

Romania's Tourism Market. Trends and Influencing Factors

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Abstract

The tourism market is the economic space in which all transactions in the form of tourism consumption and production take place.

Although competition is the main instrument that defines a free market economy, nevertheless in the tourism market it is necessary for the state to intervene by establishing certain regulations concerning the provision of tourism services by hoteliers and tourism intermediaries in order to ensure the protection of tourists as consumers of tourism services.

The tourist market is a complex and dynamic market, which is constantly subject to both endogenous and exogenous factors, such as economic, political, social, legislative, psychological, natural, geographical, military and health factors.

In Romania, the tourism market has shown trends of decline, stagnation or growth under the influence of factors specific to the Romanian economy, the aim of this paper being to highlight these aspects.

Key words: tourism market, tourism demand, tourism supply

J.E.L. classification: L80, L83

1. Introduction

Touristic demand and supply are essential in defining the tourism market. Tourism demand is primordial for tourism service providers, and for tourism consumption to take place it implies a movement of tourists from their area of residence to a tourist destination.

2. Theoretical background

The tourism market can be defined as "the economic sphere of interference, in which the tourism product appears in the form of tourism supply and tourism consumption needs in the form of tourism demand" (Snak *et al*, 2001, p.148). We note that the tourism market has the two component elements that define any market, namely tourism supply and tourism demand. Of course, in a market economy, tourism demand is the essential element and therefore tourism service providers must bear in mind that the tourist is the carrier of tourism demand and must constantly adapt their offer to his needs.

Tourist demand is formed at the tourist's place of residence, and tourist consumption takes place within the tourist supply basin (Cristureanu, C., 1992, p. 106). In other words, the tourist has to travel to a tourist destination in order to benefit from the elements that constitute the tourist supply, namely: tourist resources and attractions, tourist infrastructure, tourist services and facilities offered by tourist service providers. Therefore, in satisfying tourism demand, tourism service providers must bear in mind that tourism demand is characterized by a high degree of elasticity, while supply is rigid and closely linked to the natural and artificial tourism resources around which tourism supply has developed.

In this context, the tourist offer includes all the elements that contribute to the tourist product, namely: the natural and anthropic potential, the labour force, the technical-material base of tourism and the marketing conditions (Cosmescu, I., 1998, p.115). The material base of tourism is an essential component of the tourism product, but tourist movement is also strongly influenced by the general technical and social infrastructure of a tourist destination (Snak *et al*, 2001, p.197). In other words,

the general infrastructure of a country is a determining factor for the manifestation of tourism demand, especially in the case of international tourism, but also in the mobility of domestic tourism.

In conclusion, the tourism market has a complex and fragmented character, thus generating a multitude of forms of tourism, but it also has an opaque character because there are many uncertainties generated by the cumbersome circulation of information and that tourism services are immaterial and invisible activities (Minciu, R., 2001, p.132-133). As such, in practice, it is difficult to achieve a balance between tourism supply and demand, especially as the tourism market is also a more regulated market than the market for material goods.

3. Research methodology

The tourist demand, materialized in tourist consumption, and the tourist supply, materialized in tourist production, are shown by the number of tourists and by the use of existing accommodation capacities in Romania.

Therefore, the use of statistical methods of data analysis reflecting these indicators are the main research tools, in order to highlight the quantitative, structural and qualitative influences of the different factors on the tourism market in Romania.

4. Findings

The tourist offer is determined by a number of components such as:

- the technical and material base specific to tourism, comprising accommodation establishments and the amenities necessary for the provision of tourist services, food service establishments, leisure and entertainment establishments, and treatment centres
- the labour force specialised in the provision of tourism services, which has a quantitative, qualitative and structural influence on the tourism services included in the tourism offer, thus generating a positive or negative impact on the tourism market.

Therefore, the analysis of accommodation units expressed in terms of existing tourist accommodation capacity in Romania provides important information on the tourist market in Romania.

Thus, according to the data in Table 1, the following trends can be seen concerning the accommodation capacity expressed in number of beds in Romania:

- there is a continuous increase in the number of beds in accommodation establishments in Romania in the period 2015-2022, both in total and for spas and the Danube Delta
- in 2022 compared to 2015, accommodation capacity in Romania increased by 28.5%, indicating a positive development
- even though the tourism market was affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, accommodation capacity in Romania has continuously increased, as shown in Figure 1.

Table no. 1. Tourist accommodation capacity in Romania, in spas and in the Danube Delta, in 2015-2022

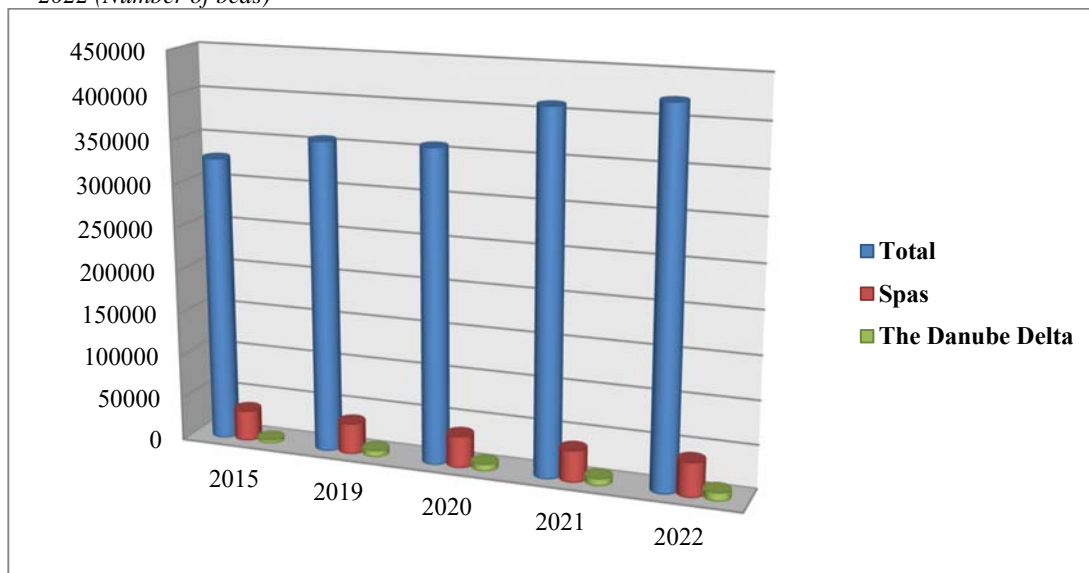
Year	Total		Spas		The Danube Delta	
	Number of beds	%	Number of beds	%	Number of beds	%
2015	328313	100	35342	10.76	3907	1.19
2019	356562	100	35643	9.99	7205	2.02
2020	358119	100	36554	10.2	7593	2.12
2021	410291	100	36362	8.86	8177	1.99
2022	422114	100	39940	9.46	9532	2.26

Sources: (National Institute of Statistics in Romania, www.insse.ro)

Because, the Romanian balneal resorts and the Danube Delta are two tourist segments with a high potential for the Romanian tourist market, the analysis of the data in Table 1 shows the following aspects:

- accommodation capacity in spas expressed in number of beds, although it has increased from 35342 beds in 2015 to 39940 beds, i.e. by 13%, it is noted that the share of the total number of beds is maintained at around 10%, but has seen a decrease of 1.3% (from 10.76% in 2015 to 9.46% in 2022)
- in the case of the Danube Delta, the accommodation capacity expressed in number of beds has increased from 3907 in 2015 to 9532 (2.4 times) which highlights the importance of this segment of the tourist offer
- although this increase has been recorded, the analysis of the data in table number 1 and figure number 1 shows a low percentage of accommodation capacity in the Danube Delta, between 1.19% and 2.26% of the total existing accommodation capacity in Romania.

Figure no. 1. Tourist accommodation capacity in Romania, in spas and in the Danube Delta, in 2015-2022 (Number of beds)



Source: Table no.1, National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro

However, in 2022 compared to 2015 there was almost a doubling of accommodation capacity in the Danube Delta, which indicates a positive trend in the tourist offer, from the point of view of the technical-material base with specific tourism.

Table no. 2. Tourist overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments in Romania, in 2015-2022

Year	Total overnight stays		Of which			
	Number (thousands)	%	Romanian tourists' overnight stays		Foreign tourists' overnight stays	
			Number (thousands)	%	Number (thousands)	%
2015	23519	100	19047	80.9	4471	19.1
2019	30086	100	24795	82.4	5290	17.6
2020	14579	100	13581	93.1	997	6.9
2021	22747	100	20823	91.5	1924	8.5
2022	27044	100	23377	86.4	3666	13.6

Source: (National Institute of Statistics in Romania, www.insse.ro)

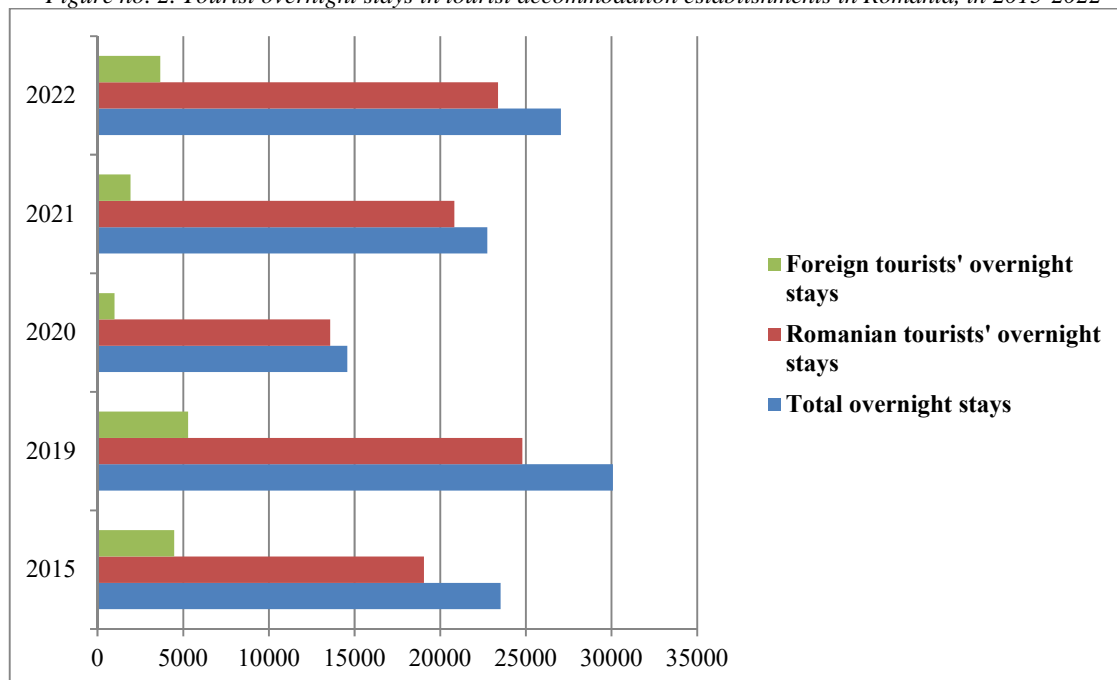
The second component of the tourism market in Romania (tourism demand) is examined in terms of overnight stays both in total and by tourist category.

Thus:

- there is an undulating trend in total overnight stays, as in 2019 compared to 2015 the number of overnight stays increased by 27%, then after 2019 there is a drastic decrease of 52% in 2020 compared to 2019, due to the restrictions generated by COVID

- although an upward trend is observed in 2021 and continued in 2022 (from 14579 in 2020 to 27044 in 2022), this increase is still below the value recorded in 2019, before the start of the COVID pandemic (see also figure number 2)
- the same trend of increase, decrease and then increase can be observed for Romanian tourists, with the addition that in 2020, although the largest decrease in the number of overnight stays was recorded (the value recorded was 13581, the share of overnight stays by Romanian tourists is the highest 93.1%, due to the decrease in the share of overnight stays by foreign tourists in Romania to a minimum of 6.9%, as an effect of the limitation of international movement based on sanitary restrictions
- in 2022 compared to 2015, there was a quantitative increase in the number of overnight stays of Romanian tourists, by 22%, but also in the share of Romanian tourists in total overnight stays (from 80.9% to 86.4%)
- in the case of foreign tourists staying in Romania, there is a decrease in the number of overnight stays from 4471 in 2015 to 3666 in 2022 and a decrease in the share of foreign tourists in total overnight stays in Romania.

Figure no. 2. Tourist overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments in Romania, in 2015-2022



Source: Table no.2, National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro

These trends in tourism supply and demand, as an actual expression of the tourism market in Romania, have been influenced by certain factors, such as:

- the sanitary crisis generated by the Covid pandemic
- the decrease in revenue due to the economic instability generated by Covid and the military conflict in Ukraine, which led to a decrease in tourism demand and disrupted the tourism supply
- shortage of skilled labour in the tourism sector
- the inadequacy of road and motorway networks to generate comfort, operability and safety in tourism consumption in Romania
- the high prices of tourist services and their disproportion to the quality of services provided on the Romanian tourist market
- ineffective controls by the Ministry of Tourism to prevent the negative effects of tourism intermediaries and some direct providers of tourism services, which have a negative impact on the Romanian tourism market
- competition from foreign tourism markets

5. Conclusions

Tourism market in Romania is constantly changing under the influence of highly complex factors, factors that cause changes in the behavior of consumers of tourism services, but also among the providers of tourism services.

All this leads to an underutilisation of tourist accommodation capacities and an insufficient tourist demand for the different forms of tourism existing on the Romanian tourist market.

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