

The Prospects for Tourism Development in the Horezu Area and the Perception of the Residents Regarding the Capitalization of the Touristic Potential

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Abstract *The geographical territory studied has a variety of natural resources, tourist historical and cultural attractions representing a way to exploit the potential existing and a particularly important factor in the development of the socio-economic area. The purpose of this study consists in analysing the touristic potential of the area of Horezu, in order to achieve an overview, as well as an identification of future possibilities of recovery a maximum level of development imposed by the tourist potential of the area*

Key words *Development, Tourism, The Perception Of The Horezu Residents*

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INTRODUCTION

In addition to the satisfaction of human needs, tourism is a solution and as regards the economic problems of a country or a region. The tourism industry is related, in particular, to the creation of new jobs, generating revenue for the people of the region in which the tourist activities are practiced, taxes and fees for local or national budget and, of course, the regional development.

In Romania, and by default in the area to be analysed, the possibilities of developing tourism are huge, due to the diversity of existing forms of scenery underlying the touristic potential of a high level, a climate favorable to the fishing activities, as well as due to an immense cultural and historical wealth which creates the anthropic tourist potential.

The tourist potential of a country, of a territory means "all of the components of the historical and natural, cultural and socio-economic expressing the possibilities of recovery in the tourist plan, providing or giving a certain functionality of the territory that are the premises for the development of tourism activities" (Cândea M., Bogan E., Simon T., 2012).

As a component of the regional planning, tourism should stimulate local business in order to generate new jobs, which is a factor recognized and understood in the development of the regional economic and social situation, to be clearly positioned in terms of its contribution to different compartments of regional development (Craik J., 1991; Williams and Shaw, 1991; Pompl and Lavery, 1993; Hannigan, furthermore; Wickens, 1999; Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004).

THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF THE HOREZU AREA

From the point of view of territorial-administrative Horezu area shall be carried out in the territory of the Vâlcea County (Romania), occupying the central and north-western part of it. The localities which form part of this complex studied are: Horezu, Bărbătești, Costești, Măldărești, Oteșani, Pietrari, Stroești, Slătioara, Tomșani and Vaideeni, with a total population in 2016 of 35.854 inhabitants. Between the localities mentioned, the most important is Horezu, representing the only urban settlement of the area. The other localities that are part of this area are rural settlements, organized administratively into communes.

Horezu area within the limits of its elements of natural frame, represents a great tourist attractiveness, as natural protected areas reservations, caves, keys, a diversified flora and fauna, a dense network of rivers and a varied landscape. Within the area it is noticed a multitude of tourist objectives anthropogenic emissions (fig. no. 1), with different values and importance. The tourist potential anthropic

in this area is specific and special notes because of the existence of an old history and civilization, cultural interference and ethnographic values different from the rest of the country.

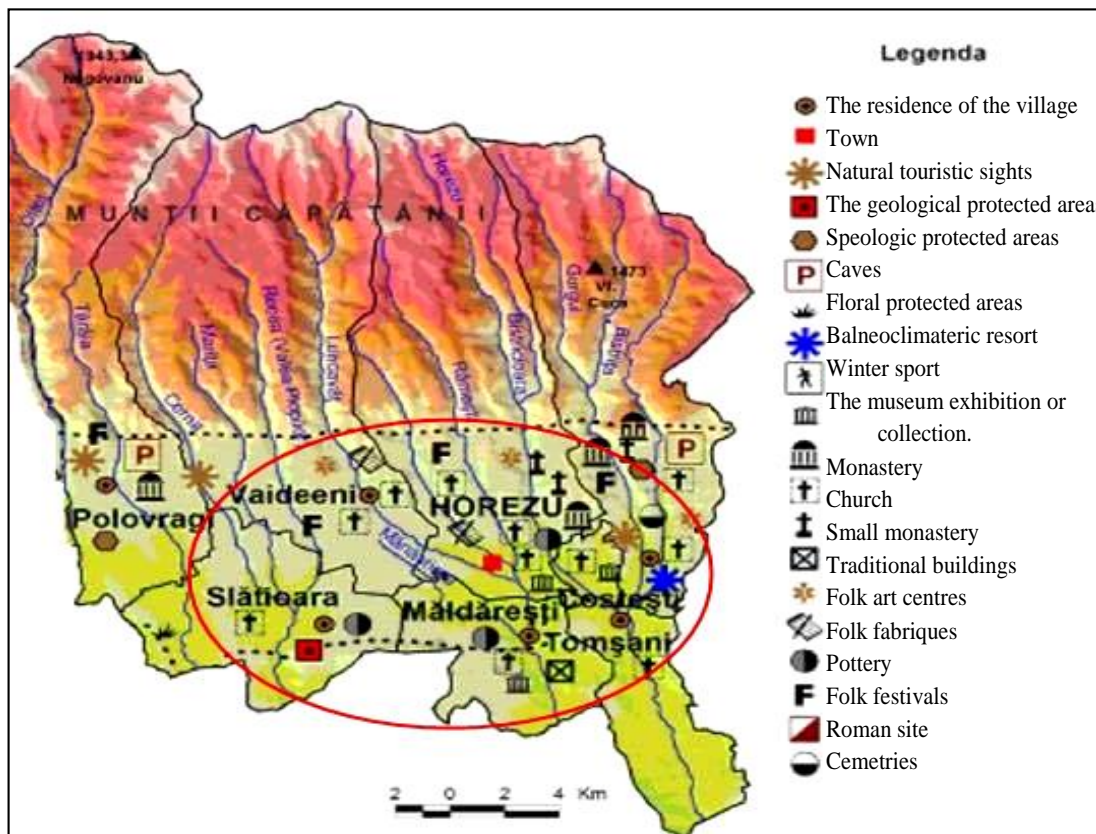


Figure 1. Sights of provenance in Horezu anthropogenic tourist area
 (Source: Pârvulescu E., 2009)

Within the Horezu area, we notice a very high concentration of monasteries and churches are valuable and important. The Hurez Monastery (fig. no. 2) is the most representative touristic objective of the entire complex and has a special interest, for both Romanians tourists, as well as for foreigners. The value of the monastery is particularly high, being included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in the year 1993.

The monastery was built between the years 1690 - 1693, its founder being the ruler Constantin Brâncoveanu. Its role was not one purely religious. Should we notice and military importance that the monastery had then, being a point of defense to the west of the country or, if necessary, a hiding place for the founder and his family (Cristea G., 2003).

Horezu monastery is the most representative Brâncovenesc style building used in the territory of the country and is perhaps the greatest monastic assembly. This is spread on an area of over three hectare, including the monastery itself, the Church of the Holy Apostles, Bolnita Monastery, Saint Stefan Monastery and the Church of the holy angels.

Pottery represents the main activity of the area, occupying the largest share of the activities undertaken by the locals. Of all existing craft in the area, pottery is the one which brought Horezu town the title "capital of the Romanian folk ceramics" and the entire zone a international reputation (fig. no. 3). The Horezu pottery glazed was introduced in 2012 on the list of universal heritage of UNESCO and represents a brand of the city, for which many tourists choose Horezu as a tourism destination.

Horezu represents a complex filled with tradition and culture. In the area there are many museums which preserve and maintain the identity of the place and which represent a main attraction for tourists. In the area there are many different cultural manifestations, both from the point of view of their importance and from the point of view of their. Popularity some of these are organised local people, but there are also festivals and fairs in the area where a large number of tourists take part.



Figure 2. Hurez Monastery Church
(Source: personal archive)



Figure 3. The symbols used in Horezu pottery
(Source: www.adevarul.ro)

The tourist potential of Horezuarea favours the existence of a wide range of types and forms of tourism. These forms and types of tourism will be enter in a permanent seasonal regime demonstrating the attractiveness of tourism resources, the viability of the tourist offer and promotion strategies. But in order to reach the maximum point for this capitalization the tourist potential of the area, it is necessary to increase the quality of services rendered, investing in tourism through endowments and organization and the multiplication and modernisation of the arrangements for the promotion of tourist packages.

In the field of tourism, marketing mix - through the composition of products, it allows a reorganization of tourism products in order to become competitive, and through the promotion of their distribution they bring an important contribution to the development of tourism.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research methodology is the establishment of the touristic potential of the Horezu area, and also the enhancement of the possibilities for optimizing the top of it. Thus it was necessary to obtain data and information to reflect the reality in the field, as well as the perception of the population of tourist activities carried out. These data are fundamental because they can capture the type of tourism in the area, and may thus contribute to the improving of underprivileged aspects of tourism as well as to ensure a sustainable tourism and quality.

In order to achieve the purpose shown above, this research will pursue the following objectives: the establishment of components to be representative of the Horezu area, identification of underprivileged aspects for the pursuit of tourism, to determine the degree of satisfaction of the population relating to the development of tourism in the area, the establishment of public 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. 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 natural tourist potential and anthropic and those relating to the basic technical - material, road infrastructure and services area.

As a tool for the collection of information on the perception of the population of the Horezu area on the touristic potential and tourism development has used a grid of questions in the form of a questionnaire. The research was carried out in the period August and September 2017 on a sample of 280 residents both in Horezu town, as well as in the localities that are part of the area of interest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was applied on a sample of 280 persons, represented by the population of the area 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 the Costesti, Bărbătești, Măldărești, Oteșani, Pietrari, Stroiști, Slătioara, Tomșani and Vaideeni.

The locals who participated in this study, are in proportion of 52% men and 48% women. The respondents are of all ages, the majority being those of the category of age between 36-70 years, which will be a percentage of 56%, being followed by the segment of age the years which represent 28 percent of the total number of respondents, the remainder of 16% being that of the respondents under 20 years, which is 9% and the respondents aged over 61 years which represents 7%.

From the point of view of the studies most of the respondents are graduates of studies, the percentage shall be 53%. The rest of the inhabitants participating in the study have graduated university studies in proportion of 23%, studies postgraduate studies in proportion of 13%, and the secondary at the rate of 11%.

Taking into account the profile and the participants in the study in relation to the category of training of which they are part, we find that 21% of them are civil servants, 36% represent workers, 16% are technicians/foremen, 8% represents the students, while students and pensioners each represents a percentage of 14 percent of the total number of respondents, and 5% other occupational categories.

The first question "Is tourism practiced in the area of the Horezu?" has in view of the determination of Horezu tourist potential area. The statistical data confirms the existence of tourism in this area. In this respect, 100% of the respondents are of that opinion.

The attractiveness of any tourist destination shall consist, firstly, of the objectives of tourist interest which are to be found in its territory. The question "do you know the objectives of tourist interest in that area?" is one of the type arcade, having a dual role. On the one hand, it is necessary to establish the proportion in which the tourist attractions are known to the public, and on the other hand, the identification of elements to be representative of the Horezu area. According to the data collected in the proportion of the population, 99.5%, said that I know one or more sights, while only 0.5% of the inhabitants declare that they do not know any objective of tourist interest in the area.

The best representative tourist objectives are the best known and most visited in the area. Thus, in the area of the analysed Hurezu Monastery can be considered the most representative and the most famous touristic objective in the area, this being mentioned by more than half of the participants in the study, namely 164 respondents.

The following touristic objective recalled approximately half of the respondents is Bistrița Monastery. Other aims of tourist interest mentioned by several respondents are: Horezu pottery, the Natural Museum of Trovant, Costești, The Arnota Monastery, Bistrița canyon and the Bats Cave (fig. no. 4). In addition to these objectives, there have been mentioned: Covrești Church, Bălănești Church, the National Park Buila-Vânturarița, the Gallery Contemporary Art, The Village Museum, The traditional buildings of Maldarești, the Church in a wood, the Bears Cave.

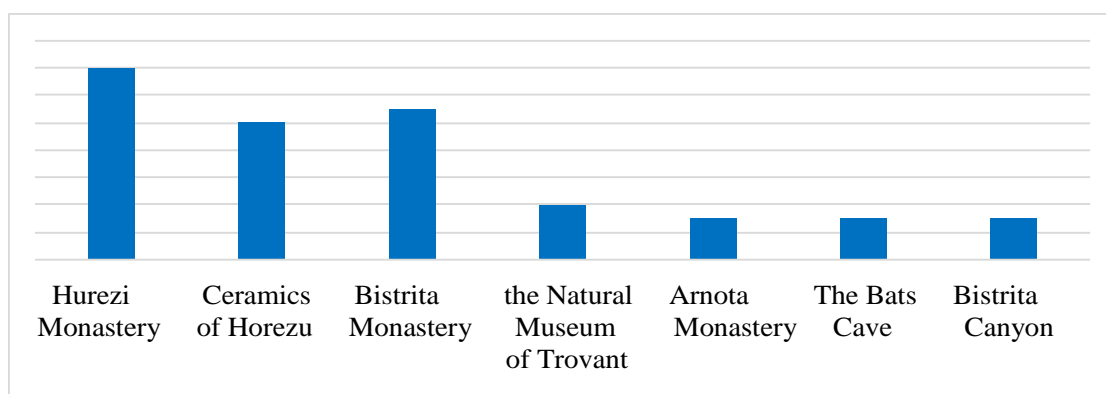


Figure 4. Horezu tourist objectives in the area covered by the population

As regards the conservation status of the objectives of tourist interest, the locals showed pleased, 52% of them declaring that tourist objectives are in a good state of preservation, while the remaining 48% consider that the conservation status of the objectives is a really good one. We can also note that no local does not consider that the conservation status of tourist objectives is satisfactory or unsatisfactory (fig. no. 5).

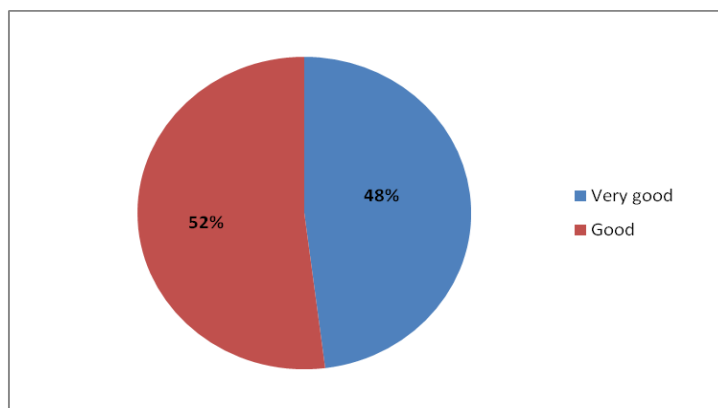


Figure 5. The perception of the population on the conservation status of the tourist objectives of the Horezu area

The tourist potential of the zone determines to a large extent, the capacity for the development of the area concerned from the point of view of tourism. From this point of view, the Horezu area has been evaluated by 80% of respondents, as having a high tourist potential, and the other 20% as having a medium tourist potential (fig. no. 6). It should be noted that all the participants in the study consider that the Horezu area shows the tourist potential.

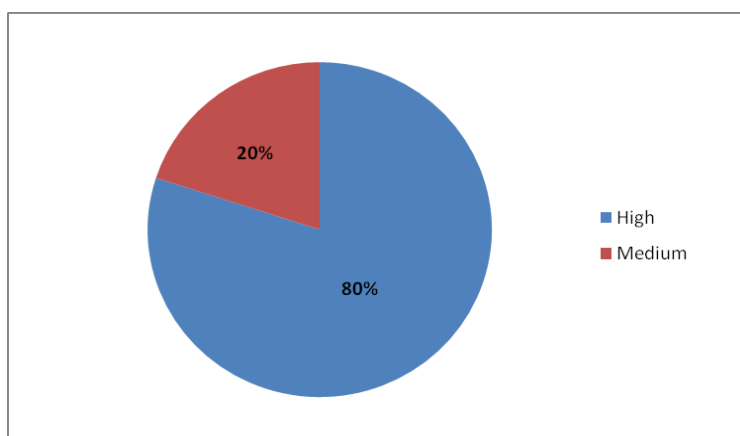


Figure 6. The perception of the population on the touristic potential of the area Horezu

The question "Do you consider that it would be able to develop tourism in this area?" the Horezu area has been assessed by inhabitants as an area with a high tourist potential. In this respect, it can be concluded that the development of tourism should come as a result of this high potential benefit available in the area. Also, all the respondents consider the area as being favorable to the development of tourism.

The development of tourism in an area can be both positive and negative. If we study the benefits, we notice that the tourism industry represents a continuous development which could result in numerous jobs which is very important, especially in the less-favoured regions from this point of view. Tourism helps to increase the local economy, and it is also an important factor that supports the conservation and recovering or capitalization the heritage of the area concerned. As negative impact, we can mention the increase in prices in the area of tourist interest, but also the pollution caused by inappropriate behaviour of the tourists. Being asked about the impact that would have tourism development in the area of the Horezu, the locals were considered in proportion of 100% that it will be positive and it will bring only benefits to the area.

All the participants in the study are of the opinion that the development of the Horezu could attract more tourists in the future than in the present.

The promotion is a major aspect of which depends on the development of tourism activity in any area. The area is more promoted, and it becomes more known and, therefore, visited by a large and ever-

growing number of tourists. The Horezu area has been assessed as an area with a high tourist potential, the respondents consider that it is not sufficiently promoted, 96% of them considering that it should focus more on this aspect, while only 4% of the participants in the study are of the opinion that the promotion is sufficient (Figure no. 4). The respondents said that it would be useful in this respect, both the promotion in the media (commercials, TV), the promotion of local (leaflets, brochures, catalogues, as well as promoting online, by means of sites dedicated to the presentation of the area.

“Fishing tourism is also necessary, in addition to the tourism potential of the area. Thus, on the Horezu area from the perspective of its infrastructure accommodation and food, we see that 88% of the populations consider that the area is accessible, while only 12% claims that the area is not accessible entirely from this point of view (fig. no. 7).

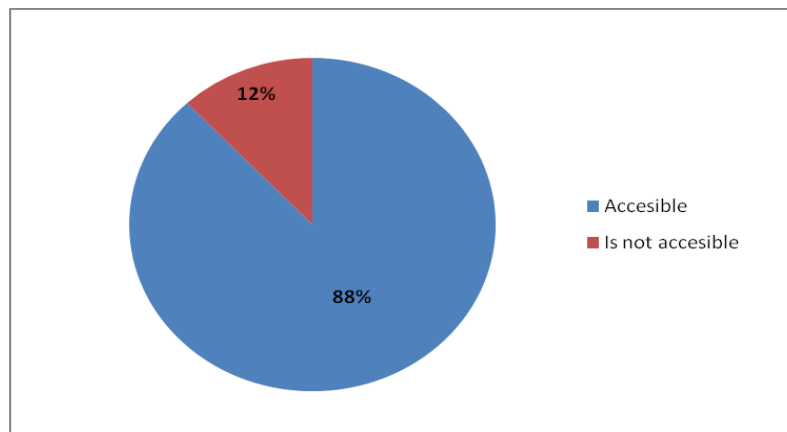


Figure 7. The perception of the inhabitants of the accessibility of Horezu area from the point of view of tourist infrastructure

Due to the fact that the question "What did you change in order to promote tourism?" addressed to the participants in the study, this could not be quantified completely from the point of view of statistics. The question has in view the expression of opinions of the inhabitants of the area which would alter to promote tourism practice in the area of the Horezu. Between the participants in the study, 68% of them have tried to answer, the remainder of 32% refused.

Regarding the fact that most of the participants in the study who tried to answer, gave answers totally/partially similar (fig. no. 8), we can conclude the following:

- 47.5% of the participants in the study consider that the promotion of the area helps to promote the fishing tourism;
- 27 percent of respondents in the study consider that only tourist offers and attractive packages would contribute to promoting tourism fishing in the area of the Horezu;
- 10.5% of the participants in the study considers that only more local involvement would promote tourism practice in the area of the Horezu;
- 11 percent of respondents in the study considers that only the restoration of tourist objectives should promote tourism practice in the area of the Horezu;
- other answers should be: improving road infrastructure, a better location of the traffic signs, design a more favorable tax conditions for tourism and increasing the facilities area.

As a result of this research it can be concluded that the population is familiar with the tourism activity in the area. Also, they consider that the Horezu area benefits from an important tourist potential, which could be exploited through the development of tourism in the area. This aspect is considered a beneficial one, the locals considering that the impact of tourism will be positive. The workers in tourism are aware of the importance of the conduct of tourist activities to exceed customers' expectations. It should be supported by local authorities which would be involved in the development of improvements to increase quality from all points of view, both for basic services as well as for the supplement (Bogan E. et al, 2014).

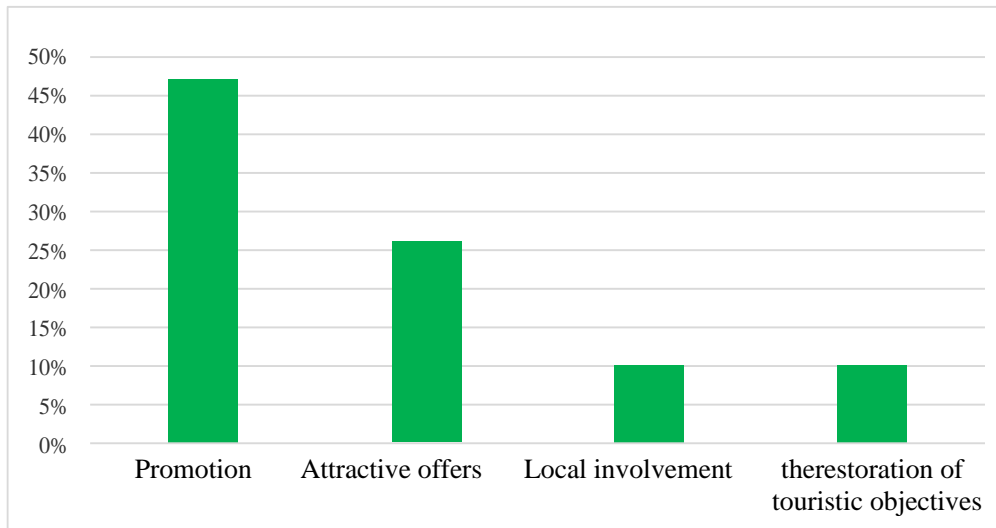


Figure 8. The perception of the population on the elements that can promote tourism in Horezu area

CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, the residents appreciate that the area concerned has tourist attractions for a bigger number of tourists, and that there are aspects that should be improved. It is important that the local authorities be concerned for the provision of services of good quality. The concern for providing quality services already exists among investors in tourism in the area.

Horezu area has a rich tourist potential, concentrating supply numerous natural and anthropogenic emission targets, as well as a tourism infrastructure sufficiently developed to permit the progress in good conditions of the activities of tourism in the area.

The prospects of tourism development of the Horezu area must seek, on the one hand to determine the extension of the current tourist potential of the area and, on the other hand, to identify possibilities of recovery in order to achieve a maximum level of development imposed by the tourist potential of the area.

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