, and enhancing economic development has been revealed through an extended literature on their competitive advantages, yet the tourism clusters remain largely an under-researched topic. When applied to the tourism industry, the definition of the cluster entails the geographical concentration of inter-related companies and institutions, with the core activities of accommodation and a large array of support activities and services (catering, entertainment, operators and travel agencies, training and consultancy, business services) and knowledge transfer institutions and facilitators. Starting from two basic assumptions that tourism is a powerful engine for economic growth and that clusters are successful tools for local and regional development, the paper is aiming to assess the potential of cluster building of the Romanian tourism. The statistical and spatial analysis based on two-digit CANE Rev. 2 data (55) at NUTS V level is aiming to identify the geographical concentrations of touristic firms with accommodation functions and their level of specialization measured by the Location Quotient. The above average values of LQ of tourism firms suggest high levels of entrepreneurship and qualified and diversified labor pool capable to generate informational spillovers. Geographical proximity facilitates knowledge-sharing and fuels the positive externalities derived from co-location of firms. Thus, spatial concentration of tourism firms lies at the basis of cluster building. The spatial patterns of tourism firms help the identification of concentrations with critical mass and internal complementarities as basic determinants for creating functional clusters. The analysis will provide insights into the relations between tourism clusters, regional development and policy design.

## Keywords

Tourism, clusters, economic development, Romania.

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# ADJUSTING THE TOURISTIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO THE EXCHANGE OF GENERATION

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## Abstract

The present paper presents the results of a qualitative research based on a focus group organized within the specializations of Tourism – Services, and Management of FSEAA Brasov, and based on evaluation questionnaires of Management in Tourism courses, organized by SFMT during 2016.

In this research, the main features of current graduates (generation Z born after 1994) were captured, the first generation raised in a digital environment with an online childhood, in relationship with their attitude towards the labor market compared to previous generations (X - born between 1966 - 1976, and Y - Millennials - born between 1977 - 1995), and the need to adapt to the educational system, and the employers' attitude to these new perspective, where personal time becomes often more important than the place work. This is a generation of independent people that will change the world!

The research has led to conclusions and recommendations on several levels. At a national level – the need to propose some strategies for retaining employment inside the national economy and attracting labor from Diaspora; here an important role can be played within the European funding programs POCU and PNRDP to finance entrepreneurial initiatives. At the employers level - implementing appropriate strategies of attracting and creating loyalty of human resources, of reduction or elimination of seasonality. At the educational system - strategies to encourage completion of studies at all levels, adapting the system to the needs of new generations, through employers' involvement in the educational process by stimulating the dual vocational education.

## Keywords

Touristic Education, Employment Market, Generation Z, Change, Adaptation

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# STUDY OF FESTIVAL PARTICIPANTS' BEHAVIOR. THE CASE OF TRANSILVANIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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## Abstract

Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF) is well-known event on the national and international agenda of cultural events. With a history of 15 editions, the festival is gathering year by year an increasing number of persons in Cluj-Napoca, the growth of the event having important effects on the city. The dynamics of the festival made TIFF the most important national cinematographic event in Romania. Moreover, the festival's notoriety determined Lonely Planet Guide to promote Cluj-Napoca as the "film capital of Romania" and as a destination of festivals and cultural events.

The impacts of festivals has been the focus of considerable literature. But mainly, the researchers focused on the economic and cultural impacts of festivals on local communities, and there is a relatively lack in considering their role in developing specific patterns of behavior and social interactions. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to analyze and discuss the role of a cultural event, like a film festival, in the process of developing specific behaviors. Starting from the participants' motivation, the research will analyze the existence of different types of behavior during the festival.

To achieve the objectives, we conducted two types of research during the timespan May – June 2017. Firstly, it was implemented an exploratory research by reviewing the existent literature and having informal discussions with TIFF organizers'. Secondly, a descriptive research using two questionnaires was applied to collect primary data during and after the close of the festival.

## Keywords

Cultural tourism, film festival, participants' motivation, participants' behaviour.

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# CEE-16: A CLUSTER ANALYSIS BASED ON TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS AND CORRELATIONS WITH MAJOR DETERMINANTS

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the main groups of CEE-16 countries in terms of tourism competitiveness. These countries are participants at the 16+1 platform initiated by China in 2011, tourism being one of the components of sectoral cooperation in this framework. We demonstrate that tourism infrastructure is one of the main determinants of tourism competitiveness, even surpassing in importance the tourism assets. In this context, China factor might play a significant role for the CEE-16 in terms of spurring competitiveness, as it is not antagonistic but complementary with other determinants of competitiveness, including the EU funds. Upgrading and developing infrastructure is one of the ways leading to increased tourism competitiveness.

Regarding the methodology, the authors calculate a specific travel and tourism competitiveness index (STTCI), starting from the main objectives of the 16+1 cooperation platform, namely prioritization, openness, environment sustainability, transport infrastructure and specific infrastructure for tourism services. The authors correlate this STTCI with other qualitative indicators and obtain two categories of clusters among the CEE-16 countries.

In Romania's case, one can remark the following paradox. The cumulative amount of investment in tourism during 2000-2017 is the largest among the CEE-16 countries, corresponding to its tourism assets and the necessity to connect them however Romania lags behind most of the analyzed countries in terms of qualitative indicators such as revealed comparative advantage, direct productivity and multiplier effect of GDP. Therefore it does not belong to the cluster of countries which should reflect its real assets. This is the first in-depth analysis of this kind at the level of CEE-16 countries. The value of this paper is given by the original methodology, the combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments employed in order to explain the reasons behind the hierarchy of the CEE-16 in terms of their competitiveness and also the role China might play in this matrix.

## Keywords

CEE, China, 16+1, Romania, tourism competitiveness, tourism assets, specific travel and tourism competitiveness index (STTCI), cluster analysis platform.

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# **TOURIST CHANGES IN TIME OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DISRUPTION**

**Aurelio Fernández Bariviera<sup>1</sup>, Delia Popescu<sup>2</sup>, Dorina Chicu<sup>3</sup> and Daniel Bulin<sup>4\*</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism industry is a key economic activity in Spain. It is usually regarded as strategic by government authorities because it is labor intensive, and with considerable added value. Spain can be considered a mature market, giving its decades long experience in touristic activities. However, the increasing or even maintaining the number of tourists is harder given the increased competition from new destinations. In this paper, we aim to compare the effect of two disruptive events in the influx of tourists and in the profitability of hotels on the Spanish coast. The two selected events were the so-called “Arab spring” and the 2008 financial crisis. Regarding the first event, in recent years several countries on the other side of the Mediterranean basin, such as Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, had been receiving an increasing influx of tourists. Sometimes this influx was at the expense of tourists who in former times visited Spanish beaches. The second event constitutes the first major economic global distress in the 21st century. Given that the main impact was in developed countries, and that many summer tourists come from other European countries, we would like to explore the effect of this situation in the composition of the tourists. We use several statistical and econometric techniques in order to deal with time series.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, Arab spring, financial crisis, Spanish coast.

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# **NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T – IS THE DUEL COMMERCIAL AND TOURISM ECONOMY IN VENICE UNSUSTAINABLE?**

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## **Abstract**

This paper seeks to make sense of the synergies and unique factors operating between the commercial and tourist economy in Venice. The research is focused on the nexus of challenges generated by water, commercial life, visitors and sustainability. Whilst the Grand Tour of the romantic period brought relatively frequent European travelers and trade attracted international merchants from the sixteenth century, the modern import of tourism and the industrial expansion of commercial shipping have contributed to the challenges that threaten the ecological longevity of Venice. The paper will explore the duel operation of the commercial and tourism economy to identify synergies, sovereign markets, anomalies and confrontations in existing and future relations. The research is particularly interested in how the duel economy operates in terms of sustainability.

Venice was designated by UNESCO in 1987 as a World Heritage Site. The second related objective of the paper is to explore the role of UNESCO in Venice, its role, remit and status in shaping policy and sustainable protection which influences, resists and encourages the commercial and tourist economy. Therefore, the related notions of posterity, longevity and sustainability, will be examined primarily under the selection of the natural and cultural criteria operating under the mantra of 'outstanding universal value'. In connecting with the first objective of the paper, the research will explore the role of lobbying and engagement with the nexus of interests prevalent in the duel commercial and tourism economy to elucidate solutions to the visible and invisible challenges facing Venice.

## **Keywords**

Venice, tourism, port development, urban and regional policy, sustainability.

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# INVOLVEMENT OF RURAL TOURISM OPERATORS IN THE PROJECT "SIBIU EUROPEAN GASTRONOMIC REGION"

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## Abstract

Rural development strategies in Sibiu County aim to bring a new concept of integrated and systemic approach to the role of promoting traditional activities where gastronomy plays an important role. The Sibian Association My Transylvania has been involved in recent years successfully organizing gastronomic events local to Sibiu County, with a decisive role in getting Sibiu the title of Gourmet European Region in 2019, a distinction which the town would share with Southern Aegean Region of Greece, which includes islands like Santorini, Mykonos and Rhodes. Both winning regions will organize events related to gastronomy throughout the year 2019. This is the second major title for the city of Sibiu, which was European Cultural Capital in 2007 and Sibiu, which received in 2009 the Golden Apple for the hospitality of the inhabitants of Mărginimea Sibiului and Eden Award as a destination of excellence for the same micro-region in 2015. Under these circumstances, the aim of the paper is to present the specific activities of this project, until 2019, which also involves the restaurants of the pensions in the five micro-regions of the county of Sibiu. Although well-individualized entities, these five micro regions (Marginimea Sibiului, Olt Country, Hârtibaciului Valley, Tarnavelor Valley and Secașului Land) form a unitary one which individualizes Sibiu County within the southern region of Transylvania even at a national level. In developing specific tourism products that can increase the attractiveness of five micro-regions of the county Sibiu making the stay of tourists more pleasant, it is necessary also the stimulation of activities related to tourism activities, such as the production of handicrafts and craftsmanship that can be used in the folk art and crafts fairs, organization of folk performances, all accompanied by tasting traditional foods. Gastronomic tourism products incorporate environmental values, landscape, parts of the local culture, traditions, local cuisine, traditional costumes, local food and the rituals associated with gastronomic experience - how foods are served and presented, ingredients, preparation methods. Identification of the culinary landscape tourist destination is one of the challenges of creating tourism products, in which an important role have the pensions from the named five micro regions.

## Keywords

Tourism activities; local cuisine; environment values; gastronomic tourism.

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# **AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH OF THE RESPONDENTS' PROFILE AMONG LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

**Smaranda Cosma<sup>1\*</sup>, Konstantina Zerva<sup>2</sup>, Marius Bota<sup>3</sup> and Cristina Fleşeriu<sup>4</sup>**  
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## **Abstract**

Nowadays, there is an increased concern about what leisure is and how people spend their leisure time. When we are talking about leisure, all of us have “images” in our minds; different from person to person. These are images of freedom out of constraints and obligations.

In this context, a research direction was developed that explores the preferences and the time allocated to different ways of spending the free time.

The purpose of the research is to identify and describe the leisure activities among the Romanians and the influence of respondents' profile in respect with the preferences.

As a research method, the descriptive research based on investigation was used. For data collection, an on-line interview based on a short questionnaire was implemented during the year of 2015 and 2016 for several months.

The research reveals that in average the respondents spent 4,6 hours engaged leisure activities in a working day and 9,3 hours in a free day. In a working day, the most frequent leisure activity is surfing on the internet (more than 60% of the respondents) and the rarest is visiting tourist attractions or destinations (almost 39%). In a free day, ones again, surfing on the internet (61% respondents) is the most frequent leisure activity and the most rare one is participating at cultural activities like visits at the museum, art galleries etc. (36.53%).

The study shows that the respondents prefer non-home-based leisure activities and also active ones.

## **Keywords**

Leisure, leisure activities, active/ passive activities, home-based/ non-home-based activities.

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# COMPETITIVENESS ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN MICRO SEASIDE DESTINATIONS

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<sup>2</sup> Prof Univ. PhD, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze, in an economic perspective, the theoretical and practical possibilities of the Romanian seaside tourism development within a competitive environment more consolidated. To straighten out the situation and achieve economic growth are necessary complex adjustment of the economic mechanism and improvement of regional economic planning tools. Therefore, the special role of tourism sector, as generator of jobs and promotion of Romania's image, the environmental recovery of areas, already brownfield economic zones and activities, in a comprehensive framework, can enhance the seaside tourism competitiveness compared to the other countries bordering the Black Sea. We applied Porter's model to the main micro destination of seaside tourism in Romania and calculated travel and tourism competitiveness index and ranking for Romania. Our research proves the fact that the Romanian micro seaside destinations have a great touristic potential, which should be used effectively by the business community in partnership with local authorities.

## Keywords

Destination competitiveness; competitive potential; competitive position; influencing factors.

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# **PROTECTING NATIONAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE WHILE PROMOTING CULTURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA – UNSOLVABLE DILEMMA OR MISSED OPPORTUNITY?**

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## **Abstract**

The current paper tackles the thorny issue of *cultural tourism* in Romania, trying to ascertain whether there is an actual chance of promoting it successfully in our country, without further damage to an already endangered national cultural patrimony.

The question we are trying to answer in the paper is whether we are facing a dilemma with little chances of being solved to our advantage – namely, if the promotion of cultural tourism would pose a threat or present an opportunity to a domain in which, unfortunately, very little has been done in recent years.

The goal of the paper is twofold – it is meant, on the one hand, as a strong alarm signal, a wake-up call as to the necessity of a coherent, well-funded strategy regarding the promotion of cultural tourism in Romania, and on the other hand as a cautionary tale – one that could envisage what might happen if such a strategy were incorrectly devised and applied. Some hints in that direction are unfortunately already at hand, visible to the naked eye when considering the current situation of some sites which are essential to our cultural and national identity.

Some of the case studies we shall discuss include Dacian sites, such as Sarmizegetusa Regia, as well as the Bucovina Monasteries, or the Old Town area in our capital, Bucharest.

## **Keywords**

Cultural heritage, national heritage, cultural tourism, sustainable tourism.

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# SHARING ECONOMY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TOURISM

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## **Abstract**

In the last decades, our society and also the economy have undergone great changes that led to the emergence of new economic branches or models. These models were born in the more developed countries. Subsequently, they have developed and expanded across the globe, contributing towards informational revolution. Shared economy is one of these branches. Through technology and internet, which are great tools that provide instant access to any information from anywhere in the world, the shared economy is expanding and developing continuously. This allows an easier and facile interaction between people of all categories.

The aim of this paper is to bring to light the challenges, opportunities and benefits brought by the shared economy regarding the national and international tourism, as well as to find out the current technological infrastructure, its availability, accessibility and its degree of acceptance by consumers or other stakeholders.

The methodological section of this paper will contain a case study on the Airbnb business model. A company that has been involved in the economic transition in the past recent years, and in the birth of shared economy.

This case study is useful for all individuals or legal entities with regards in the tourism field in order to acknowledge in what way and to what extent the accommodation units in Romania are evaluated, and also rated. And what are the possible options for touristic improvement and development in Romania, through the shared economy, in terms of quality, technological infrastructure and approach. It is also useful to discover how much our country is affected or influenced by this economy, and what repercussions or changes will be made in the future.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, economy, sharing, boarding house, evaluation.

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# DISPARITIES IN TOURISM DEMAND OF UNESCO DESTINATIONS

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## Abstract

This paper clarifies disparities in tourism demand of some chosen UNESCO destinations in the Czech Republic, which is located in Central Europe. The Czech Republic, despite its relatively small area, is an important destination for cultural tourism - a large number of unique cultural and other historic monuments are located on its territory. Twelve of those historic monuments are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including the Czech capital, the city of Prague. As capitals are usually very different from the regions as far as tourism demand is concerned, another separate study area was chosen for this case - the Vysočina Region located in the middle of the Czech Republic. This region has the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites of all the Czech regions - there are three of them there: Telč, Třebíč and Zelená hora in Žďár nad Sázavou. Within the framework of developing a new regional tourism strategy and at the request of the Regional Authority of the Vysočina Region, an extensive marketing survey among visitors to the region was carried out. This research was done by the College of Polytechnics Jihlava in 2014 – 2015 and within it, various characteristics of tourism demand in all three UNESCO destinations were gathered. The research provided background information for creating visitor profiles of the destinations, as well as information on current visitors' attitudes to tourism activities and further development of tourism in the destinations. Primary data obtained from the questionnaire survey enabled, after being processed by various mathematical and statistical methods, a comparative analysis of the chosen UNESCO destinations in Central Europe in terms of tourism demand. Its results show, e.g. that all surveyed destinations attract mainly one-day visitors, but not all of them regard a visit to unique cultural heritage sites of those destinations as their main reason for travelling there. The research results show not only new visitor profiles of the UNESCO destinations in the smallest statistical unit (the municipality) but they can also be used by destination management for planning customised tourism development strategies. Moreover, the study gives a comprehensive picture of tourism demand, which is important for the regional policy. Finally, the paper can be used as a case study for sustainable development of tourism in other UNESCO destinations.

## Keywords

Cultural tourism, marketing research, visitor profile, destination management, data analysis, UNESCO, Czech Republic.

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# **ARE TOURISTS ATTACHED TO A DESTINATION? IF SO, THEN WHY: IN THE EYE OF THE RESIDENTS**

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## **Abstract**

Place attachment is known as the bond or the connection with the people or the places positively. In the beginning it was the connection with the built environment, however later it is found that it is not only a functional attachment, which is defined as place dependency but also an emotional attachment which is known as place identity. While place dependence is related to the physical character of the place, the place identity is about the emotions and relations that give the meaning to life. However, these concepts are for the visitors/tourists. In other words tourist makes the bond with the place. In this study, this bond is questioned by the local people; what do the local people think about the tourists' attachment feeling? Do local people think tourists visit the destination due to place attachment feelings? And if so, what are the attributes that pull them to the destination and the push factors that make them visit the destination?

Kuşadası is the second destination where tourism in Turkey has developed. With its more than 103.000 residents, every year nearly two million tourists visit the destination for different purposes as it is a resort destination for sea-sand-sun; a cultural destination located near to the Ephesus ancient place and a religious place near to the Virgin Mary house where pilgrims visit. The study is conducted in Kuşadası, and 295 questionnaire were analysed. The level of attachment according to the local people and the push-pull attributes that effect the attachment are found out.

## **Keywords**

Place attachment, push-pull factors, destination attributes.

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# INTERPRETIVE –STRUCTURAL MODEL OF COMPETITIVENESS INDICATORS IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM: CASE STUDY OF SOUTH KHORASAN

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## Abstract

Nowadays competition, as an economic concept has been a great influence on sustainable development of the travel and tourism industry. The aim of this study was to present a structural interpretative model of South Khorasan province competitiveness indicators in travel and tourism based on the World Economic Forum report in 2015 year. Due to its practical implications for South Khorasan authorities and policymakers of tourism industry in identifying and ranking factors affecting the competitiveness of tourism is among applied research that used descriptive- survey design for data collection. Interviewing ten executive- scientific tourism experts, the content validity of the findings was verified. The mentioned model was used for indicators ranking. Finally, 13 key indicators were presented on 4 levels. Findings have shown the necessity of obtaining a visa in the lowest level (related to the legal Tourism regulations) as the independent variable, has low leverage and dependency. Internet broadband per 100 people (related to environmental readiness), as the dependent variable, has high dependency and low leverage. The rates of employee training, the estate agents use of Internet, government spending in tourism, World historic registration sites, easy access to skilled labor, tourism industry priority for the government, roads quality, sustainable development of travel and tourism industry, the environmental laws enforcement and how to deal with the client as link variables, have high leverage and high dependency. These are unstable variables because the slightest changes on these variables affect other variables and eventually would have undesirable feedback on themselves. Finally, reliability of police services (related to safety and security dimension) as independent variables, have high leverage and low dependency rate.

## Keywords

Competitiveness Indicators, Structural Interpretative Model, World Economic Forum, Validity.

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# **SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING TRENDS IN TOURISM**

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## **Abstract**

Advertising in our days is moving to the social media since consumers are spending more and more time on such platforms that offer very customized information for each user. Facebook, for example, is trying to bring each person the most meaningful content.

This means the advertising is ultra-customized based on the user activity and preferences, but this kind of personalisation can easily have an unpleasant side effect, like was the case of BMW that promoted a WeChat (China most popular messaging app) campaign based on the profile data, so the message was actually displayed only for the users showing some potential to buy this brand of exclusive cars. The side effect was a huge wave of complains from the users not seeing the message, simply because they started to consider themselves as losers and being angry on BMW.

The advertising for touristic destinations can become very complex by using fine-tuned campaigns triggered by user consumption patterns revealed in the digital world. Only by clicking on a picture from Bali, the social app can suggest destinations, hotels and related services to the user. Or, the campaign may work in the opposite way, by viewing holiday pictures from Greece the social media app will show some destinations from other countries, like Turkey.

By adding a button like “buy now”, the social media apps can easily integrate important e-commerce features, so the advertising of today is not only about presenting the content but also about instantly buying products and services. Such a combination between social media, advertising and e-commerce, all together mixed in a single application, could be a real booster for the future of the tourism.

## **Keywords**

Social Media, services, e-commerce, tourism, advertising.

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# BETTER BRAND MANAGEMENT THROUGH DESIGN THINKING

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## **Abstract**

The world is evolving fast, and in a global society that is developing at an astounding pace, borders of any kind are eliminated one at a time. Moreover, the competition between companies is becoming fiercer and fiercer, so the differentiation of products and services has gradually turned into a real necessity. In this context, design thinking is one of the elements that is currently drawing new directions, often being associated with the innovation process and the gain of competitive advantages. Recent studies show that design principles applied at a strategic level, especially in the field of innovation, significantly increase its success rate. Design thinking focuses on obtaining solutions and is action oriented, providing all the necessary premises in order to discover new market needs and, moreover, to satisfy them.

Another extremely important element in the current global context is brand, which gives the main points of differentiation for offers existing on the market. A correct and efficient management of the brand supports the creation of strong emotional relationships with consumers, bringing competitive advantages, especially by increasing their loyalty. As a result, brand management is an area of particular interest, and design thinking, together with innovation, can successfully support its specific actions, bringing with them the benefits of creativity, that translate into defining new concepts for attracting consumers and their trust.

The present article intends to investigate some of the important aspects of innovation and design-centered thinking in order to identify their impact on brand management.

## **Keywords**

Brand management, design thinking, innovation, development strategy, performance.

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# **DETERMINANTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE TOURISM MULTIPLIER EFFECT IN EUROPEAN ECONOMIES. TOWARDS A CORE-PERIPHERY PATTERN?**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is considered an opportunity for ensuring sustainable growth and reducing economic gaps for many less developed countries and regions. Being one of the most dynamics industries, tourism proves to be strongly resilient, with a high level of involvement and multiplication for receiver economies.

The total contribution of tourism to the economy is built from direct, indirect and induced effects. An interesting observation is that the total contribution is often several times larger than the direct effects of tourism on the economy. The multiplication potential is, however, dependent upon a series of factors (endogenous and exogenous), and the tourism multiplier effect could be very different from one economy to another (and sometimes even inside the same economy).

A comparative study of tourism multiplier effects (on GDP and jobs creation) at national level for European economies (according to UNWTO classification) was conducted. The study was based on several indicators and indexes (GDP/capita, GDP growth, competitiveness, economic diversification, index of economic freedom, institutional index).

The main goal of the research was to identify the macroeconomic indicators responsible for higher values of tourism multiplier effect. Another objective was to put into perspective the potential of tourism in reducing disparities between developed and less developed economies.

The research results indicated that the values for tourism multiplier effect (both in terms of GDP contribution and jobs creation) were higher for the Eastern and Nordic countries. However, a closer analysis which involved the competitiveness of tourism, the global investment in tourism sector for each country, and the degree of economic diversification distinguished several differences in the West-East pattern.

We obtained evidence regarding the potential contribution of tourism to core-periphery structural convergence from a macroeconomic perspective and suggested measures for strengthening tourism contribution to gap diminishment between European countries.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, Europe, tourism multiplier effect, core-periphery pattern.

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# **PREFERENCES, BIASES AND STEREOTYPES IN ROMANIAN TOURISTS' BEHAVIOUR**

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## **Abstract**

In the past decades the Romanian tourist market has expanded exponentially as more Romanians choose to spend their vacations abroad and many travel agencies are willing to supply this increasing demand. Since there are so many variables that need to be accounted for when choosing a travel package and so many options to choose from one can notice that sometimes the purchase process could be suboptimal.

Following this rationale, this paper inquires into the decision making process in order to analyse how rational biases such as confirmation, in-group, positive expectation, post-purchase rationalization, observational selection, negativity, bandwagon effect, projection, anchoring and also affective biases such as overconfidence, endowment or loss-aversion shape the consumption behaviour of the Romanian tourists.

From a methodological perspective we use cross-sectional data collected from questionnaires in order to design a behavioural pattern of the Romanian tourist and to assess how this behaviour is subjected to a number of variables. Our findings reveal occurring biases in the purchasing behaviour on the travel services market.

## **Keywords**

Tourist, behaviour, preferences, biases, stereotypes.

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# **THE COOPERATION IN CLUSTERS, A STRATEGY FOR THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**

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## **Abstract**

The term cluster is used in any group of activities to achieve the relationship and to develop various areas of interest. Clusters can be combined naturally with the growth of the market for any type of association, raise the level of performance of the company but also the area of interest in which it operates. The growth is due to increased competitiveness of clusters on the occurrence of several companies operating in the same field. This evolution of clusters can also slow when the economy is in trouble.

Clusters vary from one company to another depending on the activity, the area in which they operate and activity of networking with other institutions in the areas of interest. The tourist destination organization could contribute to the regional development by implementing in its development policy the strategy of a cluster association.

This paper provides an overview of the investigation of the term cluster with an emphasis on the level of knowledge of the term. The recent development of this sort of association is increasingly taken into considerations by investors and also by policymakers, interested in regional development of economy. Our hypothesis considers that the term cluster, regarding the association for the regional economic development, could be a good strategy for Romanian firms and particularly for destination management organization. In this paper, based on the exploratory research and a pilot survey, we show that the term cluster, on the perspective of economic growth, is moderately known and his impact on the economic development is rather unclear. Regarding the management of tourism destination, the association in clusters prepare for a long-term development support for tourism, integrated in the European development strategy. For a tourism destination organization, the association in a regional non industrial cluster provides consistency for the development policy and strategy, growth the institutional and companies relationship, improve legislation, touristic product development and diversification, marketing, tourism infrastructure, rise the economic impact of tourism, attract new investors and enhances the human resource development.

## **Keywords**

Cluster, development, growth, regional development, tourism destination, development policy.

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# **THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – A CROSS-COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is one of the main economic activities in many countries. The core idea of this paper is to present the direct, indirect and induced impacts of tourism to GDP in Romania, Spain and Turkey during 2000 - 2016. Thus, the aim of the present paper is three-fold.

The first is to analyze the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in these three countries - total spending on tourism by residents and non-residents for business and leisure purposes for each of the specified countries, as well as the spending by government on tourism services directly related to visitors. The direct contribution of tourism to GDP is calculated from total internal spending.

The second is to analyze the indirect contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in these three countries, which includes the GDP and jobs supported by tourism investment spending (such as construction of new hotels), government spending in order to help tourism activity in many different ways (tourism promotion, administration, aviation) and domestic purchases of goods and services by the sectors dealing directly with tourists (such as, purchases of catering services by airlines or purchases of IT services by travel agencies).

The third is to analyze the induced contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in these three countries which measures the GDP and jobs supported by the spending of those who are directly or indirectly employed by the tourism sector.

We will compare the results between the three analyzed countries and we will discuss potential best practices.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, Direct, indirect and induced impact, Development, Romania, Spain, Turkey.

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# **DINESCAPE, SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY**

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## **Abstract**

The dining atmosphere is an important factor for creating satisfaction and loyalty in restaurants. The aim of this study is to find out the factors that influences the satisfaction and loyalty of the restaurant customers in fine dining fish restaurants. Data is collected from customers during the dining experience in fine dining fish restaurants located in a resort destination in Turkey via questionnaire. According to the results, the factors that created dinescape are of four factors which are light & ambiance, aesthetics, table layout and service staff. However, using a structural equation modelling analysis, the study showed that only service staff and aesthetics have influenced satisfaction and loyalty.

## **Keywords**

Dinescape, satisfaction, loyalty, physical environment, fine-dining.

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# **THE IMPORTANCE OF GREEN MARKETING IN REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SPORT EVENTS**

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## **Abstract**

Sport is a social and cultural phenomenon defining people's life of all ages, and can be used as a platform for solving various social issues. As society is becoming more and more concerned with the natural environment, also businesses have to respond to these concerns. The aim of the current paper is to analyse how green marketing can support the reduction of the environmental impact of sport events and have an educative impact. The research is an exploratory analysis about the practices of green marketing during sport events, focusing on corporate social responsibility practices, marketing strategies, communication plans and marketing campaigns. The result shows that social responsibility has become increasingly prevalent in the sport industry in recent years, but “greening” has to be planned well in advance, the roles and responsibilities of different players need to be well established with an appropriate budget allocated and sound partnerships with stakeholders.

## **Keywords**

Sport events, Green Marketing, Environmental Impact, Social responsibility.

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# INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM

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## Abstract

Tourism is one of the most dynamics sectors that is considered to be an important illustration of the new geography development in the past years, mostly with respect to an important creative and cultural industries, cultural tourism. It has an important potential to stimulate entrepreneurship and social innovation by creating new jobs mostly dedicated to the creative class and by contributing a lot to a long-run smart, sustainable and inclusive local development.

Currently, touristic destinations have to face global competition in retaining their positions in the top preference of the travellers, striving to offer great customer experience through their products and services. Innovation can arise in the tourism industry, as well as in many other industries, in order to meet the cultural diversity and customers' expectations, and it can involve various forms of innovation with respect to process, products, logistic and market.

Our paper supports the idea that the tourism industry and mostly the cultural tourism can advance through innovative entrepreneurship, by introducing new methods of production, new delivery methods or simply new products or services that will attract customers. Although the tourism industry is usually thought to be less innovative, not being included in the creative sectors, the majority of small medium businesses that activate in this sector hold valuable resources in terms of knowledge, creativity and innovation.

Since innovation involves doing things in a different and better manner, our paper's most important goal is to identify the available innovative methods that can be applied to the tourism industry, with a special reference to the cultural tourism, as well as the main challenges and opportunities that might arise by applying them. The perspective of creative economy and knowledge-based society concerning the impact of creativity and innovation on the regional development will also be considered.

The paper will also include a series of best practice examples of innovation in tourism, together with a comparative analysis of the successfully implemented innovative ideas in this field of activity by highlighting also the impact on the customer experience and local economy development.

## Keywords

Tourism, cultural tourism, innovative entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship.

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# **CULTURAL HERITAGE, TOURISM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES: THE CASE OF THE SAXONS' FORTIFIED CHURCHES OF TRANSYLVANIA**

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## **Abstract**

Some 720000 Romanian and international tourists are expected to visit this year the fortified churches of Transylvania, with 10 % more by comparison to the previous year. More than 150 medieval fortified churches have been built by the Saxons established in the perimeter of the Seven Cities (Brașov, Sibiu, Sebeș, Cluj, Bistrița, Mediaș and Sighișoara) of the Siebenbürgen in the first decades of the 13th century. Erected with the main scope to provide a stronghold for their small rural communities in front of the various perils of those times, the walls of the fortified churches are still standing to remember a history that, fortunately, has proven to be slightly milder than expected by their builders and represent nowadays an enormous, yet less acknowledged and undercapitalized by their owners. As a proof of their power to picture vividly the cultural landscape of Transylvania, seven of these fortified churches - Biertan, Prejmer, Viscri, Dârjiu, Saschiz, Călnic and Valea Viilor - have been included, since 2010, on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Still, tens of other fortified churches or citadels from the former Saxon villages could deserve a similar honor.

Using secondary data regarding the existing cultural heritage, its tourism marketing related environment and the performances of cultural tourism, as well as the primary data provided by representatives of the stakeholders of this heritage, the paper assesses the ways local communities succeed to capitalize a cultural heritage of more than 800 years old by attracting tourists to discover, explore, experience and enjoy it in order to support their sustainable local development.

## **Keywords**

Cultural heritage, tourism marketing, sustainable development, local communities.

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# **CULTURAL AND RURAL TOURISM: POTENTIAL SYNERGIES FOR A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN. THE ITALIAN CASE**

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## **Abstract**

Thanks to its important naturalistic, historical, cultural and artistic heritage, Italy is one of the Countries with the greatest touristic vocation in the world.

As consequence, tourism is the most important productive sector in Italian economy, with an impact just below 12% on GDP. During the long period of economic crisis that affected the major world economies, between 2008 and 2014, some parts of the Italian tourism, including seaside for example, declined. This decline, at an aggregate level, has been however balanced by the development of cultural tourism. This also thanks to the increase of external demand: the number of foreign visits went from 140 million in 2000 to more than 190 million in 2016, without any decline also over the hardest period of the above mentioned economic crisis.

About 37% of external demand is attributed to expenditures for holidays in art heritage cities and they represent the most dynamic part of Italian tourism. Although with more modest absolute values, agritourism and food and wine tourism are dynamic parts of Italian tourism too and, sometimes, they are linked with cultural tourism. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the development of cultural tourism, agritourism and food and wine tourism can be a single goal of economic policy aimed at creating new growth strategies in order to overcome the effects of the economic crisis. Organizing as a single economic system the different parts of Italian tourism can be the most coherent action in order to cope with the different development needs and potentialities of Italy whose economic system is traditionally linked to the territorial values.

## **Keywords**

Cultural tourism, growth strategies; agritourism, art heritage cities.

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# THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM UPON INCOMING TOURISTS COUNTRIES

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## Abstract

The article highlights the fact that the recent wave of terrorist attacks took place in countries such as France, Belgium, Great Britain and Turkey, which are also major incoming tourists destinations. The article aims at highlighting that there is a correlation between the occurrence of those major terrorist incidents, many of which are of a lone-wolf type, and the diminution of incoming tourists' activity in those countries. As tourism is an important economic activity, the terrorist attacks have a heavy negative impact upon the economies of the countries where they occur.

## Keywords

Tourism, terrorist attacks, lone-wolf terrorism.

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# **RURAL TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

## **CASE STUDY: SEQALE, FERDOS, IRAN**

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*<sup>3</sup> Geography and Tourism Planning, Iran*

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### **Abstract**

The objectives of rural tourism entrepreneurship, sustainable development in rural areas and in this regard, addressing the traditional essence of rural tourism is all -absorbing elements. The elements that shape the economy, livelihood and social relations in the rural villages of relativity and the activities of the original villages. Native crafts such as carpet, agricultural production such as breeding of animals and the production process can be used as part of the attractions of rural tourism and rural entrepreneurs is impressive .This study using documentary research, field data and are preparing the SeQale in the village (Ferdos) in the fields of rural tourism entrepreneurs. This applied research, development and methods of descriptive analysis. This study analyzes the spatial distribution of elements in space tourism and examine their impact on entrepreneurs. Results show the traditional architecture, local production in the agricultural sector and the fabric of the potential of entrepreneurship in rural tourism are the Seqale.

### **Keywords**

Seqale , rural entrepreneurship , rural tourism.

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# THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMANIAN RURAL TOURISM SECTOR

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## Abstract

The main goal of the present paper is to provide a clear assessment of the rural tourism, from a regional perspective, for the case of Romania, over the period 2007 – 2016. Furthermore, the paper aims to highlight the main drivers of rural tourism in Romania using principal component analysis for mixed data for panel data and also to identify the main regional poles of development using the cluster analysis. The method developed by Chavent et al. (2012) combines the principal component analysis for numerical data with the multiple correspondence analysis for categorical variables.

The paper also wishes to identify the main development opportunities for each region and to provide a list of alternatives. The tourism sector has the potential to become one of the growth engines of the Romanian economy so that it can actively contribute to the increase of economic resilience of the national economy. In this general context of the European tourism market with extremely strong players and also taking in consideration the geographical characteristics of Romania the development of the rural tourism sector becomes a very appealing alternative which can boost Romanian attractiveness on a very competitive market.

## Keywords

Rural tourism, principal component analysis, regional development, regional disparities, resilience of the economy.

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# TOURISM AND RESILIENCE

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## Abstract

“Crises in tourism” is the ideological approach to this article, where we have intensively analysed the information, focusing on the negative effects of tourism, being caused by different types of crises such as economic crises, political crises, technological crises, tourism and health crises, socio-cultural conflicts, and especially terrorism, causing the greatest negative impact on tourism. The last part of the article looks at crisis management and its stages: the pre-crisis phase, the actual stage and the post-crisis phase. We notice that “Tourism is victorious also after the economic crisis”, due to the increase of tourism even during the years of crisis 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, both now and globally, as well as at the national level of Romania, which also benefited from tourism increases, because man despite catastrophes, terrorist acts and economic crisis continues to travel. Following the analysis, we deduced that tourism is a strong point on the world economy even if it is affected by various phenomena. The concept of resilience and its specific application and relevance for tourism is especially applied for touristic destinations. Resistance refers to the ability of organisms, communities, ecosystems and populations to withstand the effects of external forces while preserving their integrity and ability to continue to function. This applies especially to touristic destinations and touristic attractions that are exposed to potentially damaging and sometimes severe tourism development and visitation, but can also have greater resistance to the economic benefits of tourism.

## Keywords

Resilience, touristic destinations, adaptive capacity, tourism.

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# **ECOTOURISM, AGRO-TOURISM AND RURAL TOURISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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## **Abstract**

Ecotourism, agro-tourism, rural tourism are forms of tourism that emerged in the last century, becoming increasingly important sectors of the tourism industry worldwide. The new kinds of life-style, the evolving tourist behaviour and continuously changing customers' preferences coupled with the widespread concern about environment, industrial heritage and sustainable development are all factors that led to the expansion of these niche market types of tourism. The objectives of this paper are to research important implications and identify significant trends of ecotourism, agro-tourism and rural tourism in the European Union, focusing on the New Member States area, as there is a lot of potential for the expansion of these forms of tourism in the region. The Old Member States earn significant income from agro-tourism, while in the New Member States this is rather an unexploited opportunity, despite the fact that the cultural heritage and number of unspoilt natural areas is much more abundant than in the West. This paper will also look at the policies in this field, as the European Union is very interested and active in supporting agro-tourism and sustainable development, and many policies, programmes and initiatives address the three types of niche tourism. Key features, economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits, as well as current and future challenges for ecotourism, agro-tourism and rural tourism in the entire European Union, but more thoroughly in the New Member States will also be addressed, with the purpose of creating a comprehensive paper, able to convince the scholars and practitioners in the field to pay more attention to this rather new topic, as a proactive approach can enable investments and attract more tourists to the area.

## **Keywords**

Ecotourism, agro-tourism, rural tourism, sustainable development, EU policies, niche tourism.

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# **THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.**

## **DARK TOURISM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND SERBIA**

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### **Abstract**

In the early 1990s, the Balkans faced some of the most violent military confrontations since the end of the Second World War. As a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the borders have been redesigned on the map of Europe and new states have emerged. Some of these countries have succeeded in becoming members of Euro-Atlantic structures. While Montenegro became a NATO member, and Slovenia and Croatia have integrated into both NATO and the European Union, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be affected by frozen conflicts and interethnic tensions. From a geopolitical point of view, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are located in the heart of the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans is a concept used in the specialized literature and by international institutions precisely to differentiate states that are not yet part of the Euro-Atlantic structures from the rest of the neighboring countries.

The research aims to analyze the evolution of tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and the socio-economic impact of dark tourism in the context of these post-conflict societies. Tourism was an important economic component for countries such as Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro and it could be a good development opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia also.

The novelty of the research is to analyze the socio-economic impact that dark tourism can have in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The methodology used implied, on the one hand, field research in both countries, in order to identify the tourism potential - with emphasis on dark tourism heritage on both countries. Also, on the other hand, a series of statistical indicators were analyzed in order to identify the correlations between the tourist phenomenon and the socio-economic evolution of the two countries.

### **Keywords**

Dark Tourism, Post-conflict societies, Western Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia.

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# FROM HUMAN TOURIST GUIDING TO VIRTUAL GUIDING IN BUCHAREST. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## Abstract

Tourist Mobility represents the movement of tourists reaching different routes to a particular tourism destination. With organized tours, destinations are selected by tour-operators and the seller is supposed to offer clients all comparable supplies. With self-organized tours, in contrary, information sources are wider and include also mobility towards secondary destinations.

Tourists are now traveling both on the internet and with the internet and they are attached to virtual places, and virtual tours could impact the traditional ways of travel particularly as technology advances.

With a total of 149 accommodation units, Bucharest city was visited by 1.9 million tourists, from which 1.1 million foreign tourists in 2016. The foreign tourists overnights registered in Bucharest in 2016 were 1,869,820 and the length of stay was 1.7 days so they have at least 1 day to visit our city.

The main purpose of our study is focused in examining a new concept of self-tourism mobility in Bucharest. The methodology follows several steps starting from pinpointing the requirements related to a functional touristic system (the number of tourist information centres, the number of organized city tours, and the number of city bus tours and their frequency along the season). Moving to the opportunities, the paper will discuss the role of virtual channels of communication and information in guiding foreign tourists across the urban space (investigating the number of interactive online applications for visiting Bucharest and the number of daily views, the number of the most popular tourism blogs and their accessed frequency).

The project consists in connecting the main touristic places in Bucharest through an orange line painted on the sidewalks giving tourists the opportunity to self-visit our city without the need of a human tourist guide. The travel experience is born from tourist mobility (either physical or virtual) and the tourist's itinerary in Bucharest will be proposed in our paper.

In the end some conclusions are to be made and some thoughts on future research directions will be taken into consideration.

## Keywords

Tourist Mobility, virtual guiding, self-tourism, travel.

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# THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROMANIAN BAKERY INDUSTRY: AN ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

Bread represents a fundamental dietary item and a valuable commodity for most of the people around the world. Since its emergence, the bakery industry has been considered as a key sector of the economy. It has witnessed a profound revolution over the past 150 years as different baking technologies were designed and developed in order to better respond to various market demands, new ingredients were introduced in bread composition and nutritionally superior products were created and launched on the market. From a number of reasons, the Romanian bakery industry provides a provocative example for an empirical study in the context of the changing economic environment of a former communist country from Eastern Europe. First, the industry deserves an independent examination owing to the significant number of Romanian consumers. Second, the major players from the bakery industry are both Romanian and foreign companies. Third, the Romanian bakery industry comprises both big companies with a national coverage and small local companies. Fourth, the Romanian economy made in a considerable proportion the transition from a central planned economy to a market economy, and therefore, the private companies have become dominant.

The paper aims to analyse the evolution of the Romanian bakery industry in the last years from an entrepreneurial point of view. In this respect, it takes into account several indicators such as the number of companies, their turnover and number of employees. The methodological approach is based on a case study. The paper shows that entrepreneurship has played an important role in the evolution of the Romanian baker industry.

## Keywords

Bakery industry, entrepreneurship, market economy, empirical study.

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# **MEDICAL TOURISM: FACTORS, TRENDS AND DESTINATIONS**

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## **Abstract**

Medical tourism is a highly growing trend globally, with an average of 6 million people traveling yearly to other countries with the sole purpose to get medical care. This number does not take into account people who travel within their own country from region to another for the same purpose. The global market was worth USD10.5 billion in 2012 and is expected to grow to reach an estimated value higher than 100 billion USD in 2019.

This paper will base itself on a the statistical and numerical data that is published by the leading authorities in the field of tourism as well as data and research from various high profile associations and organizations that specialize in the domain of tourism. The gathered data will be analyzed and an assessment of the leading countries in the field of medical tourism will be drawn, these countries will be evaluated in order to determine the main trends and influences that govern the behavior of tourists on the look for better medical services abroad.

At the end of the analysis, it expected to demonstrate that the main factors that overlook the medical tourism practice are the search for a high quality medical service at a reasonable price. It is also expected to demonstrate that in addition to the cost/quality ratio, patients are on the look for ease of access as well as speed of medical treatment.

The elements that will be established in this paper as the main factors behind medical tourism could be the basis of further study and lead to the development and ameliorations of the touristic potential of countries especially those with low touristic attractions.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, Medical Services, Best Practices, Health Insurance, Patient Care.

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# **TOURISM AND GEOPOLITICAL RISKS**

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## **Abstract**

This study captures the new context of the development of contemporary tourism activity in a special framework: the emergence of geopolitical risks. Tourism, an expression of freedom, has become more and more conditioned by geopolitics, as a manifestation of power. What are the effects, how the tourism activity is geographically reconfigured are just some of the questions that give rise to the research hypotheses of this study, focusing particularly on the European area and its proximity.

## **Keywords**

Tourism, geopolitics, geopolitical risks, terrorism, terrorist attack, European Union.

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# **THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF TOP BUCHAREST HOTEL SERVICES THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE REVIEWS**

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## **Abstract**

The ever increasing demand on the Bucharest hotel market leads to new investments and, in general, to a strong market dynamics. At the top 5 star category, there are 10 hotels, most of which belonging to international hotel chains (through management and franchise contracts) or enclosing into the category of boutique hotel units. The purpose of this paper is to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of the units rated at 5 stars in terms of customer comments. For this, the opinions expressed on the website [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) were reviewed for the period March - August 2017. Moreover, according to sources inside the industry, in 2017, hotels in Romania receive around 41% more reviews compared to last year. In addition to total scores (between 9.30 and 7.90 on a scale from 10 to 1), as well as for a number of well-established categories (between 9.05 for cleaning and 6.7 for paid WIFI, for all hotels), the authors identify the detail issues that led to those grades. Thus, the customer reviews allow not only to identify the perceived pluses and minuses, but also the ranking of hotels according to the different categories, giving an overview of the Bucharest's 5 star hotel market.

## **Keywords**

Hospitality, hotel services, management, review, Romania.

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# **CURRENT BUSINESS TOURISM REFERENCES. CASE STUDY - HOTEL NOVOTEL BUCHAREST**

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## **Abstract**

Business tourism has proven to be an important part of the hospitality industry in terms of both travel volumes and generated revenue. This type of activity, far from being a novelty, has expanded and seems destined to continue to grow at a higher rate every year. Growth is particularly marked by international events that bring important financial gains to host cities, generated not only by these activities, but also by the multiplier effect of all tourism activities.

The motivation for the chosen theme results from the fact that in the hospitality industry, business tourism is a segment in which a variety of events can be organized, such as: local, regional and national conferences and meetings - organized by associations and corporations, congresses and conventions, international courses, trainings and induction courses, fairs, exhibitions, product launches, motivation tourism, exchanges addressed to students and teachers, travel of government employees, etc., with major economic impact both at national and international level for the development of society. The evolution of business tourism in Bucharest provides a strengthening of business relations, investments, more efficient use of hotel structures and obvious increases in revenues.

The starting point of this research is represented by an analysis of the current context of the evolution of business tourism and the identification of its potential at the level of the Capital of Romania. Our analysis shows that there is a correlation between the hotel sector specific to events organizing services and the development of the business tourism segment. The case study on the Novotel Hotel in Bucharest brings to light the following striking themes in the field of tourism: the organization of business events as an engine for economic growth and the attraction of new tourists, as well as the impact of events in the MICE industry on the reduction of seasonality in the Capital.

Research based solely on the processing of secondary data does not present issues related to the subjectivity of tourists nor does it present the point of view of the providers. Thus, the analysis of the events organized at the Novotel Hotel in Bucharest during the period 2012-2016 reflects that the business tourism is specific to the area of events, conferences, business meetings, etc., may have an effect in reducing the seasonality in Bucharest, but also in increasing the economic profit for the hotel industry.

## **Keywords**

Business travel, MICE industry events, seasonality, profit.

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# THE DESTINATION EXPERIENCE THROUGH “STOPOVER TOURISM”

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Cristina Stoenescu<sup>4</sup>

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## Abstract

On the international tourism market, the tourist destination competition is steadily increasing. Beyond natural and cultural attractions, infrastructure plays an essential role in promoting tourism destinations, and air travel is sometimes a decisive argument.

Over the years, the evolution of the air transport sector has determined important changes in the tourism industry. One of the consequences of the liberalization of air transport is the development of the “hub-and-spoke” system, used by traditional airlines in order to be more efficient in a highly competitive environment. As air traffic significantly developed worldwide, “hubs” have become highly connected places concentrating an increasing number of transit passengers. At the same time, the liberalization of the airline industry has stimulated both airline and airport competition, therefore, vertical partnerships have become an interesting option for airlines, as well as airports. Moreover, considering that, transiting traffic represents a potential tourism market, tourism destination organizations have also started to get involved in the process. “Stopover tourism” is a new type of tourism based on the partnership between airlines, airports and Destination Management Organizations, with the purpose to turn transit passengers into stayover tourists.

This paper focuses on building a better understanding of the “stopover tourism” concept, identifying the best practices used by several destinations and finding ways to apply the concept in Romania. In order to achieve these objectives, the research was conducted using analysis of secondary data included in several scientific journals and publications, case studies, as well as primary data collection, through qualitative research, having as interviewees experts from the airline industry, from Destination Management Organizations and airport representatives. Based on their input, a proposal has been made for the development of stopover tourism in Henri Coandă Airport, respectively in Bucharest.

## Keywords

Stopover tourism, tourism experience, Destination Management Organisation, air transport sector, hub.

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# RESEARCH ON THE INNOVATION ACTIVITY OF TRAVEL AGENCIES: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

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## Abstract

Considering the constant developments in the economic environment, there has been an increasing focus on the topic of innovation. However, the research contributions on this topic in the tourism industry are still scarce and numerous issues still need to be addressed, since the classical innovation literature mainly took into consideration the manufacturing industries. Innovation research in the tourism industry should be most appreciated, as it represents a valuable tool for understanding the dynamics of each specific business sector, providing deeper insights that may prove helpful not only for industry's representatives, but also for policy makers. As a result, this article presents an exploratory study, conducted using a questionnaire-based survey among all travel agencies officially registered in Romania. The research addressed the most important innovation categories recognized in literature: product and service innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, management innovation and organizational innovation. The main aim of the research was to indicate whether travel agencies have an innovative behaviour, if managers in this type of organizations perceive innovation as a key for obtaining competitive advantage and consequently if their organizations have innovation-related objectives. The results are interesting, as they highlight whether travel agencies in Romania have developed a culture of innovation. Moreover, the study presents empirical evidence on the sectors in which travel agencies tend to be more innovative. Based on these results, an agenda for future, more comprehensive research can be established, aiming to develop further studies on the innovation activity and its impact on travel agencies' performance and possible influence on the development of tourism, in general.

## Keywords

Innovation, tour-operator, travel agency, tourism.

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# **TOURISTS` PREFERENCES IN THE BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGION**

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*The Bucharest University of Economic Studies*

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## **Abstract**

The dynamism of the tourist market has generated a series of changes in tourism consumption behaviour over time, generating significant efforts of the providers to diversify their offer, in order to meet the ever-increasing demand of tourists. Thus, at international level there are a number of trends in the tourist movement - the shift of interest towards exclusive and authentic experiences, which are based on interaction with the local community, concern for sustainability, personalized holidays and the use of new technologies - which generates important concerns about increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations.

In this context, the study of tourism demand and, in particular, the knowledge of tourists' travel preferences is stated as an indispensable condition (sine-qua-non) of the development of domestic and international tourism in Romania.

The research gap this article addresses relates to the tourism behaviour of tourists from one of the most important regions of Romania, i.e. Bucharest-Ilfov, the capital city area. What are the main factors that influence the most their destination preferences? What is the foundation of their choice for activities once in site? What correlation is there between their average stay and the chosen type of tourism resort? A survey was conducted among the population of the above mentioned area and a descriptive analysis of the results was undertaken in order to address these issues. Also, the implications of the research provide suggestions for future improvements in the creation of tourism products that are addressed to tourists from The Bucharest-Ilfov region, based on their characteristics of tourism behaviour.

## **Keywords**

Tourism preferences, tourism behaviour, tourism consumption.

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# IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY WITH THE SUPPORT OF NETWORKS

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**Carsten Kirschner, Katrin Marquardt and Klaus Singer**  
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## Abstract

Energy efficiency is an important pillar of the European sustainability approach. With increasing scarcity of fossil raw materials improving the energy efficiency helps to gain time for the development of alternative technologies. Furthermore, improvements in the area of energy efficiency are especially important for energy intensive businesses such as hotels. Because prices of fossil fuels keep increasing as a result of diminishing energy reserves, the reduction of energy consumption by increasing energy efficiency becomes a key factor for future competitiveness and sustainability of businesses.

Improving energy efficiency is a field which requires thorough understanding and experience to take proper action. Besides self-education and support through external consultants, there is a cost- and time-efficient alternative: The Energy Efficiency Network (EEN). Amongst others its purposes are: 1. the analyses of the current level of energy efficiency of an organization as well as; 2. the development and implementation of energy efficiency measures.

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the history and the purpose of Energy Efficiency Networks. In the next step, the structure and the process within a typical EEN will be explained. Besides that, the participating parties and their role within the network shall be pointed out. Furthermore, the benefits, but also the limitations of participation in energy efficiency networks have been analysed and will be explained. Thus, it shall provide managers with sufficient information and knowledge to make a good and mature decision whether to participate in an energy efficiency network or not.

Therefore, an intensive literature research on the history and the current status of the EENs was conducted. The findings were analysed, and the results were used as a basis for a deeper field research. For this reason, several meetings of a typical Energy Efficiency Network were attended, and interviews with the participants, the moderator and the presenting technical experts were conducted. The findings were analysed and mirrored with the findings from the literature research.

The results are reflected in this paper and provide a profound insight into the benefits and limitations of Energy Efficiency Networks, and a basis for further management decisions.

## Keywords

Energy, Efficiency, Networks, Sustainability, Networking.

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# **THE DEMAND ANALYSIS OF TOURISM ECO-SUSTAINABLE GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE RETEZAT NATIONAL PARK BASED ON THE YOUNG ROMANIAN TOURISTS' PREFERENCES**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to analyze young Romanian tourists' preferences regarding the demand of tourism eco-sustainable goods and services offered by the Retezat National Park. Therefore, our analysis' purpose is to examine the following variables: young Romanian tourists' motivations to visit the Retezat National Park, their preferences regarding the demand of tourism eco-sustainable products and services, their eco-sustainable criteria used in order to book the accommodation and their future eco-sustainable recreational activities in the park. The study results relies on the cross-sectional survey as a research method, which is based on a self-completed questionnaire with 18 categories projected to reply to the research questions. Generally, this study contributes to the literature by informing the Retezat National Park administrators about the preferences of the young Romanian tourists regarding the demand for tourism eco-sustainable goods and services in order to create an suitable ecotourism offer.

## **Keywords**

Goods and services eco-sustainable; young Romanian tourists' preferences.

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# **THE ANALYSIS OF THE TOOLS USED BY NATIONAL PARK OF SIBILLINI MOUNTAINS, ITALY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE TOURISM GOODS AND SERVICES ECO-SUSTAINABLE ON THE MARKET AFTER THE 2016 EARTHQUAKE**

**Gianluca Felicetti\* and Remus Ion Hornoiu**  
*The Bucharest University of Economic Studies*

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine in what extent the local communities from the protected areas implemented the measures, imposed by the national authorities, regarding the reconstruction after a natural disaster, such as earthquake. Therefore, the paper identifies the tools used by the protected areas, after a natural disaster, in order to maintain or re-arrange the tourism management. The paper is based on an exploratory case study of the National Park of Sibillini Mountain, Italy which has been severely damaged and suffered physical changes following the 26th of August, 2016 earthquake. The empirical evidences regarding the tools used by the National Park's management in order to maintain the tourism eco-sustainable goods and services on the market, after this important natural disaster, were collected through secondary data, observation and interview with the park administrators. We report that the Sibillini Mountain National Park's management through the implementation of these tools can react to an important natural disaster, such as earthquake, and maintain their tourism eco-sustainable goods and services on the market.

## **Keywords**

Earthquake; tourism eco-sustainable goods and services; protected areas.

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