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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# MARKETING POLICIES IN THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUCOVINA AREA

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### ABSTRACT

Bucovina, an ancient cradle of culture and civilization, is recognized nationally and internationally due to its beautiful natural landscapes and anthropic tourist objectives, the folk customs and traditions specific to this area. Today, tourism is a distinct field of activity, with an ever more active presence in the economic and social life, with an ever-increasing rhythm of evolution. As a generator of profound changes in the social dynamics, tourism has also claimed to be a factor of progress and civilization, as a promoter of international relations and, more recently, as an argument of globalization and sustainable development. One of the current basics in the field of tourism concerns the study of the regional elements, according to which typical tourist activities are organized in certain areas, and the possibilities of their complex arrangement are evident. Bucovina is recognized for the variety of natural landscapes as well as for national and internationally recognized monasteries for the uniqueness of interior and exterior paintings, some of which are included in the UNESCO heritage.

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## INTRODUCTION

The marketing activity taking place at the level of the tourist destination is a strategic process that aims to develop tourism in view of protecting the environment and satisfying the requirements of tourists and those involved in tourism activity. The tourist destination is regarded as a well-defined geographic area and viewed from the standpoint of a product, the tourist destination is "a set of services and facilities that materialize in the specific ambience of the natural and artificial factors of attraction and the tourist facilities created, which are components of the tourist offer and can exert a positive force of attraction for tourists" (Snak, 1999). In the modern sense, the tourist destination is perceived as the experience acquired by the tourist as a result of consumption (Ispas et al., 2011).

### The tourist destination can be approached from two perspectives

- From an overall perspective, considered an entity as a whole
- From a composite perspective, viewed from the standpoint of the tourist products offered within it; the basic constituents of a tourist destination include natural factors and anthropic resources.

Due to the passage of time, these resources end up, because the tourist development of an area has negative effects upon the environment. Therefore, it is obvious that the practice of tourist activity must be in harmony with the environment. The development of the tourist destination is necessary to be a continuous development process, considering the dynamics of the tourist market. Any tourist destination must consider sustainable development strategies. The sustainable development of the tourist destination implies the development of all forms of tourism, tourism management and marketing that respect the natural, social and economic integrity of the environment by ensuring the exploitation of natural and cultural resources and for future generations (Ionescu and Murariu, 2005).

The tourist destination has a major interest in ensuring the sustainable development, and the following objectives must be considered:

- Sustaining the tourism activities that bring the least impact upon the environment, reducing the forms of pollution produced by tourism,
- The conservation and valorization of local cultures and ethnographic traditions,
- The protection of historical monuments and local architecture
- Introducing them into the value circuit, ensuring the modernization of the infrastructure and of the technical-

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communal equipment, of the access ways and services (Ruhanen, 2010).

The destination tourism is also an economic motivation for building access and communication ways. In Bucovina we can provide as example a series of rural settlements in which the accessibility of the localities to the roads has determined the emergence, development and evolution of tourism in those areas. The routes and means of transport used to drive visitors to tourist and leisure destinations in the area are: railways, roads, air transportation and special means of transportation. Their share is different in the tourist flows in the area, as it is determined by the tourist seasonality, the importance of the tourist attractions, the interest of the tourists for a certain type of tourism, etc. Another important characteristic of the transport routes in the studied area is imposed by the natural environment, the arrangement of the hydrographic network and the major landforms by levels, which decrease in the north-south, northwest and south-east directions, determining the orientation of the major system of communications of the Suceava River and its tributaries (Soloneț, Solca, Sucevita, Putna and Brodina). In Bucovina there are also reverse situations where the existence of a natural or anthropic touristic potential has determined the improvement and modernization of the access roads to the destination.

### **The marketing policies of the Bucovina tourist destination**

**The product policy:** The foreign tourists arrive in Bucovina, usually because it is recognized for its Monasteries of renown located in its northern part, some of which are part of the UNESCO World Heritage and are recognized nationally and internationally. The Romanian tourists choose this destination for a limited period of time, usually for a weekend. In order to extend the stay of both foreign tourists and Romanian tourists, as well as to attract as many tourists as possible, it is necessary to design touristic products such as tours: 5-6 days to visit Bucovina. These products must contain a varied and diversified offer so that each day provides different activities and is personalized, for example, by age segment. The purpose of these packages should be, in addition to visiting all the tourist attractions and discovering the customs and traditions specific to the area (e.g. organizing Romanian-themed folk-dance performances, traditional dinner or camp fires) to highlight the uniqueness of the area.

It is advisable to adopt the market penetration strategy because a new, diversified tourist product should be conceived to capitalize on tourism potential and be introduced on the national and international market. Regarding the flow of tourists in the Bucovina tourist area, we present below the situation of the accommodation of the tourists in the tourist accommodation units, during the period 2010-2016. A detailed analysis of the dynamics and structure of the accommodation facilities in the Suceava County is intended to highlight the level of development of tourism and the degree of capitalization of its potential, the directions in which action should be taken to achieve a proper capitalization of the natural and anthropic attractions. According to the statistical data available on the website of the National Institute of Statistics, the existing accommodation capacity in the Suceava County is presented in table no.2.1: In terms of dynamics, the main indicators of accommodation capacity point to a growth trend during the period 2010-2017. At the same time, the dimensions and trends registered in the dynamics of the main capacity

indicators highlight a modest endowment and, consequently, a poor capitalization of the tourist attractions. From the point of view of the type of unit, hotels have the highest share, with a higher level of comfort and providing a wide range of high-quality services. During the period 2010-2016, the number of tourists' arrivals experienced a continuous increase in all types of tourist accommodation structures. The number of tourists per total increased from 194.365 tourists in 2010 to 342.710 in 2016. Most tourists stayed in hotels as they were the accommodation establishments of their choice. The share of tourists in hotels was 57.44% in 2016 compared to 67.5% in 2010. The decrease in the share was due to the choice of tourists as a form of tourist accommodation of the tourist and agritourism pensions in the area. Thus, tourist pensions were chosen by 15.44% of tourists in 2016 compared to 10.44% in 2010.

The number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments increased by 299.117 in 2016 as compared to 2010, with a 65% increase. The number of overnight stays in tourist and agritourist hostels in 2016 was significantly higher than in 2010. In 2016, the number of overnight stays in tourist pensions was 2.24 times higher than in 2010 and 2.64 times higher big in the agritourism pensions in the county.

**The pricing policy:** The main measure to be taken in the case of this marketing policy is to adjust prices to the quality of services so that the quality-price ratio is acceptable to all tourists. A strategy should be conceived regarding the rates charged for entries into museums, churches, and fortresses. Usually, the access charges are differentiated between Romanian and foreign tourists and they are lower in the case of the first category. This creates differences of opinion among foreign tourists who, even due to Romania's good reputation abroad, feel that they are being fooled. Therefore, it is necessary to set common rates that are expressed in EURO and the equivalent in lei must also be mentioned. The access rates to cultural, religious and historical objectives throughout Bucovina are accessible to all tourists. It is therefore necessary to provide discounts to groups of tourists, pensioners, students or students and to children under a certain age.

It is possible to design a marketing tool (such as an access card or a travel card) that could be purchased on the Internet at a global price lower than the amount of access rates for each objective, also providing a reduction for transportation, which includes entries to the most important objectives in the area of Bucovina. As a whole-area price strategy, one can use the low-price strategy to win a market position and attract tourists. Given the current national economic situation, this may be an opportunity for the area of Bucovina to attract more domestic tourists. Also, it is recommended to use the adjustment strategy for off-season rates (for spring and autumn). In the case of business trips, the transport companies and the accommodation units in the Bucovina area must attract this valuable segment of tourism demand by providing bonuses to loyal customers who will benefit from them during the holiday period, thus ensuring a significant number of future tourists. The consumers' sensitivity to the rates of the tourist services also varies depending on the payment methods: cash, card or transfer. In order to attract as many tourists as possible, all tour operators must accept the cash, card and on-line payment. It is necessary to provide ATMs, card readers, computers and laptops connected to the Internet, thus ensuring the access of tourists to modern means of payment.

**Table no. 2.1. Tourist accommodation capacity in operation by types of tourist accommodation structures in the Suceava County during the period 2010-2018**

	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016
Total	2263630	2439609	2594059	2642601	2686399	2780181	2764901
Hotels	1141347	1199286	1234081	1329994	1398169	1330435	1251026
Hostels	89177	105945	107203	97838	54874	48371	58260
Motels	30387	73628	73055	80773	103176	105857	104593
Tourist villas	145579	101860	87689	77010	81643	79128	70612
Tourist huts	75846	60502	67734	74130	73956	67102	69847
Bungalows	6740	6120	6740	8580	10210	17172	17098
Holiday villages	:	:	:	:	:	4816	:
Campsites	29398	31692	22712	29088	18352	21432	17952
Tourist stops	8046	8252	6992	5732	4918	23492	24192
Tourist houses	:	920	1840	1220	:	:	366
Tourist boarding houses	370943	419498	441444	417341	407494	474472	527300
Agritourist hostels	366167	431906	544569	520895	533607	607904	623655

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Suceava County, INS, Edition 2018, city of Suceava

**Table no.2.2. Arrivals of tourists in tourist accommodation establishments with tourist accommodation options in Suceava County during the period 2010-2016**

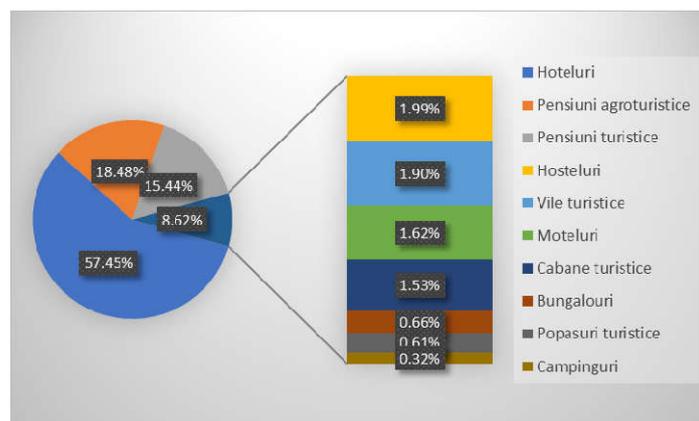
Type of establishments	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016
Total	194365	229519	238611	241629	260684	310548	342710
Hotels	131209	149158	149170	154442	169052	189504	196866
Hostels	3699	4327	5295	4747	3996	4006	6812
Motels	2209	5207	3347	4410	5333	5977	5561
Tourist villas	10190	8339	7620	6585	6987	6572	6528
Tourist huts	2229	2684	3874	3601	3994	5555	5229
Bungalows	382	455	708	407	990	2232	2246
Holiday villages	:	:	:	:	:	551	:
Camping sites	696	640	749	994	552	1081	1099
Tourist stops	226	212	130	139	152	1389	2076
Tourist houses	:	47	85	35	:	:	30
Tourist boarding houses	20319	24530	28848	30202	31568	42086	52924
Agritourist hostels	23206	33920	38785	36067	38060	51595	63339

Source: SuceavaS statistical Yearbook of the Suceava County, INS, Edition 2018, the city of Suceava

**Table no. 2.3 Overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments by types of structures, in the Suceava County during the period 2010-2016**

Types of accommodation establishments	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016
Total	460637	556249	586237	577232	583642	699491	759754
Hotels	310515	347064	357182	367725	385349	447509	470014
Hostels	12385	17355	25598	27702	8737	8285	13844
Motels	3920	11305	7335	5374	7155	9666	8913
Tourist villas	30704	24695	15274	14540	13560	12351	11405
Tourist huts	3884	7213	9670	10841	10552	11862	10145
Bungalows	1036	1330	1287	803	1855	3818	3876
Holiday villages	:	:	:	:	:	1050	:
Camping sites	1288	1648	2268	2708	1036	1948	1652
Tourist stops	348	235	142	171	152	2578	2930
Tourist houses	:	67	94	75	:	:	58
Tourist boarding houses	45500	66367	65158	65163	68595	88872	102239
Agritourist hostels	51057	78970	102229	82130	86651	111552	134678

Source: Suceava Statistical Yearbook of the Suceava County, INS, Edition 2018, the city of Suceava

**Figure 2.1. Structure of tourists by types of tourist accommodation units in 2016 in the Suceava County**

The pricing policy of tour operators in Bucovina must also consider the different behavior of consumers according to the economic situation. During the economic upswing period (before the 2010 economic crisis), the population spent more with meeting their travel needs by making more expensive voyages and accommodating reception facilities with a higher classification category. Unfortunately, Bucovina cannot offer too many 4 and 5-star accommodation establishments and it is imperative to attract foreign investors or to implement projects financed by European funds to create a modern material base. During the period of economic recession (after 2010) the tourist demand decreased considerably due to the low level of the incomes and savings of the population. It is necessary to revive economic activities and create new jobs. In order to promote sales, a marketing tool can be designed to allow all monasteries to be visited by paying a global price. Just as with all museums – designing and selling a voucher is a practical choice. It recommends for the accommodation establishments in Bucovina to promote low prices for a minimum package of services offered to attract tourists to their destination, and to convince tourists to spend more by providing additional services: trips to the area, hiking options, organizing folklore programs, visiting local attractions and reservations).

**The distribution policy:** Nowadays, there are tourism agencies dealing with the incoming and outgoing activity in the Bucovina area. Travel agencies prefer to organize tourist packages on demand only than to design some and distribute them internally and externally. The local agencies participating in tourism fairs prefer to promote outgoing offers rather than incoming offers. There is a very large and untapped opportunity for incoming tourism in the area of Bucovina. The contribution of all tour operators is necessary in order to establish tourist products of the Bucovina touristic circuit at an advantageous price, which will be distributed both to domestic and foreign travel agencies.

It is necessary to collaborate with the big tour operators to include these products in their offers, and with regard to the electronic distribution, it is necessary to design a single official website that contains all the information a tourist needs to know when it comes to visiting the Bucovina area and this website may also contain an on-line booking system that includes the accommodation offer in the area, as the Bucovina tourist destination wishes to strengthen its position on the market. A distribution strategy is recommended, involving the use of a large number of intermediaries. The tourist product of the Bucovina area should be placed primarily in the offers of the big international tour operators, then in the travel agencies and the internal and external tourist information centers and to the electronic intermediaries. The package of tourist services cannot be shipped to the customer, the tourist will have to travel to the product to consume it at the destination (in reception facilities, spa treatment, recreation, etc.). The units of tourist services, except those in the urban area, are located in regions with an attractive offer in terms of leisure opportunities. It is necessary to attract the tourist consumer to the places of supply and consumption of the tourist services in a certain resort or area. This role is fulfilled in tourism by the distribution through an activity to stimulate and inform potential tourists about the characteristics and structural components of the products provided. The ease of choosing the destination for consumers requires the diversification of informational products (leaflets, catalogs, brochures, advertising spots on radio and television stations, internet

advertising, and websites) made available to tourists. The perishability of tourism services is countered by the intervention of distribution, which is designed to allow for the resale in advance compared to the moment of the consumption. It is imperative that the organized travel holidays be completed well in advance of the actual consumption of the services paid up through direct distribution channels by the tourist and through indirect channels by the intermediaries. Considering the cyclical, seasonal character of tourist activities, it is necessary to intensify the actions and the distribution efforts in the off season to stimulate the tourist demand. In this respect, it is possible to choose to organize sales outlets around commercial units, university campuses, main access roads in localities and to provide mobile units covering a larger area

**The promotion policy:** The promotion in tourism consists of a set of communication approaches aimed at permanently transmitting, in various ways, of messages aimed at informing both potential clients and tourists upon the characteristics of the tourism products and services offered for sale in order to consolidate a positive image, to cultivate a favorable attitude, and to determine changes that are convenient to the sending or receiving company of these messages. The components of the promotional mix in tourism include the tourism advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and the sales force. The advertising is made through printed means of information (leaflets, guides, tourist posters, newspapers, catalogs, leaflets, flyers) or electronic, audio-visual, internet, television or radio means of information.

The public relations are carried out both in the internal environment (travel agency staff, accommodation establishments, food and leisure facilities, transport companies, guides) as well as in the external environment (press relations via press releases, press conferences, the creation of events). The promotion of sales of the tourist product – one receives promotional gifts, discounts (special offers, grouped sales), promotional contests, games, lotteries. The direct marketing – in tourism, one can use the mailing (e-mails, postal mail), catalogs, direct meetings, telemarketing and internet. There are initiatives to promote the Bucovina tourist area due to its high attractiveness among the destinations in Romania. Thus, this tourist destination must be considered a well-known tourist brand nationwide and internationally, in order to start a promotional campaign.

In order to ensure the effective promotion at the local level, it is necessary to cooperate with all the intermediaries in tourism in order to:

- Designing an attractive portal to showcase all the attractions of the area, the activities that can be carried out here and the opportunities for leisure.
- Introduce the Bucovina tourism product on the social media sites and on the websites of the various travel agencies.
- Produce various good quality, attractive, well-documented promotional materials such as leaflets, brochures, CDs, tourist guides, distributed free of charge to tourists, information centers and travel agents in the country and abroad.
- Design a brand of the Bucovina area to represent the identity of the tourist destination, including an advertising clip with the representative, possibly unique objectives of

the area, a very concise presentation of the customs and leisure possibilities; a short message, easy to remember; promotional materials to be advertised under the common message. This brand has to be launched both on the domestic and international markets.

- Organize info-trip trips for the representatives of tour operators and travel agencies for the knowledge of the area in person.
- Organize international festivals.
- Attract personalities to support the brand through the performance of concerts, book presentations, etc.
- Participate in as many trade fairs and exhibitions as possible and promote the Bucovina area product.

The Bucovina tourist destination can adopt several promotion strategies: advertising, public relations and sales promotion strategies.

#### **The promotion of the Bucovina tourist destination was made by:**

#### **The participation in tourism fairs and exhibitions domestically and abroad**

- the participation a proprietary stand called Bucovina at the Romanian Tourism Fair in Bucharest;
- the participation with a proprietary stand at the "GLOB" International Tourism Fair in Katowice (Poland);
- the participation with a proprietary stand at the International Fair of Crafts, Tourism, Regional Culinary Specialties in Trieste (Italy);
- the participation at the "Touristica" Tourism Fair in Cluj – Napoca;
- the participation in the "Ferien Messe" Tourism Fair in Vienna.

#### **The printing of specific material**

- Editing the "Holiday in Bucovina" brochure;
- the printing the "Bucovina" brochure in English and German;
- The printing of the "Bucovina" travel guide;
- The printing the "Bucovina" tourist map in English and German;
- The printing of the "Force-Tourism-Business & Tourism" brochure in English and German.

#### **Organizing promotional information tours for Romanian and foreign journalists**

#### **Organizing cultural events, festivals and fairs in the Bucovina area**

- The "Painted Eggs" Festival;
- The National Trout Festival in Ciocănești;
- The Medieval Art Festival in the city of Suceava
- The Sânzieni Fair June 22-24, Suceava;
- The "Humor... in Gura Humorului" Festival;
- The National Festival of Winter Wines and Customs "Porniti Plugul Feti Frumosi" 27-28 December in Vatra Dornei;
- The Snow Celebrations-February-March in Vatra Dornei;;
- Easter in Bucovina;
- Christmas in Bucovina;

- The "Hora" of Bucovinei – May – in Frasin;
- -Religious tourism in Bucovina;
- Bucovina BIOLAND – ecotourism for the promotion of traditional bio products.

In order to promote the tourism potential of the Suceava County (which obviously includes the area of Bucovina), the National Tourist Information and Promotion Center in the city of Suceava was designed and achieved besides and with the support of the Suceava County Council. This Center is located on the "Stefan cel Mare" Street, no. 36, near the "Nicolae Sbierea" County Library. The National Tourist Information and Promotion Center Suceava is the only one in the North-East Region of Romania that fulfills both the tourist information function and the promotion of tourism at local, county, regional and national levels. At the level of the "Ștefan cel Mare" University, the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, the Promotur BUCOVINA Tourist Information and Promotion Center, the Marketing Club and the Voiaj Travel Club were established.

#### **The strengths of the Bucovina tourist product**

- The alternative tourism potential, the traditional houses, craftsmanship, high natural potential, the special landforms, the well-preserved natural environment, the attractive natural landscapes, the local gastronomic specialties, traditional cuisine, the New Year's customs, masks, the folk music and dances.
- Tourist resorts: Vatra Dornei (Spa) Câmpulung Moldovenesc, the mineral springs, the folklore and folk festivals, the historical and ethnographic museums, the medieval fortresses, the ceramics and traditional painting exhibitions, the possibility of organizing a touristic circuit (the monastery tour was the most requested), the craftsmanship of the black ceramics (Marginea).
- The local population is welcoming and open to tourism, and the local authorities have identified tourism as an activity that could lead to the economic development of the region.
- The tourist infrastructure in certain areas can be developed from scratch.
- The multitude of the landforms existing in Bucovina, the itinerant tourism with cultural valences, the spa tourism, the rural tourism and the transit tourism.

#### **The weaknesses**

- The mentality of the people who want to earn money quickly, the people's indifference towards the natural environment;
- The insufficient training of the specialists in the tourism industry, the lack of motivation of the staff;
- A low interest for investments;
- The disturbance of the transport because of the access routes;
- The apparent poverty seen from the outside and the impression of neglect of certain monuments from the historical areas.
- The insufficient promotion of tourist objectives.

#### **The opportunities**

- The development of new tourist resorts in Câmpulung, Cacica and Botuș;

- The establishment of a Tourism Stock Exchange in Suceava
- The organization of the rental of traditional houses;
- The provision of reception facilities with conference and seminar rooms;
- The establishment of a network of tourist information centers near the main tourist attractions;
- The development of new forms of tourism (scientific or adventure tourism);
- The improvement of the infrastructure by implementing projects funded by European funds.
- The increased interest of tourists from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine for the mountain area.

### Threats

- the carelessness of the authorities over the degradation of some monuments of art and architecture;
- the development of the Maramureş tourism product;
- the decrease of the real population incomes, the inflation
- the instability of government policies on tourism and taxation
- the decrease of the spare time availability;
- -the increase in the competitiveness between regions and the lack of collaboration between them.

### Conclusions

Bucovina means more than the heroic history encountered almost everywhere, the traditions and customs of great originality inherited for our ancestors, the monuments and folk traditions of great ingenuity, but also the monuments of the Renaissance voivodships, which tell the story of over our 5 centuries our European vocation, the beauty of the lands and the hospitality of households. Tourism has undergone an important development, with an emphasis on the economic tourism, represented by monasteries in Bucovina, as they are part of the UNESCO World Heritage. The rich and varied potential of the area imposes an increasingly diversified endowment and organization measures upon the level of the requirements of the modern tourism. One of the determining factors in the tourism exploitation is the upgraded network of roads connecting various tourist objectives.

This makes it possible to make some interesting route options. The technical and material basis of tourism comprises all the material means that tourism uses to fulfill its economic and social functions. The technical – material basis of tourism includes: the accommodation establishments, the catering, the recreation options and their number and structure reflects mostly the degree of tourism endowment and development. The tourist destinations, the basic pillars of tourist activity face many challenges in order to enter and stay on this market. That is why the marketing activity in the tourist destinations is of paramount importance for them to remain at a competitive level. The marketing approaches within the tourist destinations have become important tools for their success.

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