Tourism Infrastructure – a Factor which Influences the Quality of Tourism Services

Lecturer Emilia PASCU, PhD
pascu.emilia@ucdc.ro
"Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract
At the end of this century and millennium, the tourism and travel industry represents, at a global scale, the most dynamic activity sector and, at the same time, it is the most important workforce generator. From an economical point of view, tourism represents the main source of redressing the national economies of those countries which possess valuable tourism resources and properly exploits them. Its action manifests at a large scale, from stimulating economical development to perfecting social structure, from a superior resources’ valorizing to an improvement of life conditions. Any tourist activity requires a specific material base tourism industry, but at the same time, to ensure tourist traffic require both the tourist material specific as well as general and technical infrastructure.

Key words: free time, accommodation capacity, technical infrastructure, material basis

JEL Classification: L83

Introduction
Viewed in conjunction with the national economy, tourism acts as a stimulating TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE global system. Conducting tourism involves a specific request for goods and services, demand drives the increase in their production area. Tourism demand determines supply adaptation that results in, inter alia, the technical and material development of the sector, and indirectly stimulating the production branches participating in the construction and equipping of accommodation and food, modernization of roads, development of means transport, leisure facilities etc. Perceived in relationship to the assembly of national economy, tourism acts as an element which activates the global system.

Determinant factors of tourism development
In this context, the main arguments which determine the necessity of tourism development are the consequence of the following aspects (Apostol D., 2012):
- Because tourism resources are practically inexhaustible, tourism represents one of economy’s sectors with real long term development perspectives;
- The complex exploitation and valorization of tourism resources, together with an efficient advertising on the external market can represent a way of growing the financial resources of the state, contributing to establishing a balance of external payments;
- Tourism is a secure market for workforce as it redistributes the unemployed personnel coming from other economic sectors;
- Because of its multiplying effect, tourism acts as an element of the global tourism system, generating a specific request of goods and services which determine a growth of their production, contributing to the national economy’s sectors’ diversification;
- A harmonious development of tourism contributes to the economic and social growth and to the attenuation of the disequilibrium between various areas, representing an important source of increasing the population’s financial resources.

Regional development

The regional development policy wants to:
- diminish the existing regional disequilibrium, focusing on stimulating a balanced development and revitalizing the affected areas (with delayed development); it anticipates and solves future disequilibrium;
- accomplish the criteria of integration in the European Union’s structures and having access to financial assistance tools for member states (structural and cohesion funds);
- correlate the governmental sector programs; it also wants to stimulate the interregional, internal and international cooperation, which contributes to economic development and follows the legal regulations and international agreements signed by Romania.
- tourism represents a tool for rural development by means of expanding the area of the specific offer and of creating workplaces other than the traditional ones, improving life conditions and growing the local population’s incomes;
- local industry’s diversification through small and medium enterprises;
- developing nonpolluting industries which would promote products such as handicraft articles, furniture, leather etc.;
- under the conditions of respecting and promoting the durable development principles, tourism is a means of protecting, conserving and valorizing the cultural, historical, folkloric and architectural potential of countries;
- by adopting a durable development strategy and imposing a series of measures for the protection of environment and human existence’s fundamental principles (water, air, flora, fauna, ecosystems etc.), tourism has an ecological vocation at the same time;
- the social dimension of tourism manifests itself as a way of educating and improving the level of civilization, playing an important part in properly spending the free time.

The adaptation of tourism activities to the current level of exigencies and to the present and future mutations of the internal and international request’s level and intensity cannot be realized without the existence of a tourism material unit and that of an adequate technical and social infrastructure which would be able to valorize all tourism resources available. Valorizing the touristic potential, the natural potential (relief and geology, climate, hydrography, flora and fauna, natural parks and natural reservations) and the anthropic potential (vestiges, historical places and monuments, ethnography and folklore,
as well as technical-economical and social-demographic) directly depend on the technical-
material base of tourism and the quality of tourism services (P. Nedea, 2012).

Over the last few decades, at an international level, the hotels’ activity has gained more and more the characteristics of a true industry.

The hotels industry gathers in a coherent system all those processes developed in accommodation units generated by the tourists’ receiving, hosting and departure. This is the reason why it can be established a complex and profound interdependency relationship between hotels industry and tourist activity (O.M. Rezeanu, 2011).

On the one hand, tourism development is causally determined by the existence of accommodation units, their equipments, the services’ variety and quality, and on the other hand, the hotels industry develops from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view as a result of tourism circuits. This way, hotels industry allows a superior valorization of the touristic patrimony by attracting in this circuit various geographical areas; it creates the conditions which would allow a larger amount of the population to spend their free time in a tourism destination (Bălășoiu, V., Dobândă, E., Snak, O., 2003).

The level of hotels industry’s development also represents the extent to which the population’s need for tourism has been satisfied. In return, profits increase, urbanization, a larger amount of free time have led to mutations in what regards consumers’ behavior, in the sense that their tourism request has grown.

Insufficient or low quality hotel services in relationship with population’s requests will determine changes in incomes’ destination and in the way of spending free time, leading to a decrease in tourism circuits. Hotels industry and the quality of tourism services provide a good valorization of the tourism potential, workforce, the capacity of the technical-material base and growing the efficiency of its trading. The hotels industry is influenced by tourism development and develops under the influence of various factors and economical and social phenomena in which tourism circuits play an important part (O.M. Rezeanu, 2011).

The increase of tourists’ number and their exigencies will lead to an increase of accommodation units and their modernization. Moreover, we will face the apparition of hotel units with complex functions, as well as a diversification of their services.

If we analyze the tradition of hospitality and the manner in which it has been managed, we reach the conclusion that hotel activity oscillates between services and industry.

Types of services specific to the activity tourism
Modern hostelry is characterized by a series of tendencies of integrating tourists’ accommodation and alimentation. Moreover, there are some accommodation units which provide cultural and artistic services, recreation services, informing services and commercial ones (O. Milea, 2012).

Recreation and cultural-artistic services request adequate equipments (pools, saunas, gyms, sports fields, areas for holding folkloric festivals, reunions, shows, exhibits etc.) and specialized personnel able to instruct and/or supervise tourists (Minciu R., 2006).

Information services enable the possibility of acknowledging the tourism offer. Intermediation services enable a better communication between tourists and specialized services providers: renting recreation products of personal use, booking etc.

Commercial services are represented by selling a series of necessary products during the sojourn.

Considered through the lenses of its position – that of component part of both the tourism product and the base services – public alimentation determines the quality of
tourism services in its assembly, and it influences the tourism offer’s content and attractiveness, having at the same time major influences over the dimensions of the tourism fluxes’ directions. In order to achieve these things, public alimentation services must complete the following requests:

- being present at every major moment of tourism consume;
- the existence of a structural diversity of this type of services;
- particularizing the public alimentation service;
- the necessity of responding to both local and foreign tourists’ exigencies;

Enterprisers from the public alimentation services domain are permanently busy with providing a qualitative and quantitative development of the provided services, in order to respond to alimentation requests of local and foreign tourists. From a quantitative point of view, they focus on growing the volume of activity, and from a qualitative perspective, they permanently adapt to the requests’ exigencies by means of modernizing and perfecting the production, of improving and diversifying serving methods.

In order to respond to international tourism’s requests, it has been developed a network of specific, representative units, which offer ethnic food in a pleasant ambient with cultural and architectural elements, decorations, well chosen artistic programs – offering public alimentation new features and making it more interesting.

Balneary units contain both accommodation units and treatment units. Most of the treatment units are placed inside the hotels and allow a number of 95.000 procedures a day and they assure a diversified treatment base, able of satisfying treatment requests included in the World Health Organization’s nomenclature: hearth diseases, renal disease etc. (Vlad D., 2006).

The therapeutically value of these natural cure factors in our country has led to the development of treatment bases which allow the treatment of various affections, the most important ones being listed below:

- renal affections;
- alimentary duct affections;
- hepatic and bilious affections;
- metabolic affections;
- inflammatory and degenerative rheumatic affections;
- respiratory affections;
- neurological affections etc.

These are the reasons why the development of accommodation and treatment units at the level requested by the balneary tourism market becomes a necessity. Moreover, they improve the recreation and relaxing possibilities. A scientifically funded strategy – that of diversifying tourism services in spa units – must take into account various categories of clients which favor those market segments that include this kind of services.

The characteristics of treatment and spa services derive from the definition of cures: treatment possibilities which are based on a regular use of therapeutically methods according to medical prescriptions together which a change regarding the tourist’s usual environment. During the treatment, patients would benefit of medical assistance. This way, medical consults and medical assistance represent a specific form of balneary and medical services, provided in order to complete the series of spa and treatment services.

The recreation unit contains all the tools and equipments needed in order to provide a qualitative spending of free time. The recreation unit’s technical and material base consists of clubs, casinos, multipurpose halls, amusement parks, sports and recreation services etc.
The recreation service was conceived as a base of the tourism service and it responds to tourists’ specific needs and interests. Therefore, it focuses on the tourist’s physical relaxation, his amusement and the development of his abilities. Its development aims at fulfilling the exigencies regarding the improvement of tourism units and leads to a diversification of the offer in this field. This is the reason why the recreation units’ development strategy must take into account tourists’ motivations, exigencies and expectations, on the one hand and the units’ profile, structure and specific, on the other hand.

In order to achieve tourism services, we need a material base, a general tourism infrastructure and a special technical infrastructure.

Conclusions
The general tourism infrastructure which contributes to achieving of tourism consumption is made by:

- road network: it occupies an important place in developing tourism travels as it is distributed in the entire country and it offers the opportunity of visiting touristic objectives even in more isolated areas;
- railway network;
- air transportation is a main factor of international tourism’s development;
- water transportation (fluvial and maritime) are favored by the fact that Romania is placed on the inferior course of the Danube, having 1.075 km of navigable waters. At the same time, Romania benefits from the advantages of being placed near the Black Sea, having 224 km of beaches. The fluvial channels can be developed by means of various facilities which derive from the existence of a high number of rivers and lakes.

The general infrastructure and the tourism infrastructure also include elements from the cultural networks: theatres, cinemas, clubs, museums, exhibits etc.

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