

## Balneary Tourism Management in Turkey - Comparative Analysis

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### Abstract

*Nowadays, the tourism is a significant and remarkable economic branch. The increase in volume and the complexity of the touristic service offer have generated a true industry of the journeys and tourism, which justifies treating the touristic phenomenon as a distinctive branch of the national economy which is in full development, being a component of the tertiary sector. In this way there is a concern to define the concept in a more complete form.*

*Tourism is a phenomenon characteristic to the modern civilization, influenced by its evolution. It fulfils the needs of all client categories. Also, through its mass character and complex content, tourism trains a vast material and human potential, with important implications upon the evolution of the economy and society, upon the national and international interhuman relations. As a result, tourism represents a true business, contributing to the employed work force and the gross world product.*

*The balneary tourism, as an integrated branch of tourism, its extremely important, given that it's based on natural resources, given that it is based on natural resources, from which not every country benefit from. So, owning some natural resources constitutes a true treasure that needs to be treasured and simultaneously valued through adopting a total management. We have chosen this theme in order to highlight the differences between the approach of balneary tourism by two countries: Turkey and Romania.*

**Key words:** balneary tourism, management, Turkey, Romania

**J.E.L. classification:** Z30

### 1. Introduction

Tourism and the local economic development are strongly connected. Tourism can have a constructive effect upon the local economy and can contribute to the balancing of some inequalities between different parts of a country. Thus, in many regions of the world, tourism is accepted as one of the biggest sources of economic growth and job creation. In accordance with the economic contribution of the sector, the policy in the tourism department has become a regional development instrument and to improve the opportunities of a country.

Thus, tourism for many countries has become a constant concern and a priority. Through the prism of the tourism, the local resources are superior valued, the infrastructure is improved, the action of spatial planning is intensified and at the same time exchanges of experiences and cultures are made.

Tourism in Turkey has rapidly developed, gaining an important competitive advantage in the international tourism market using its natural potential. In addition to the mass tourism, Turkey also has a significant potential for alternative tourism in different regions. Although Turkey holds an important share of the tourism at a global level, from the point of view of tourism revenues and arrivals, it is not enough to only consider this potential. It is obvious that the alternative tourism potential is not fully explored and exploited due to obstacles encountered in the tourism sector.

Insufficient commercialization of thermal natural resources, lack of adequate infrastructure for diversification and geographical expansion, lack of efficient promotion and marketing activities are some of these obstacles.

## 2. Literature review

The constantly developing economy, the living conditions of the people in the modern society and the fast pace of life lead to the appearance of negative aspects, such as: the increased pollution, which affects the development of the human body, having harmful effects on it, the accumulated daily stress, the food imbalances, both quantitative and qualitative, but also the intensification of work have an impact on people's health. Balneary tourism is seen as a solution to these consequences, contributing to the improvement of the side effects which these factors present. The tourist chooses as destination a balneary resort to regain its energy and to take care and straighten his health.

Spa tourism combines relaxation with different forms of spa treatment and balneomedical treatment and is practiced in the spa and climatic resorts with rich natural cleaning resources: mineral waters, thermal waters, sludge, mofettes, with therapeutic effects, usually located in areas with a specific microclimate, suitable for treating various diseases.

Given the major importance of spa tourism throughout the world, it is imperative that each country, which benefits from natural resources that can facilitate this type of tourism, to approach an integrated management for the conservation, development and continuous improvement of the quality of the services offered by this branch of tourism.

The management of tourism is the process of overseeing all activities related to the tourism and hospitality sector. It is a multidisciplinary field that prepares people with the interest, experience and professionalism required for management positions in the food, accommodation and tourism industry. Tourism management could also include businesses, associations and public authorities that market tourism services to potential travelers.

The management of tourism comprises the functions of business administration, such as finances, human resources and marketing. Also, the management of tourism involves theories and management principles of the tourism industry sectors, such as the travel motivation, environmental factors and tourism organizations.

The principles of general management must be adapted to the tourism industry, according to its particularities, the service representing the central element in this industry. Thus, the branch of balneoclimatic tourism knows certain specific features to its characteristics, for which the management is different from other areas of tourism.

The managerial approach of the balneary tourism realized at a microeconomic level, focuses on the managerial activity necessary for an enterprise that works in the field of tourism. The managerial approach is considered the most important component in the study of tourism. In the event that it intervenes changes in tourism products, institutions, legislation, society, the managerial approach must be modified and adapted to the new tourism environment.

Also, a special influence in the tourism management activity in general and of the balneary tourism in particular is the technical progress registered in the field of the means of transport's development and in the visible and invisible tourism infrastructure. As for the demographic evolution correlated with the dynamics of the population and with the changes in its structure, they also influence the tourism activity, as well as the urbanization process and the governmental actions or the psycho-sociological factors and the facilities granted by the tourism organizers.

The latest theories of strategic management consider that entrepreneurship and innovation development are more favored by certain contexts of organizational development. Due to the fact that innovation has become both a tool and a condition for performance, its approach should be done in a systematic way. Managers are responsible for developing an organizational entrepreneurial environment and adopting innovation as the main tool for development.

Thus, the managers occupy an important place in the development of the balneary tourism's activity, as they are assigned to carry out a management activity. In the context of tourism, the manager is not the person who directs the organizational activity in a direction that was previously

established, but they have the role to carry out the activity through a continuous flow of changes and innovations throughout the structure.

The manager plays the leader role which is particularly important in the tourism industry. The leader must tend to reflect the character and spirit of an organization in this industry. Many of the activities carried out by managers in the tourism industry have their roots in the activities related to gathering, processing and transmitting information. This means that receiving and communicating information is a very important element of the manager's activity.

For the balneary tourism industry, the role of entrepreneur is a major criterion for classifying managers into efficient and inefficient. When a manager is creative, innovative and generates growth through profit, by being efficient, then he is an entrepreneurial manager.

### 3. Research Methodology

Given that the intention of the present paper is that to make a comparative analysis of the balneary tourism management in two different countries, I thought that it would be most appropriate to use as a research method a comparative analysis, both at a resource level, and an economic one.

Turkey is a country with a vast potential in the balneary tourism and with a rich history in this area, as well as our country, being the most important type of alternative tourism in both countries. However, there is a significant difference in the interest given to this sector by the two countries. Thus, Turkey offers qualified health services that are competitive with those of developed countries, while Romania pays too little attention to balneary tourism.

### 4. Results

The tourists from the balneoclimatic and health sector spend almost 10 times more than the tourists who go to Turkey during the holidays, according to the Association of Health and Social Politics Strategy (SASOMER).

SASOMER claims that Turkey receives 1.1 million medical tourists. The balneoclimatic tourism produces annual revenues of 2.3 up to 3 billion dollars and it is foreseen that Turkey will raise this number to 5 billion dollars until 2020.

The evolution of the incomes obtained from the balneary tourism by Turkey during the last four years is presented below by highlighting the number of tourists in this sector both in Turkey and in Romania.

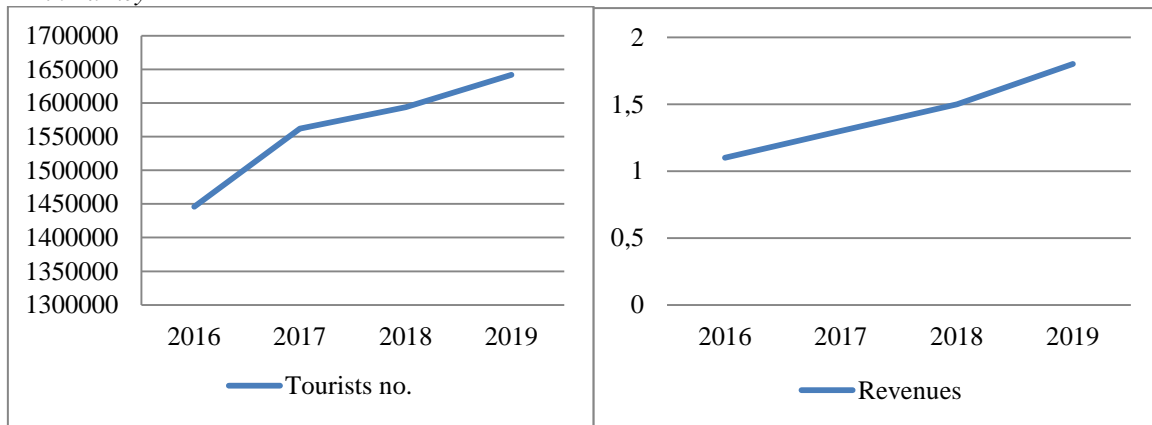
*Table no.1 The number of tourists and incomes in the balneary sector in Turkey*

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>No. of tourists</b>	1,446,000	1,562,000	1,594,000	1,642,000
<b>Revenues</b>	1.1 billion \$	1.3 billion \$	1.5 billion \$	1.8 billion \$

*Source:* Authors' contribution, based on the information from SASOMER

We note that medical tourism has become a booming sector in Turkey, with a higher growth in 2019.

Figure no.1 The evolution of the tourist's number and revenues in the balneary sector between 2016-2019 in Turkey



Source: Authors' contribution, based on the information from SASOMER

The Turkish government aims to become one of the top 10 tourism countries by 2023, through supporting boutique type hotels, instead of five-star hotels and holiday villages. The target of the government is 50 million tourists and revenues of 50 billion dollars by 2023.

Table no.2 The number of tourists and revenues in the balneary sector in Romania

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>No. of tourists</b>	851,040	945,257	1,018,721	1,143,562
<b>Revenues</b>	23.8 mil Euro	24.4 mil Euro	25.9 mil. euro	26.7 mil. euro

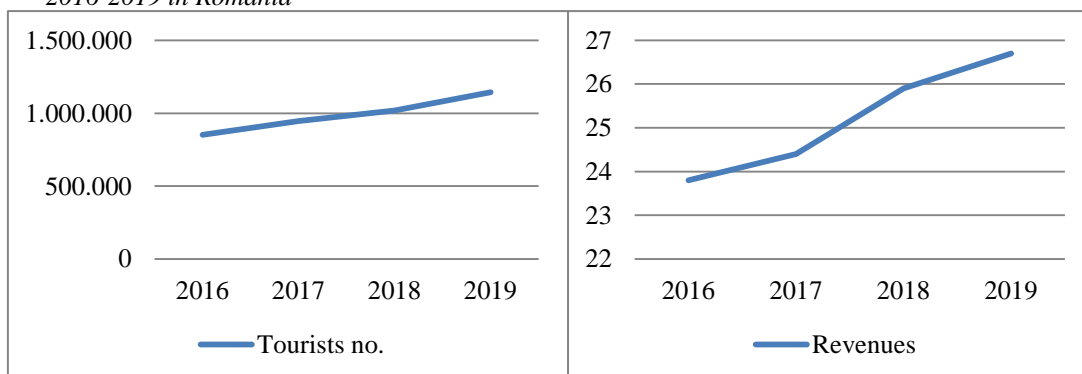
Source: Authors' contribution, based on the information from INSSE

The Romanian balneary market generated in 2018 a turnover of approximately 314 million euro. The average price of a health stay is 797 lei/person. Tourism vouchers have brought a major boost to the growth of the health, recovery and prevention tourism market in Romania. Thus, in the health and relaxation segment, over 1,000,000 people invested over 25.9 million euro for their health and well-being.

In 2018, the balneo market in Romania increased by about 10% compared to 2017, when the total income obtained was 24.4 million euro. And the revenue growth generated in 2017 compared to 2016 was also about 10%.

As for the revenues obtained in 2019, those also increased by about 10% compared to the previous year, up to now, but the number is constantly increasing.

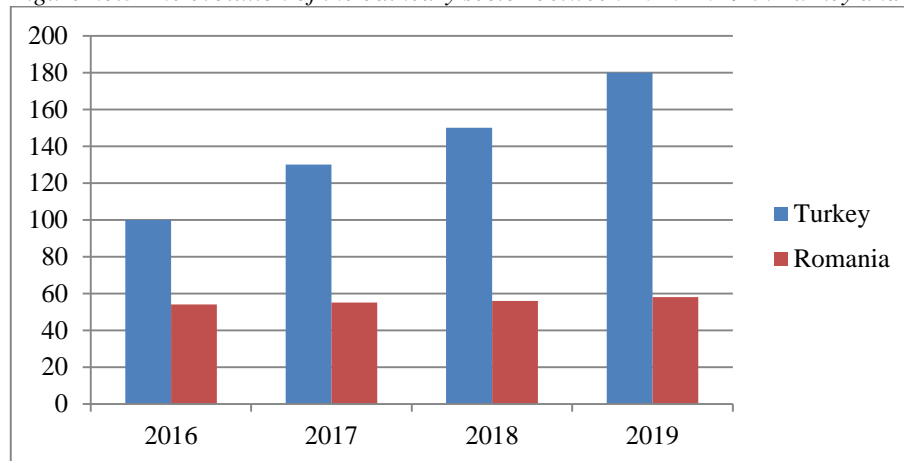
Figure no.2 The evolution of the tourist's numbers and of the revenues in the balneo sector between 2016-2019 in Romania



Source: Authors' contribution, based on the information from INSSE

Therefore, both the number of tourists from the balneary resorts and the income obtained from this type of tourism have experienced a constant and homogenous growth since 2016 and until now. It is also expected that this growth will be faster in the coming years and will produce higher incomes.

Figure no.3 The evolution of the balneary sector between 2016-2019 in Turkey and Romania



Source: Authors' contribution, based on the information from INSSE

Both countries have a lot to offer in the field of tourism. Both Romania and Turkey have natural resources that facilitate tourism in the balneary sector. There are, however, differences in the management of this sector and the development of tourism in these areas between the two countries. Thus, as we see in the graphics above, even though Romania has a natural potential near as great as that of Turkey, it is classified much lower in terms of tourism development in the balneary and medical sector. Due to the fact that it offers much better facilities than Romania, Turkey benefits from a much larger number of tourists and implicitly by obtaining much higher incomes. Also, the evolution of the balneary sector is much faster in Turkey than in Romania.

## 5. Proposals and recommendations

Compared to Turkey, Romania has a very modest presence in terms of economic performance of tourism. Thus, Romania needs a coherent and stable action program to regulate tourism development. Also, it is recommended to access some funds for investments intended for the development, modification and rehabilitation of general and specific infrastructure, as a result of the slow and complicated privatization process.

The representatives of the National Tourism Agency should offer solutions for the coverage of Romanian tourism, solutions that depend on a bold strategy, specific to the sector, elaborated in collaboration with the persons responsible for operations, which could provide a vision, a model capable of directing production and trade. with tourist products.

The sustainable establishment in the field of tourism must address very important issues, such as: encouraging dialogue between the partners involved, setting up multidisciplinary teams, guiding and encouraging investors, contributing to improving local transport, communication infrastructure with great benefits for the local population. Also, ensuring the long-term security of investments in tourism and including the conservation of the specific nature elements in the strategy for the development of balneary tourism.

## 6. Conclusions

Like Turkey, Romania can rely on its natural and cultural resources for the development of balneary tourism. However, unlike Turkey, Romania provides less resources and management for improving the conditions and accommodation services and for modernizing the infrastructure to

facilitate the access to potential tourist areas, and on the activity of domestic and international presentation of the balneary tourism potential.

However, the security of Romania, compared to the other European states, including Turkey, can be exploited as an opportunity, as terrorist attacks are not felt as in other countries which, until recently, did not present any danger. On November 15, 2003, in Turkey, at two synagogues in Istanbul, bomb attacks took place that resulted in 25 dead and 300 wounded. These attacks had negative results immediately and not only on the Turkish economy, but implicitly and tourism.

So, there are some downsides for Turkey, but it has always managed to recover and make tourism, and especially the medical tourism, which is an important source of income for the country. On the other hand, Romania, which also has the necessary resources to develop the balneary tourism sector, being able to transform this branch into a very profitable one, has not been able to overcome the barriers of an underdeveloped country, without the infrastructure and promotion necessary for a tourism realized at high quotas.

## 7. References

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