

The Perception of Tourists on the Touristic Resources and Structures of the Horezu Area

Elena Iuliana ȘERBAN (DUMITRESCU)

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography, Romania

Email : iuliadumi@yahoo.com

Abstract *Horezu area means an area of local tourist interest, at a national and international level. However, tourism has not yet reached an optimal exploitation, imposed by the tourist potential of this zone. The purpose of this investigation aims to the assessment of the touristic potential of the area, analyzing the terms and opportunities for the recovery and development of this potential and the perception of tourists and their degree of satisfaction for tourist services offered. The Assessment of the touristic potential is a necessity, a first step with a view to the completion of a strategy for the development and promotion, which will contribute to the full development of tourism in this area.*

Key words Tourism Resources, The Perception of Tourists, Tourist Structure, Horezu

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, tourism has won more and more land becoming a flourishing industry. If we study the impact that this industry has, both at national and local level, we can notice that tourism is a viable solution for the national economy and administration, for the creation of new jobs, and also for the protection of the natural and anthropic environment.

The regeneration process of the cultural heritage represents a topic of the present debated is the policies of the European Union. At European level, it is desirable to implement policies to ensure an integrated development of human settlements, regarding the values of sustainable development (the Declaration of Toledo, 2010).

At the level of a tourist destination it is required a comprehensive approach, with an emphasis on the satisfaction of the tourist principles of a sustainable development, within an "integrated quality management" (TQM). In the vision of Grönroos "quality charged for a particular service will be the result of the evaluation process, in the case in which the consumer compare these expectations with the perception of the service received, in other words, he is charged with service as expected, opposite one another" (Grönroos Ch., 1984). The success of a tourist destination, judging by the tourist satisfaction depends on several interdependent factors. Thus, the need for a strategic and integrated planning for tourist destinations by the use of a specific technique allows you to provide an integrated system of management quality assurance (Bogan E. et all, 2014). High quality helps to improve the profitability and competitiveness (Yoo and Park, 2007), also, and customers are important in the provision of high quality services (Crick and Spencer, 2010).

STUDY AREA

The Horezu area has a tourist potential significantly due to the elements of attractiveness, such as relief diversified landscapes, unique traditions, which were transmitted and shall be kept for centuries and a cultural heritage of the original type.

Due to its favourable geographical position, Horezu area "Offered in all times favorable conditions of life", a fact that is evident from the "intense habitation and evidence of a way of life advanced for various populations of the Ancient Epoch, which have been discovered in localities in the immediate vicinity of Horezu" (Ciocan V., Ciocan V., 2012).

This area comprises two elements which are part of the world heritage of UNESCO Horezu pottery and all the monastic assembly Hurezi Monastery. Also, according to the Ministry of Culture, the region contains approximately 16% of the historical monuments in the Territory of Vâlcea County. On the basis of the significance, they are divided in two categories. Thus, in category A historical monuments of national and Universal value (33 monuments) and in Class B historical monuments representative for the local cultural heritage 46 monuments (table no. 1).

Table no. 1. The classification of the monuments of moulting Horezu

TOWN	NO. MONUMENTS		TOTAL
	Category A	Category B	
Horezu	18	9	27
Bărbătești	-	9	9
Costești	9	10	19
Măldărești	5	2	7
Oteșani	-	2	2
Stroiești	-	3	3
Slătioara	-	5	5
Tomșani	-	3	3
Vaideeni	1	3	4
TOTAL	33	46	79

Horezu area has a rich tourist potential, concentrating numerous natural objectives (the National Park Buila-Vânturarița, the Museum of Natural Trovantilor Costești, Bistrița keys, Bats Cave, The Bears Cave and others) and The Monastery Arnota , the Church Bălănești, the Church of a wooden, Ceramic Horezu, The Contemporary Folk Art Gallery Hurez Monastery, Bistrița Monastery, The Church Covrești, The Village Museum, The Maldaresti Culele and others), as well as a tourism infrastructure sufficiently developed to allow the progress in good conditions of the activities of tourism in this area.

The dynamics of tourist accommodation units at the level of the Horezu area (fig. no. 1) emphasize an increase in their number, especially after the year 2005. Thus, in the area there have been constructed and arranged new units of receipt, in particular tourist and tourist agro hostels, and others have been the subject of extensive modernization. As regards the number of tourists who visit the Horezu area we note an increase in the number of tourists who choose this destination (fig. no. 2). The promotion of events and tourist objectives of the Horezu area is performed by means of the printed presentation materials, video and audio broadcast in the media and on the internet (Bogan E., Roman E.R., 2013).

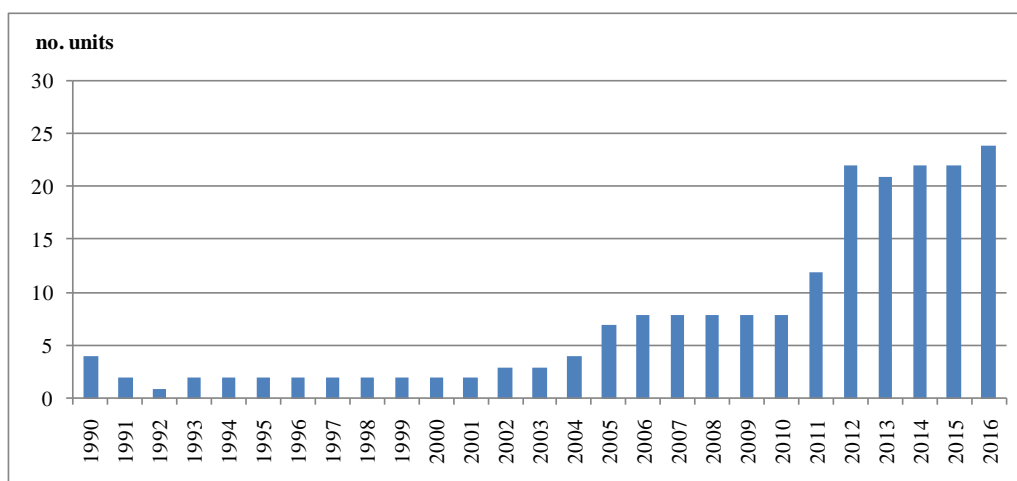


Figure 1. The evolution of the number of establishments of receipt - Horezu tourist area (1990-2016)

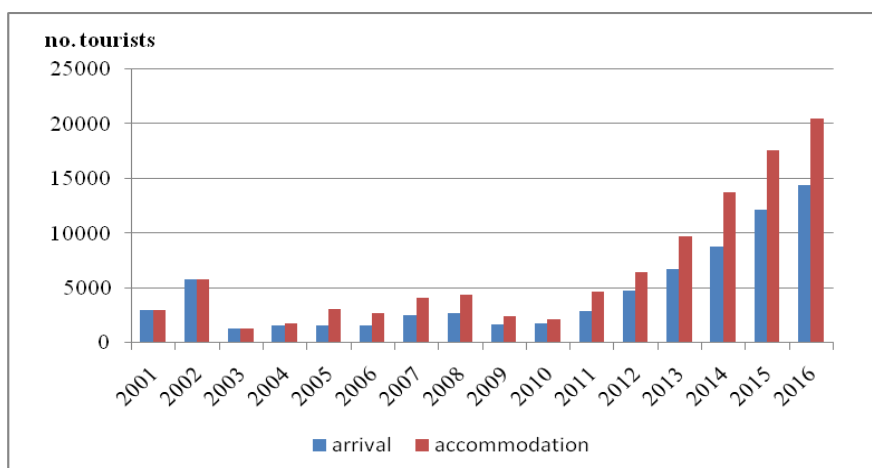


Figure 2. The evolution of the number in the structures of the arrivals and accommodations tourist area of receipt – area Horezu (2001-2016)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is not based only on certain aspects, but has in view an overall picture of the potential of the area, which involves both the aspects relating to the tourist natural and anthropic potential and those relating to the basic technical - material, road infrastructure and services.

Research does not include a target group, the participants in the study being both sexes, of all ages, from all social categories, regardless of studies and focuses on the options and opinions of tourists who visited the area. For the determination of the perception of tourists on resources and structures of Horezu tourist area, there were applied 200 questionnaires, research tests carried out in the period August and September 2017. Also, have been organized tourists encounters both in Horezu town, as well as in the localities that are part of the area of interest.

In order to achieve the purpose shown above, this research will pursue the following objectives: to identify potential tourists, the establishment of components to be representative of the Horezu area, identification of underprivileged aspects in pursuit of tourism, to determine the degree of satisfaction of the tourists on the tourist services, the determination of the tourists' opinion about the accessibility of the area from the point of view of the infrastructure, of accommodation and food, the assessment of the touristic potential of the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire had different items and provided space for the answers to the preset objectives, and also for subsequent interpretations to generate solutions to the problems raised and perspectives for sustainable development and exploitation.

The questionnaire was applied on a sample of 200 persons, tourists, of both sexes, of all ages, from all social categories, regardless of studies, the town of Horezu and towns in the area of interest, namely: Costești, Măldărești, Oțeșani, Bărbătești, Slătioara, Pietrari, Stroiești, Tomșani and Vaideeni.

The tourists who participated in this study are in proportion of 59% females and 41% males. The respondents have reached the age of 71 years, the majority being aged between 36-71 years, respectively, 76% of them. The rest of the tourists are in proportion of 12% less than 20 years, those aged between 20-35 years representing a percentage of 12%. If we study the level of studies of respondents, we can notice that the highest proportion is the probationary studies, namely 50%. The respondents with university studies shall be at the rate of 33%, and those with postgraduate studies represent the rest of 17%.

Taking into account the profile of respondents in relation to the category of training of which they are part, we find that in proportion of 32% are servants, in proportion of 32% found technicians/foremen, 20% of the respondents are workers, 12% represent the students and unemployed are a percentage of 4%.

On the basis of the observations made on the participants in the study, we appreciate that most tourists encounter in the area of the Horezu are women, the segment of the predominant age is between

36-71 years. Also, the majority are those with studies course and who belong to the category of training of officials and technicians/foremen.

The first question "How often drill tourism, in general?" has in view of the establishment of the importance of tourism as a business. The intensity of fishing tourism and the number of persons who are engaged in such an activity, represents the essential information in the establishment of tourism as a principal activity of major interest or as a secondary activity, which are of particular interest. To identify such position of tourism, the participants in the study have been assessed and gradually from "frequently" to "no" the intensity of fishing tourism in general.

As we can see from the replies received (fig. no. 3), tourism is often practiced by 24% of respondents and the environment by as much as 48% of them, the remainder of 28% stating that the practice of tourism slowly. No respondent has not declared that the practice of tourism "very rare" or "none". Thus, it would be noted that all the participants in the study have declared that the practice of tourism. In view of this, as well as the fact that tourism activity is practiced frequently or the environment by 72% of respondents, it can be concluded that tourism is a principal activity of major interest.

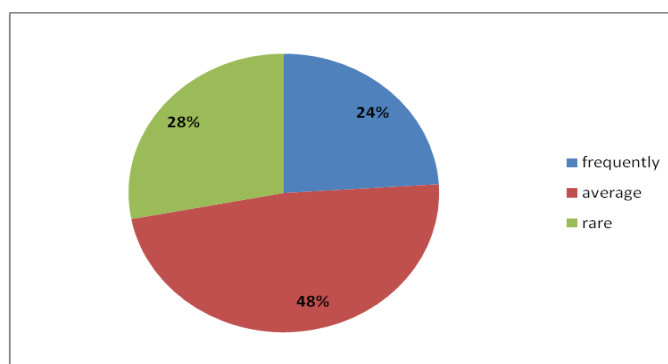


Figure 3. The intensity of fishing tourism

The budget is an important factor of influence of tourist activities. It is considered, in general, a major factor, because it depends on both the choice of destination and the duration of the journey, as well as the frequency of fishing and tourism. The budget allotted for tourism will vary depending on the income of each tourist and the importance of this activity. It also represents a detent factor for tourism activity. Thus, depending on the amount assigned, certain destinations may become inaccessible to tourists, and the period of driving may decrease. In general, a specific destination corresponds to a certain type of budget.

Evaluating of the tourists budget in the Horezu area can be concluded that the budget corresponds to the destinations. Most of the tourists, 60% of them, shall assign a budget between 500-1000 lei, 20% assign a budget between 1000-2000 lei, 16% assign between 3000 lei, while only 4% assign under500 lei (fig. no. 4). No respondent stated that he would not assign a budget more than 3000 lei. It can be concluded that the Horezu area is a destination frequented, in general, by persons who assign a budget for tourism activity.

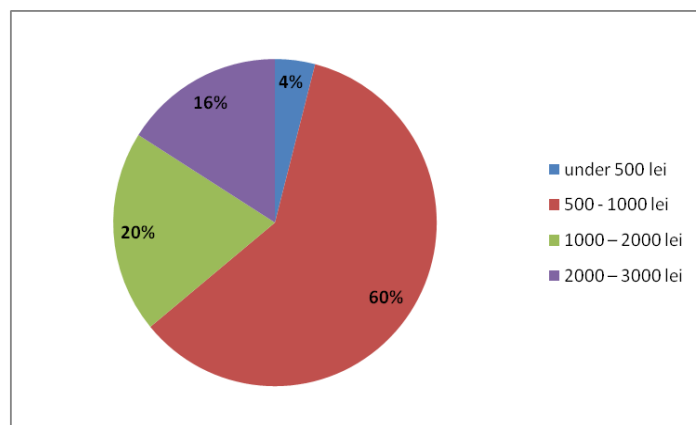


Figure 4. The budget allotted to tourism activities

We found that, in the current society, there are certain destinations which attract a large and ever-growing number of tourists coming in the top of their preferences. On the basis of research, we have determined the most important criteria according to which the tourists are determined to choose a specific destination at the expense of the other.

The results show that 34% of the respondents choose the destination depending on the facilities of the area, 21% choose a destination favorable to the fishing activity of a certain type of tourism, and 14% of them considered that income or accessibility of the area from the point of view of tourist infrastructure are important for the choice of a tourist destinations (fig. no. 5). In particular, it can be concluded that the Horezu area is a destination chosen in particular by tourists interested in the facilities of the area, then by tourists interested in a certain type of tourism.

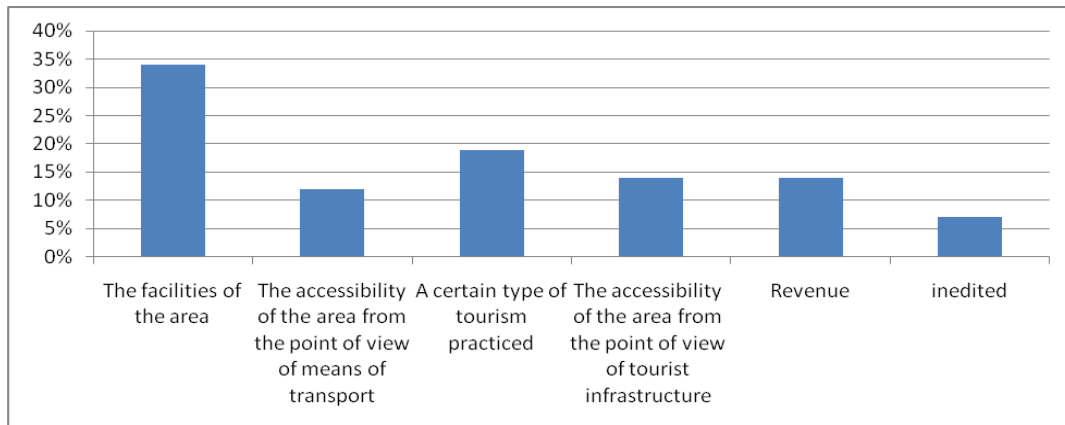


Figure 5. The criteria for tourists in the choice of destination

The question "Do you know the objectives of tourist interest in the area of Horezu?" referred strictly to the area of interest, namely Horezu area. The interviewed tourists stated, in proportion of 76%, the fact that they know some of the objectives of tourist interest in the area specified, 16% said they know them all, and 8 percent do not know any touristic objective in the area (fig. no. 6). Knowledge of tourist objectives is very important, and brings them to the attention of tourists that they are a good way to promote tourism in the Horezu area.

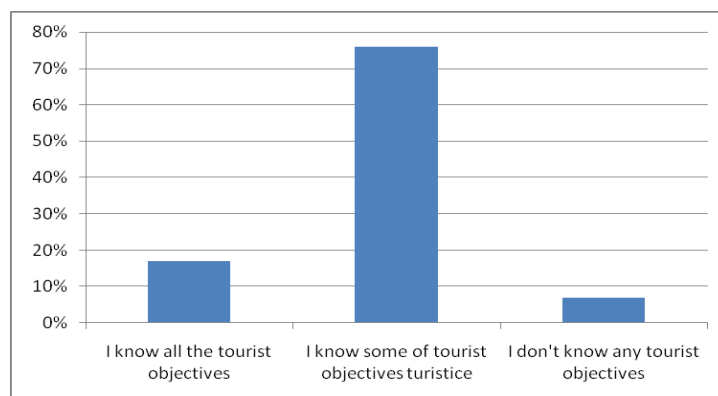


Figure 6. Tourist Information with regard to the objectives of the Horezu tourist area

The interviewed tourists are satisfied with the conditions of the tourist objectives, which gives the area a plus of attractiveness. Specifically, 48% of the latter consider that the conservation status of tourist objectives is good, 44% consider that the conservation status of tourist objectives is very good, while only 8% showed slightly dissatisfied, stating that the objectives are in a satisfactory conservation status (fig. no. 7).

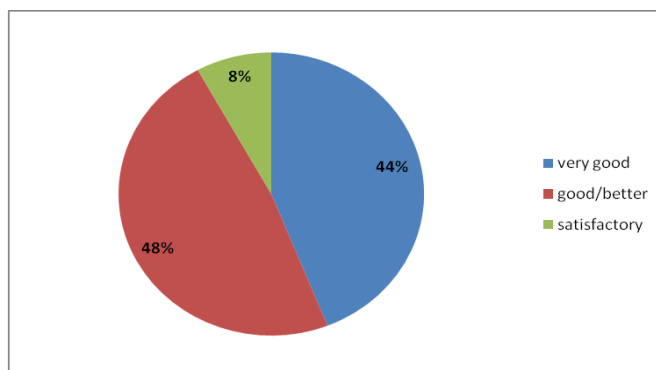


Figure 7. The opinion of the tourists on the conservation status of the tourist objectives of the Horezu area

Between the participants to this study, the majority (84%) have benefited of the tourist services in the area of Horezu, the remainder of 16% declaring that they did not benefit of these services.

The question "If you have benefited of the tourist services in this area, how do you have thought?" the respondents said that tourist services in the area of Horezu could further improved.

Between the tourists who have benefited of these, respectively, 84%, 33% said they were really pleased. The services have been considered to be the best of 42%, and the remaining 22% were considered as satisfactory services, and 3% as unsatisfactory.

Tourism infrastructure, and the access to accommodation and food, may represent a weak point or a strong point of destination, regarding the fact that 15% of the respondents choose tourist destination on the basis of this criterion. In the area of Horezu, tourism infrastructure is a strong point, tourists stating (fig. no. 8) at a rate of 92% that the area is accessible, and the remaining 8% being of the opinion that the area is not accessible. Any participant in the study has not considered that Horezu area is not accessible from the point of view of tourism infrastructure.

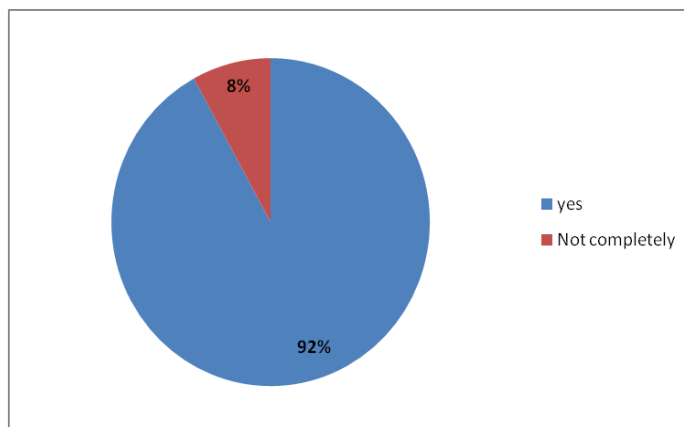


Figure 8. The perception of the tourists on the accessibility of Horezu area from the point of view of the accommodation and food

All the participants in the study have declared that they visited Horezu area. It can be concluded that the tourists are satisfied, in general, of all aspects of the Horezu area and that the area is a destination which fulfils the conditions necessary for a favourable tourist activities.

All the tourists who participated in the study have declared that they would recommend other persons to visit Horezu area.

As a result of the research carried out it can be concluded that the area of Horezu represents a destination of interest for tourists who practice tourism regularly and that they allocate a budget, up to 2000 lei for tourism activity. In the choice of destinations, the facilities offered by the zone mattered to most of tourists. The criteria according to which it has been chosen area and is favorable aspects from a particular type of tourism and the accessibility of the area from the tourist point of view infrastructure.

Regarding the favourable aspects, the area has numerous tourist interest objectives which are in good condition for the conservation and it is accessible from the point of view of the accommodation and food. There has been under privileged aspects for the pursuit of tourism. The tourists declare themselves satisfied, considering that the Horezu area deserves to be recommended and visited.

CONCLUSIONS

Horezu Area represents an important tourist area of Romania and being with traditions and customs which shall be kept for centuries, with a rich and diversified tourist natural potential and with a high density of anthropogenic tourist objectives are to be mentioned the two components of the anthropic environment here .They are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, namely the Horezu pottery and the Horezu Monastery. Regarding the interest of tourists and their degree of satisfaction for what this complex offer, I believe that the development of tourism in the area of the Horezu should continue to represent a priority, both for the Government and local authorities. A more intense promotion can attract a greater number of tourists, with an emphasis on foreign tourists.

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