

MOUNTAIN TOURISM-PLEASURE AND NECESSITY

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Abstract

Tourism has a more and more important role in the economic development of many countries. Mountain tourism is an anti-stress solutions and a type of disconnection from the citadel life style through replacing some activities of media consuming type, games and virtual socializing with therapy through movement, the physical activity being an essential dimension in assuring the high life quality. Mountaineering is searched for: practicing winter sports, its invigorating and comforting, relaxing role, medical spa treatments practicing hiking, alpinism. Mountain tourism generates increased economic benefits for the surrounding areas, improves the life quality of the local communities and can assure the prosperity of some disadvantaged areas, being able to be a remedy for unindustrialised regions. Mountain tourism contributes to the economic development of the region and also to satisfying spiritual and psychological needs of the people, representing a necessity for a touristic area and a pleasure for tourist consumers.

Key words: *tourism, development, mountains, health, pleasure, sports, landscape, resources, spiritual and psychological needs.*

JEL Classification: *L83, F60, I00*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades tourism has started to play a more important role in the economic development of many countries. The researches carried over the role of tourism have revealed that it has a significant impact on the economy, societies and cultures of different countries. Its action occurs on multiple levels: economic, social, cultural, political; the intensity of these actions differs from country to country depending on its level of development and policy promoted related to it (Turcu, 2008).

Romania faces some order and economical gaps, caused by improper application of the policy of economic restructuring, especially in mono industrial areas such as Petroșani Depression, an area centred on coal exploitation. In such cases the use of potential mountain tourism becomes necessary to get out of this imposed situation.

There are several arguments that support the use of this alternative mountain tourism due to the touristic potential which is given by: geographical position of the country, the landscape, the beauty and diversity of the landscape, the attractive natural environment (caves, glacial lakes, waterfalls), climate, many lookout points, skiing potential, the possibility to practice extreme sports, curative waters, all the archaeological remains, the historical- cultural ethnographic heritage.

At national and international level it was noticed that there is a great attraction of the population for visiting the mountain regions. Generally, mountaineering is searched for: practicing winter sports, its invigorating and comforting, relaxing role, medical spa treatments practicing hiking, alpinism.

II. MOUNTAIN TOURISM- GENERALITIES

Viewed mainly as a social and economic phenomenon, creator of important benefits, tourism has been defined in many different ways: "the art of travelling for one's own pleasure" (M. Peyromarrie Debord); "leisure activity which consists of a voyage or living away from the place of residence, for fun, recreation, culture and experience enriching thanks to new human aspects and to unknown landscape" (Jan Meticin).

In the specialized literature there are many classifications of types and forms of tourism. Based on the particularities of the region of destination, some authors (Velcea, Ungureanu, 1993, Neaguț, Vlăsceanu, Negoescu, Zotta, Bran, 2001) have found the following forms of tourism: sea spa tourism, mountainous and

winter sports tourism, spa cure tourism, hunting and safari tourism, cultural tourism, trade and exhibition tourism, festival tourism, meetings and congress tourism, business tourism.

In a broad sense, mountainous tourism includes the assembly of tourist activities which take place in the mountain environment in close connection with the natural and human environment of the respective area.

The mountain area is characterized by a great variety of tourist resources. The mountain relief impresses through altitude, spectacular cliffs, picturesque ridges and a variety of genetic types of relief: karsts (keys, valleys, caves, steepness, and defiles); volcanic (craters, cones, trays); on conglomerates (sphinxes, mushrooms, towers); massive relief of high mountains (ridges, steep peaks, impressive edges), glacial (glacial amphitheatres, glacial valleys, stony ridges). All the glacial relief is the one which offers a variety of ski areas, which can be arranged for practicing winter sports. Also, specific flora and fauna can cause specific forms of tourism (of knowledge, hunting, sportive fishing, scientific) and the creation of natural reservations increases its touristic attraction.

Given the variety of touristic resources in the mountain, this is the space in which there can be carried out a wide range of touristic forms: of leisure and recreation, adventure, sportive, cultural or rural etc. In recent decades, mountainous tourism is increasingly associated with green tourism or ecotourism, the form of tourism with the largest development perspective in these regions.

The mountainous tourism has a complex character, being in direct connection with the other activities from the area. It cannot be dissociated from the economic, social and cultural life of the community it takes place. The mountainous tourism includes a variety of activities which can be practiced in the two seasons: summery (hiking, walking, climatic tourism) and hibernal.

The mountainous tourism presents the following characteristics:

- -fructifying the mountainous touristic resources (natural, cultural, human);
- -fructifying the touristic over structure (access ways and means, resorts, board and lodging and agro touristic farms);
- -uses varied accommodation spaces (inns, rural hotels, holiday houses);

III. THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF PETROSANI

The Jiu Valley tourist area is favoured, primarily, due to geographical settlement in the upper basin of the Jiu being framed within a geographical area characterized by unique mountainous massifs as landscapes, represented by the mountains of Parâng and Vâlcan to the South and Retezat Mountains and Sureanu to the North, including within its limits a wide variety of attractive natural factors.

Parâng is a unique geographical area represented by the beauty of the landscapes, conferred by the appearance of the alpine ridges, of the glacial amphitheatres and lakes, and at the same time of the appearance of limestone formations, which introduce a certain diversity in the landscape, but not deprived of importance are the forests, the vegetation and the flora, as well as the wealthy fauna of the Carpathians.

Vâlcan Mountains concentrate in their calcareous area stunning endocarps forms as well as exokarst like: canyons, caves, springs and ditches.

Șureanu Mountains separates the depression in the South-western part, being composed mainly of limestone, which led to the appearance of karst forms of surface and depth, particularly spectacular. Due to its extension but also because of its thickness, the limestones from Crivadia-Bănița are very rich in karst forms.

The mountain area, with altitudes ranging between 1700-2500 m, shows a great potential for tourism with picturesque landscapes, the scenery being completed here by a natural attractive setting for the tourism sector (glacial lakes, waterfalls, rare elements of flora: endemic plant species). The area includes many belvedere points: Custurii peaks, Vâlcan and Straja peaks offer the opportunity to admire the Oltean depression Getic Piemont and Mehedinți Plateau, Parângu Mare (2518m), Mândra (2306m) Rus's Coast(2301 m) offer a wide panorama across Olt and Făgăraș Mountains.

The presence of numerous steep rocks offers the possibility to practice extreme sports such as mountain climbing, rappel, climbing, and flying fox. The main attraction of the area is represented by Parâng and Vâlcan Mountains, which has a sizeable ski domain.

The Parâng Mountains have an appreciable skiing domain, the slopes of Parâng mountain resort can be compared with those from Prahova Valley. Here can be practiced both touristic ski and performance skiing. There are a number of 10 ski slopes, one of which is an Olympic slope, which represents the slope with the highest degree of difficulty in the country.

The skiing potential from the Nordic slope of the Vâlcan Mountains, is fructified through arranged slopes from Straja and Vâlcan pass. Straja mountain resort has a skiing surface of 40 hectares on which there are arranged seven ski slopes with different degrees of difficulty and served by cable transportation.

The hydrographical net is another natural component with special touristic valences, both through the variety of the elements they are made of and the possibilities they offer for practicing the different forms of sport tourism.

IV. THE TOURIST ATTITUDE REGARDING THE TOURISTIC OFFER OF PETROȘANI DEPRESSION.

For a clear image regarding the tourist attitude to the touristic offer of Petroșani depression area, I made a study on the basis of questionnaire having as a purpose the identification of the people’s knowledge about the mountain tourism and their availability to practice this form of tourism.

The questionnaire was applied during 15.12.2014-14.01.2015, upon 60 people in Lupeni town. From all the persons questioned belong both locals and tourists being in the mountainous resort Straja.

At the question “How often do you travel in a touristic purpose?” almost half of those asked practice touristic activities once a year, followed by those who travel half-yearly.

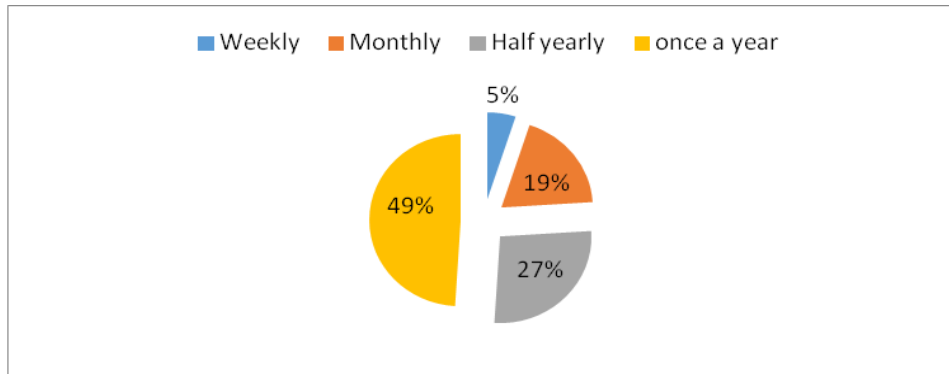


Figure 1 - The answers of the persons asked about “How often do you travel in a touristic purpose? “

According to the graphic below, it can be noticed that an overwhelming majority prefers internal tourism, while external tourism is preferred only by 15 persons. This thing should make the competent authorities think and this should be an objective on which an accent should be put in the future.

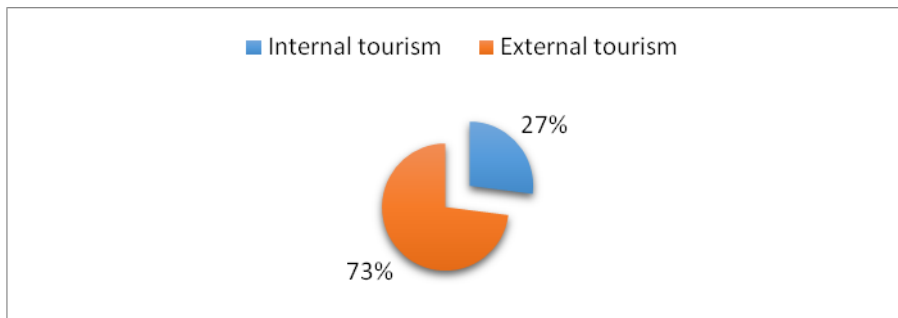


Figure 2 - Opinion of the questioned persons regarding favoured tourism

Cumulated, a percent of 83% from the questioned persons considers that Petroșani Depression can be a possible touristic area of Romania.

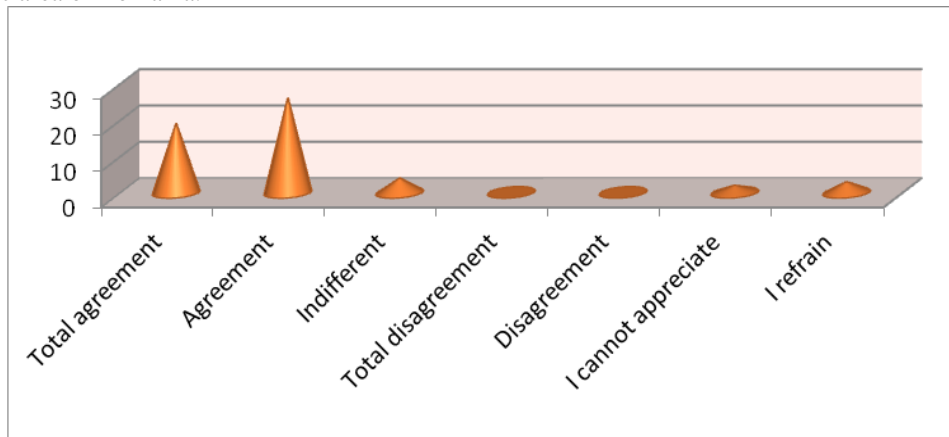


Figure 3 - The answers of the questioned persons regarding the fact that Petroșani Depression can be a possible touristic area of Romania.

Once established the fact that Petroșani can be considered a touristic area, there had to be seen which are the reasons for which this can be placed as a touristic area. Thus, it seems that the main reason would be the beauty of the scenery, followed by the quality of the environment factors and the traditions and customs specific to the area. These seem to be the main three reasons chosen by the local population, followed by the settlements for winter sports and the accessible prices comparing to other areas.

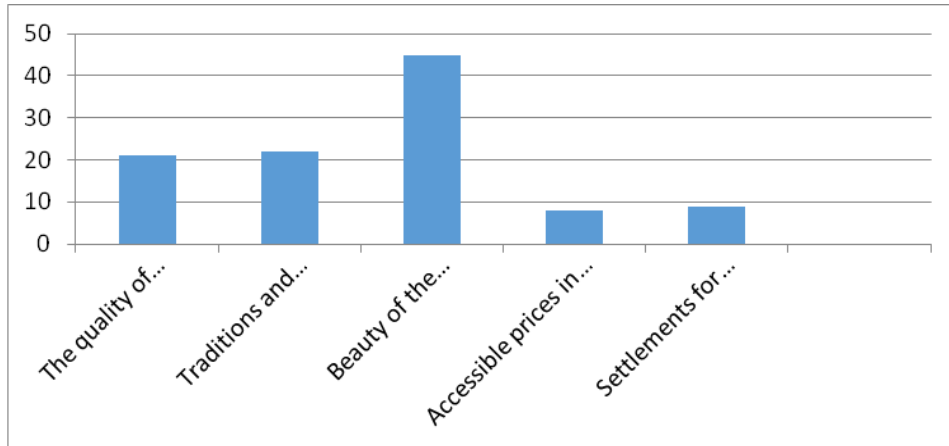


Figure 4 - The reasons for which Petroșani Depression can be considered a touristic area

Regarding the main touristic attractions of the area, Parâng and Vâlcan Mountains detach, taking the first place with a predominance of 66%, followed by the components of the entropic touristic potential: The Mining Museum (11%), Momârlans' Museum (9%) and Memorial House I.D.Sîrbu (8%).

This thing can be noticed also from the tourists' destination; the great majority come in the area either to practice winter sports, either for the mountain routes from Parâng Mountains.

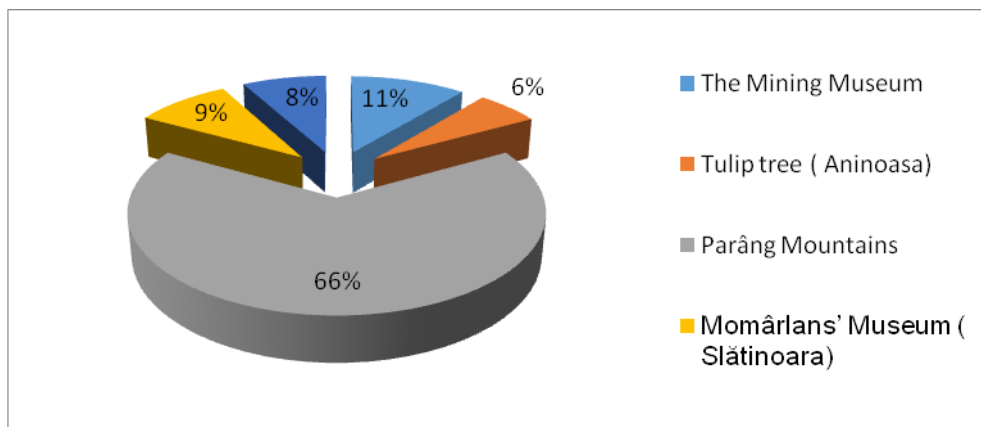


Figure 5 - The main touristic attractions of Petroșani Depression

Of course there are also elements that influence negatively the tourism in the analysed area. According to the obtained results after applying the questionnaires, the lack of touristic arranging (touristic marks, touristic information centres) seems the main negative element, followed by the defective infrastructure from the area, but also the fact that the settlements for winter sports doesn't stand at the standards requested by tourists/ international standards.

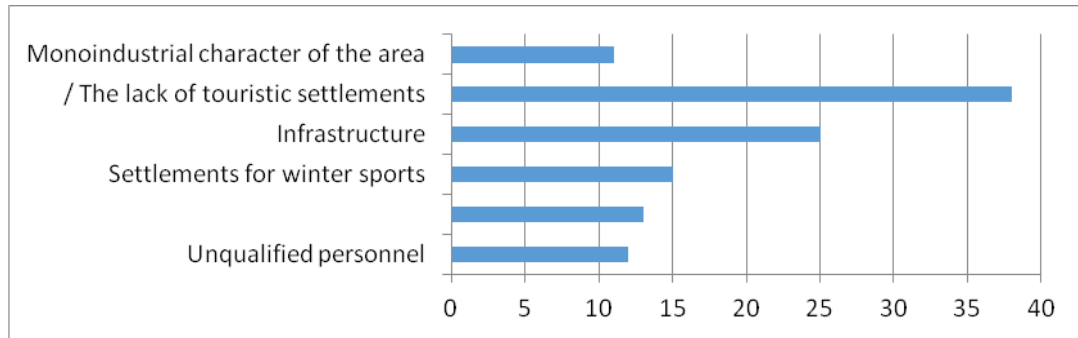


Figure 6 - Elements with negative impact over tourism in the area of Petroșani Depression

Related to the investments for the development of the area from a touristic point of view, the answers of those questioned reveals the fact that a priority can be putting in value the touristic objectives, of course with the purpose of attracting tourists. A second domain in which investments should be made is the traffic infrastructure, which in Romania needs urgent investments and at scales to reach the European standards. Also promoting the area would need investments followed by the facilities for diversion but also settlements for winter sports.

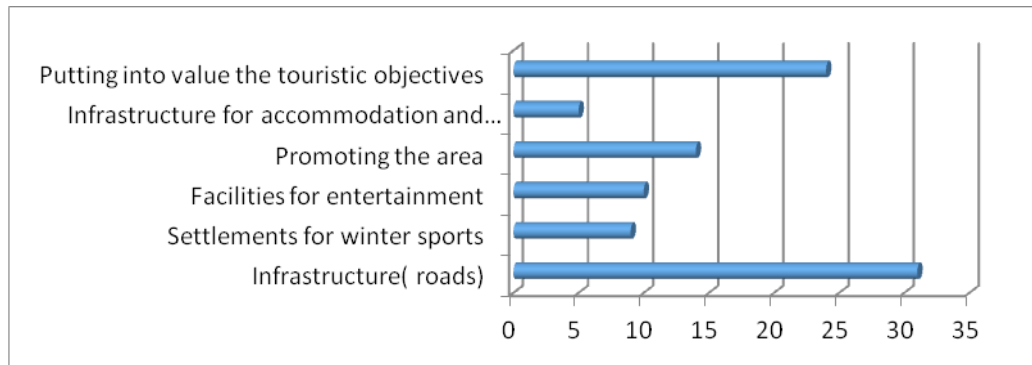


Figure 7 - Possible investments to be made for the development of the area from a touristic point of view

When they choose their touristic destination, the great majority of the tourists uses as an information source the specialized sites on the Internet, but also the touristic guides or media.

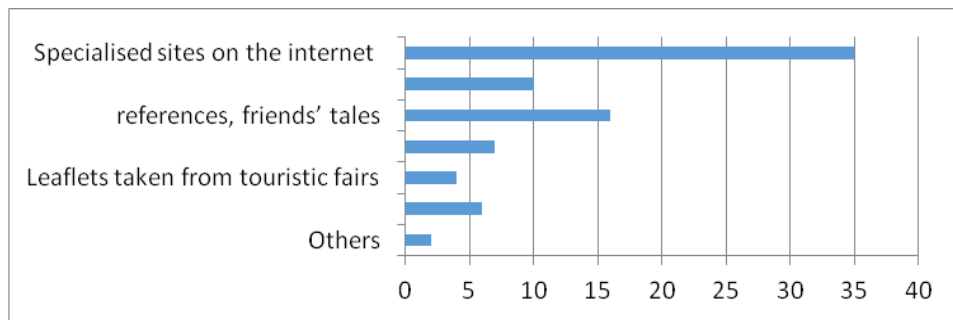


Figure 8 - Information sources related to touristic destinations

About the accommodation base, the reviews are mostly similar. It has however been noticed a slightly domination of those who prefer a touristic cottage. The number of those who prefer boarding and lodging or touristic villa is approximately even, few of those who were questioned wished that they stayed at a hotel or a camping unit.

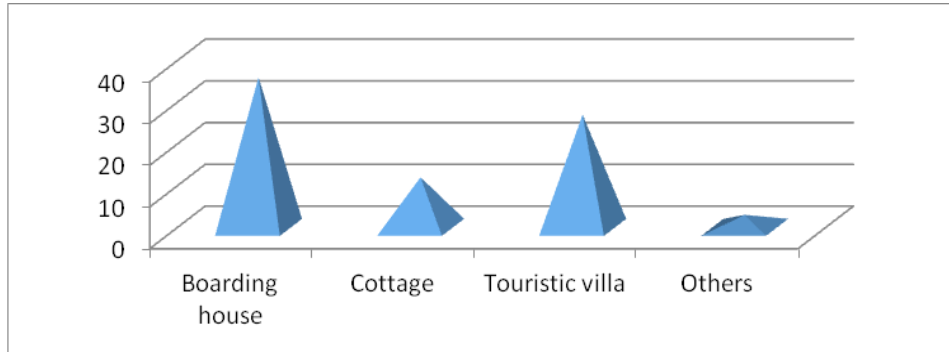


Figure 9 - Accommodation basis preferred by those questioned

In terms of tourism type for the ones that would visit the area, the answers are variable. Noteworthy that very few people chose one type of tourism. The great majority have chosen two or even three types of tourism. In general those who want to come to the area for recreation chose also hiking, and those who prefer practicing winter sports also chose adventure tourism. Only six people have chosen cultural tourism.

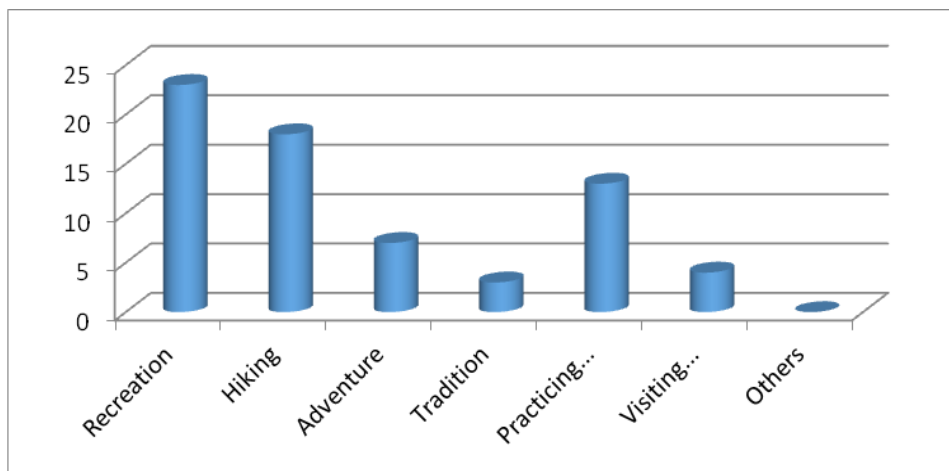


Figure 10 - Type of tourism for which those questioned would come to the area

According to the chart below, we can notice that related to the last completed studies of those questioned, high school has the largest share with 48%, followed by university-licence degree with 20% and post university studies with 8%.

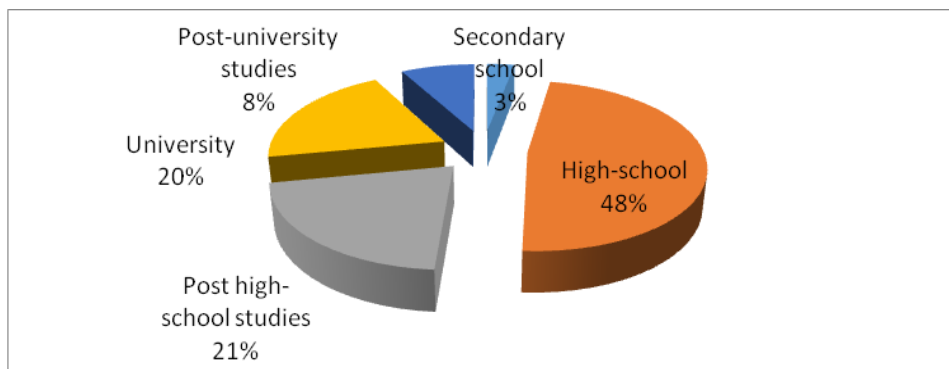


Figure 11 - Level of graduated studies

Regarding respondents' profession, we can see that the majority are employees with secondary education, closely followed by employees with higher education.

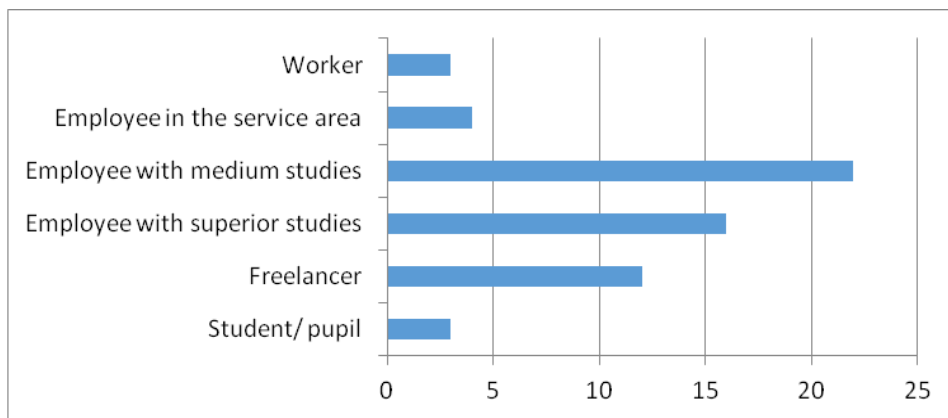


Figure 12 - Respondents' profession

Mountain tourism presents both benefits for tourists and economic advantages.

The psychological benefits of mountain tourism:

- ✚ -work capacity regeneration;
- ✚ restorative part;
- ✚ returning to nature as a need of psychological reintegration in the biological native space;
- ✚ -disconnection from the citadel life style through replacing some activities of media consuming type, games and virtual socializing with therapy through movement, the physical activity being an essential dimension in assuring the life quality;
- ✚ anti-stress solutions;
- ✚ personal development through self-acknowledgement, testing one's own physical and physical forces, over passing personal limits;
- ✚ -knowing and sharing the traditions and authentic local cultural values.

Economic benefits of mountain tourism:

- ❖ -generates increased economic benefits for locals and improves the life quality of the local communities and the work conditions;
- ❖ -has a significant contribution to creating PIB(internal uncut product) and to making the added value through the consume of live work, intelligence and creativity;
- ❖ -stimulates the production from other domains;
- ❖ fructifies the natural resources: the beauty of the landscape, flora, fauna, vegetation and the ski potential;
- ❖ can assure the prosperity of some disadvantaged areas, being able to be a remedy for unindustrialised regions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Tourism acts as a stimulating factor of the global system. Thus, the tourist is a consumer of goods and services, the expenses made by him on the host destination territory represent the income (encashment) for the local budget and the local population. These incomes enter the economical circuit and, the greater the number of rotations is, the more positive effects are higher. As a result, the tourism contributes to assuring an equilibrate money circulations through participating the incomes from tourism to more economic circuits. It is estimated that the travelling industry and of tourism will increase with 4.2% per year, in real terms (Baltaretu, 2008).

The tourism is one of the most important creators of work places from global economy. The speciality studies show that related to creating work places in the tourism domain, a dollar spent in this field is stronger than a dollar spent in other sectors, with some exceptions (Slusariuc, 2015). More specifically, the benefits brought by the tourism sector both direct and indirect in employment is estimated at 212,500 jobs, respectively 500 400 jobs, a situation that places Romania in the last position among neighboring countries and ranks 136 in world. In this context we mention that with a 5.1% total contribution of tourism to GDP, Romania appears last in Europe, surpassed among others by Albania (16.7% of GDP), Bulgaria (13.3%), Hungary (10.6%), Czech Republic (8.4%) and Slovakia (6%). (Cioban, Slusariuc, 2014)

Romania and thus Petrosani Depression enjoy a special natural setting that offers a rich tourism potential. It was fructified until now only in a small degree. The investments and projects started after 2002 led to the development of tourism focused on winter sports, which led to a seasonality of tourism activities. The area has potential for practicing mountain activities and in summer hiking, walking, cycling, etc. The natural environment with special karst forms, canyons with steep slopes offer extreme sports opportunities. The slopes of the canyons

can be used for mountaineering, climbing and flying fox. Caves located nearby can be arranged for activities on string and speleological study.

In addition to mountainous tourism and that for winter sports, Petrosani Depression, through its heritage offers the possibility to practice also other types of tourism, like the urban, cultural, rural one or even industrial tourism.

So, mountaineering contributes not only to the economic development of the region but also to satisfying spiritual and psychological needs of the people, representing a must for a touristic area and a pleasure for tourist consumers.

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