
STRATEGIES FOR THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN AREAS IN ROMANIA

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

In the development of mountain areas, and not only, we need to go through a series of stages, which ultimately lead to the creation of a resort or a tourist settlement, with all the necessary facilities to meet the tourists' needs. Therefore, any tourism development must offer optimal conditions for recreation, rest, and relaxation.

In Romania, most of the tourist developments in the mountain areas were made before 1990. Over the years, they were mostly modernized, representing a tourist attraction even on an international level, but others due to the lack of tourists, the way of organization and the degree of endowment, are in disrepair.

Keywords : agritourism, competitiveness, companies

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INTRODUCTION

The mountain areas in Romania are picturesque and meet the selection criteria regarding touristic facilities. As a result, the following aspects can be considered:

- natural conditions, namely relief, climate, hydrography, vegetation, fauna, nature reserves and monuments;
- cultural-historical heritage, with reference to art and culture monuments, ethnographic and folkloric heritage, historical vestiges;
- economic-social conditions, i.e. special emphasis is placed on avoiding the gap between the living conditions of tourists and those of residents (level of development, living conditions of the population);
- the general infrastructure and the level of equipment for culture and recreation, respectively the level of building facilities, starting with the road network and ending with the commercial network, and the level of equipment of the accommodation spaces, in order to meet the requirements of tourists;
- protection of the environment, with reference to creating a balance between the environment and the degree of tourist development.

In Romania, the first tourist development in a mountain area that resulted in the appearance of a mountain tourist resort was realized in Păltiniș, in 1894. After this date, the mountain resorts on

Valea Prahovei-Sinaia, Predeal, Cheia, Bușteni appeared and developed. We must specify the fact that these mountain resorts, despite their age, represent tourist attractions of great value, being attractive throughout the year.

When the Romanian mountain resorts appeared, a series of associations and societies played an important role in their tourist promotion. In the operating status of many of these we can find objectives such as: organizing mountain excursions, building and marking tourist roads and paths in the mountains, building shelters, publishing tourist monographs and editing tourist maps, conducting ski courses, etc.

The tourist facilities in the Romanian mountain areas continued, so we can mention the appearance of the famous mountain resorts Poiana Brașov, Borșa, Durău, Stâna de Vale, Azuga, Voineasa. Some of these, such as the Stâna de Vale resort, although it has a rich and varied natural heritage, lack facilities that would increase the comfort level of the accommodation spaces, and the leisure facilities are few.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methods used in this study were different: the historical method, the comparative method, the sociological method, the logical method and the analytical one, their aim was the

systematic analysis of the information selected from the sources studied in order to develop personal points of view and conclusions about the stated objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The tourist development of mountain areas is a complex process because it answers various questions related to the tourist circulation, the relationship between demand and supply, the degree of satisfaction of tourists, etc.

Each mountain tourism arrangement in Romania was realized according to a plan, respectively according to a strategy.

The development of mountain tourism strategies is carried out in accordance with a series of factors, among which we can mention: tourist resources and their degree of valorization, material, human, and financial resources related to tourism, short, medium, and long-term objectives, the capacity of accommodation facilities to meet the comfort level of tourists, and so on. As a result, tourism strategies must have the following objectives:

- superior capitalization of the mountain tourism potential;
- elimination of the seasonality of mountain tourist activities by equipping them with functional equipment all year round;
- increase in the number of tourists, especially foreigners;
- the practice of multi-purpose tourism in the designed space;
- protection and conservation of tourist attractions and the surrounding environment.

When developing a strategy for mountain tourism development, it is necessary to consider the favorable and unfavorable factors in the area to be developed. Among the multitude of factors taken into account, we can mention: the geographical location, the degree of accessibility determined by the existence of access roads, the relief and meteorological conditions, the picturesqueness of the natural landscape, the degree of humanization of the area, the socio-economic conditions, etc.

In the mountain area, the natural conditions are of particular importance because they

ensure the quality of recreational activities, especially in terms of practicing winter sports.

The tourist product of the mountain areas is the result of the association between the natural conditions, the quality of services, the degree of equipment and comfort, the pleasant and picturesque environment. As a result, the following elements are taken into account: accommodation and catering spaces and services, the ski area with its related facilities, the offer of additional services, environmental protection.

For Romanian mountain tourism, all the elements of the tourist product are important, but a more special sensitivity is presented by the skiing area with its related facilities. Thus, concerns are being considered for the expansion and development of the ski, toboggan, and bobsled slopes; the provision of means of cable transport; organization of winter sports courses. In the Carpathians on the territory of Romania, the ski area is found between 1000 and 1800 m altitude. Some mountain massifs such as Bucegi and Postăvaru have a more complex technical equipment, in others such as Semenic and Parâng, the degree of technical endowment is lower compared to the potential that these massifs hold.

The characteristics that a successful mountain tourism development, for example a resort, must have are:

- location in a space, or near one that presents tourist interest (lake, ski area);
- favorable climate;
- excellent access possibilities or with construction potential;
- the absence of ecological problems;
- the availability of labor to work in the resort or its attraction from other parts of the country;
- enough available land to enter the circuit of tourist facilities;
- the tourist facilities in the resort to give it a particular character;
- to establish connections between resorts and local communities.

According to statistical dates in my country, Romania, domestic tourism and urban territories dominate the sector. Domestic tourism contributed 88 percent of total tourists

and 70 percent of total spending in 2021. The percentage of international visitors declined by 5 percent from 2009 to 2019, indicating that the overall increase came from domestic tourists visiting the region in greater numbers. Urban territories generated 77 percent of the tourism turnover in 2018, and over half of certified travel agencies and tour operators are in urban centers. Tourism in Romania is facing a serious worker shortage, which has existed even before the pandemic due to low pay and structural issues. Tourism accounted for 6.7 percent of Romania's jobs in 2019, but this decreased to 6 percent in 2020 before recovering to 6.3 percent in 2021.

The Romanian Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism reports a need for 50,000 more tourism workers due to the sustained increase in demand for employment in the sector.

The elaboration of the strategy for the development of mountain tourism in Romania must take into account a number of aspects that, first of all, attract a growing number of foreign tourists, taking into account the fact that on the territory of the European continent there are countries with a tradition of practicing mountain tourism and winter sports: Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy.

CONCLUSIONS

Romania, as a member of the European Union, has a number of opportunities, which it must be able to capitalize in order to become an attractive tourist destination.

Any model postulates the fact that the tourist destinations tend to experiment five distinct development stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. According to the reaction of the managers of the destination in stagnation, various scenarios are possible, including the decline, the stabilisation, the rejuvenating and the reinvention. Within the consolidation and the stagnation stages, the managers must intervene and act in order to avoid the unwanted decline of the respective tourist destination. That is why, it is very important to organise a Destination Management (DMO – Destination Management Organisation), whose stages of governance ensure the destination sustainability, too

The complexity of the landscaping actions, the variety of methods and techniques used involve a large number of specialists and institutions from various fields. The coordination of the development activity falls under the responsibility of some commercial companies and economic agents.

In order to promote Romanian mountain tourism, it is necessary to take measures to act both within the companies providing mountain tourism services and on the potential clients. The promotion of Romania as an internal and external tourist destination in the following years can be achieved

Mountain tourism development represents a particular form of national tourism development, the specificity elements being determined by the stay and movement of tourists, to which is added the management of resources that constitute tourist attractions.

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