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A STUDY CONCERNING RURAL BANAT TOURISM MARKET

STUDIU PRIVIND PIAȚA TURISTICĂ A BANATULUI RURAL

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Abstract: *To optimise exchange of tourism products we need to direct marketing towards production, sales, and particularly in the case of ethnic and religious tourism, towards societal marketing characterised by market-orientation so that it takes into account the welfare of the society and of the environment. To do so, destination marketing needs an increased effort to manage destination resources generating incomes. Banat has an important potential for the development of niche tourism at local level – ethnic and religious tourism – but to do so we need to develop properly the necessary infrastructure.*

Keywords: *market, ethnic tourism, religious tourism, rural area, Banat*

INTRODUCTION

The **tourism market** is the field on which are confronted two forces – **demand** (represented by the tourists in search of tourism products and services that meet certain of their needs) and **offer** (represented by the tourism industry that tries to enhance the demand of tourism products and services). In this context, **marketing** is the process regulating the exchange between the two forces or, as Kotler *et al*. (5) said, "a social and managerial

process through individuals and groups of individuals get what they need by developing and exchanging products and services".

Experts have suggested that tourism also should make the same steps towards marketing orientation as any other industry and become:

- *production-oriented*, characterised by the lack of available goods and services (a seller's market);
- *sale-oriented*, characterised by mass production and, therefore, by increased competition, low prices and more goods and services than demanded (a consumer's market);
- *marketing-oriented*, characterised by the need of identifying consumers' needs to achieve optimal consumer's satisfaction with proper profit for the producer and/or supplier of tourism products and services;
- *societal marketing-oriented*, characterised by an orientation of the market meant to take into account the welfare of society and of environment (4, 6, and 8).

Mitchell (2) shows that **destination marketing** needs both a sustained effort of managing destination resources and of generating incomes from tourism business, and taking into account all social issues that have no relationship whatsoever with tourism market – the latter as part of the corporatist strategy of sustainable development. This new concept resulted in a paradigmatic change of the objectives of tourism business, objectives that no longer consist in **maximising the owners' value** but in **maximising the value of everybody involved in tourism business** (employees, customers, creditors, directors, clerks in the state administration, owners, suppliers, members of the local community, trade unions) – which points to the involvement of social responsibility factors.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Our market research aimed at analysing the following: seasonality of tourist traffic depending on the type of tourism chosen; models of purchase of stays; types of tourism traffic; tourism basins; profile of religious tourist and of ethnic tourism, purchase facilities; and unique or multiple destination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For this scientific approach, we took into account the following aspects concerning the tourism market in the studied area**.**

1. Seasonality of tourist traffic depends on the type of tourism chosen by the tourism consumers. Thus, the traffic of tourists practicing religious tourism can be characterised as:

- *seasonal* (it depends on the events and festivals covered by the religious calendar);
- *weekly* (it is practiced mainly on week-end days: the Jewish Shabbat, the Adventist of the 6th day Shabbat, and Christian Sundays);
- *sporadic* (it depends on the budget and on the free time of the secular tourists).

while the traffic of tourists practicing **ethnic tourism** is not conditioned temporarily.

2. Models of purchasing overnight stays. Banat is the week-end destination or even long stay destination for those who have secondary residences. Unfortunately, there are no statistics that illustrate models of purchase of trips and/or overnight stays in the case of religious or ethnic tourism amateurs because these forms of tourism have only started to be practiced large scale in Banat and that particularly by foreign tourists.

3. Type of tourism traffic. Because their novelty, **religious tourism** and **ethnic tourism** are practiced only in extremely rare cases as such. In most cases, these forms of tourism identify with or complete other forms of tourism: business travel, educational trip, fully inclusive tour, tourist package, conference attendance, artistic and cultural incentive, and cultural tourism.

4. Tourism basins. According to what we have mentioned above, we think that the following segments of tourists are **the main religious and ethnic tourism basin of the Banat**: the inhabitants of Banat and of the neighbouring areas in Romania, Serbia, and Hungary; the population of the DKTM; European tourists; tourists from other continents than Europe. Statistic data concerning the religious tourism basin of Romania, for instance, are scarce. Analysing spa tourism, for instance, tourism researchers claim that the number of foreign tourists practicing religious

tourism increased with 28.5% without mentioning the reference period (3, 5, 7, and 8).

5. The religious profile of the religious tourist and of the ethnic tourist. Religious tourists and **ethnic tourists** can be grouped depending on the following criteria: place of origin – mainly the urban area of Banat and of neighbouring areas, the DKTM area, Europe, and other continents; age – seniors, in religious tourism, mature to young, in ethnic tourism; gender – mainly females, in religious tourism, heterogeneous, in ethnic tourism; social status – medium education and low incomes, in religious tourism, medium and higher education and medium to high incomes, in ethnic tourism) (9).

6. Purchase facilities. If, in **religious tourism**, the wish to go shopping is limited by both tourism motivation and level of incomes, in **ethnic tourism** the level of purchases is high due to the wish of purchasing handmade items that preserve the exotic charm of the places visited.

7. Unique/multiple destination. Given the distribution of the wooden churches in Banat, we cannot speak, at least not now, about a unique destination in religious tourism (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the wooden churches in Banat

County	**Town/commune**	**village**	**Specification**
Caraş-Severin	Dognecea	Calina	Orthodox Church
	Fârliug	Valea Mare	Biserica Greco-Catolică din Scăiuş (Icoana Maicii Domnului care a lăcrimat în 1934)
	Forotic	Surducu Mare	Orthodox Church
	Iablanița	Globu Craiovei	Roman-Catholic Church
	Vermeş	Ersig	Orthodox Church
Timiş	Bara	Dobreşti	Orthodox Church
	Brestovăț	Lucăreț	Roman-Catholic Church in Coşarii (1870) Serbian Orthodox Church in Lucareț (1779) Roman-Catholic Church in Brestovăț (1847, 1892) Romanian Orthodox Churches in Brestovăț (1927), Coşarii (1840), Hodoş (1897), Lucareț (1925), Teş (1760)
	CIACOVA	Cebza	Orthodox Church (Monastery)
	Coşteiu	Hezeriş	Orthodox Church
	Curtea	Curtea	Romanian Orthodox Churches in Coşava (1838), Curtea (1796)

		Homojdia	Orthodox Church
	FĂGET	Băteşti	Orthodox Church
		Jupâneşti	Orthodox Church
		Povergina	Orthodox Church
	Fârdea	Zolt	Monastery of the Dormition in Fârdea
	Margina	Bulza	Orthodox Church in Bulza (1830)
		Coşeviţa	Orthodox Church (1900)
		Groşi	Orthodox Church (1741)
		Margina	Orthodox Church in Luncanii de Sus Monastery Miron's Spring in Româneşti
		Nemeşeşti	Orthodox Church (1811)
	Ohaba Lungă	Dubeşti	Orthodox Church
	Pietroasa	Crivina de Sus	Orthodox Church
		Foieni	Orthodox Church
		Pietroasa	Orthodox Church
	Racoviţa	Căpăt	Romanian Orthodox Churches in Drăgoieşti (1784), Ficătăr, Hitiaş, Racoviţa, Sârbova (1690, 1735) Greek-Catholic Churches in Hitiaş, Racoviţa Roman-Catholic Church in Căpăt
	Sacoşu Turcesc	Berini	Orthodox Church
	Secaş	Crivobara	Orthodox Church
	Ştiuca	Dragomireşti	Roman-Catholic Church in Ştiuca (1810) Romanian Orthodox Churches in Oloşag (1767), Zgribeşti (1848) Ukrainian Orthodox Churches in Dragomireşti (2002), Ştiuca (2000)
	Tomeşti	Tomeşti	The Monastery Miron's Spring Monastery in Luncanii de Sus

This is why we think that grouping wooden churches per areas is a better solution for organising religious tours.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to emphasise the fact that ethnic groups themselves cooperate directly to the ethnic tourism experience – purely and simply because they are directly interested (financially) in the success of the ethnic tourism experience. The natives do it encouraged by the state and hoping this will increase their incomes. **Ethnic tourism is often promoted by the state as a catalyst of economic integration and of "modernisation" of**

the populations that live from subsistence activities but contribute, as such, a little to the increase of the state's incomes.

Religious tourism is a form of **pilgrimage tourism** established for hundreds of years and aiming, almost exclusively, at visiting places – wooden churches in Banat or monastic settlements where one can see the relics of saints or of martyrs. **Pilgrimage tourism** or **faith tourism** is, in its turn, of three types: **traditional pilgrimage**, **missionary** or **humanitarian travel**, and **confessional travel**.

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