PARTICULARITIES OF TOURISM DEMAND IN A SPA RESORT, CASE OF VATRA DORNEI, ROMANIA

PARTICULARITĂŢILE CERERII TURISTICE ÎNTR-O STAŢIUNE BALNEOCLIMATERICĂ, STUDIU DE CAZ VATRA DORNEI, ROMÂNIA

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Abstract: *According the development strategies for the Romania tourism, the SPA sector represents one of the main ways of increasing the attractiveness of Romania as a tourist destination. In this context the present paper is focused for identify the main characteristics of the demand in Vatra Dornei as a SPA resort. To achieve the objective of the research a survey was conducted during the summer 2011 in this tourist destination and 150 tourists were interviewed.*

Key words: *SPA development, tourists' preferences,*

INTRODUCTION

Spa tourism in Romania has a significant importance, as there is well-known for its benefits for a longer period of time now. Not only the natural resources but the know-how of the personal involved in offering spa services is recognized inside and outside of Romanian borders, making it a possible solution of tourism development.

In the same time, it must not be neglected the actual state of fact of the most of the facilities, situated outside of the main cites, that offers wellness services are not up-to-dated, their infrastructure is poor: access roads are barely practicable, buildings and logistics are old, medical services are critical. The reputation of Romanian is divided in two different approaches: on the one side it is related to curative services, generally offered to old and ill persons who are there for medical cure and, on the other side, is linked to ludic tourism offered to rich persons for luxurious beauty services.

The number of touristic accommodation facility and of visitors and tourists are directly influenced by the elements mentioned before, so the results of the paper are affected by them and the conclusions have to be filtered accordingly.

Even those, the development strategies of Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism consider this type of tourism a chance and an opportunity for Romanian tourism (Banbdallah and Tomatis, 2009).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This research was conducted in Vatra Dornei SPA resort located in the South-West Part of Suceava County. This SPA resort is known since 1750 and nowadays it regroup 3 main treatment bases: Calimani, Intus and Ozon. According the data offered by the local bodies in Vatra Dornei are 26 accommodation facilities, from which: 12 hotels, 5 villas and 9 guesthouses.

Vatra Dornei is also attractive because of the Calimani National Park which is close to this area and is more and more interesting for different research initiative (Dumitras ***et. all.***, 2011).

For the purpose of this paper a survey was conducted during July-August 2011. The instrument used was a questionnaire and it was applied to 150 visitors from the area. To analyze the date SPSS var. 19 was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUTIONS

The socio-demographic data show the fact that the tourists from Vatra Dornei SPA are relatively high educated people, more that 50% of them having an university degree, with an average age of 46 and a half years, most of them being males (52%).

The distribution of the monthly income shows the fact that the majority of the tourists 40% of them gain between 1000 lei and 2000 lei each month.

Being asked how many times they previous visited the area it was observed that 64% of the tourists have been there more than one time, while 36% was at the first visit in Vatra Dornei SPA (Fig 1).

The main reason for visiting Vatra Dornei was the need to relax, followed by the need of rest. These facts are in correlation with the

specificity of the area. The beauty of the mountains is also another important attraction for this region, almost 47% of the respondent pointed this as being one of the trip's reasons.

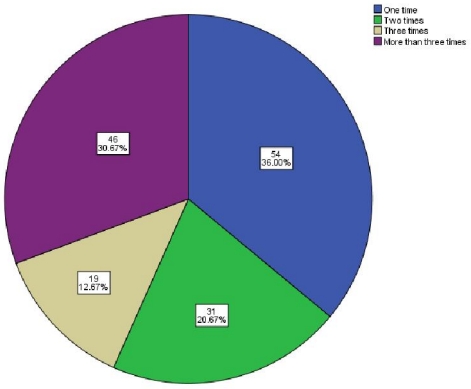


Fig. 1: Number of visits in the area

The main services accessed during the stay were: accommodation (100%), food and beverage (91.22%) and treatment (34.46%).

To determinate the particularities of the tourist demand in Vatra Dornei the average length of stay and the trip budget were also established based on the respondents' answers. Contrary to the trend registered at the national level, where the average length in SPA resorts is around 8 nights (Muresan, 2009), in this case the average length of stay was of 2.84 days. This things can be explain by the fact that the main reason for making the trip is not represented by the treatment, where is necessary a longer period of time, but by need of rest and relaxing.

40% of the respondents declared the fact that the trip budget is between 500-1000 lei. The Chi-square test confirms the fact that between the average length of stay and the budget trip is a link. The higher are the number of days, the higher is the budget for the trip. Other factor that has a major influence of the trip's budget is represented by the income. Asked about the intention of returning in the area almost 45% declared probably yes, while 38% declared definitely yes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the preliminary results it can be concluded the fact that tourists from Vatra Dornei area are in general middle age people, with a medium level of income monthly and they prefer to go there to relax, to recreate and to admire the beauty of the landscape. The main services accessed during the stay are represented by the basic ones. In this order is necessary to make efforts to increase the attractiveness of the region by developing new tourist products which can lead to the increase of the average length of stay, on one hand, and to the welfare of the entire community on the other hand. For achieving this purpose efforts need to be done at the local level and private sector.

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