

TOURISTIC DEVELOPEMENT IN SUCEAVA COUNTY

Anastasia IAZ

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229, Romania
anastasia_iaaz@yahoo.com

Abstract

This case study aims to present the development of the touristic sector in Suceava County during 2016-2021 years. The key points that this article will cover are : the touristic types that can be practiced in Suceava County, the touristic attractions that make this area so unique, an overview regarding the accommodation units in the mentioned period of time, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the touristic sector in the area and a survey regarding the level of satisfaction tourists experience when visiting the county.

Key words: *Tourism, Tourism types, Touristic destination, Suceava county*

JEL Classification: *M31, M39*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been defined as the sum of the relationships arising out of the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes(Wall and Mathieson, 2005).

According to Sara Vinyals-Mirabent article from 2019 regarding the attractiveness of a destination to tourists, a region becomes a point of interest when it combines multiple factors and activities such as culture, architecture, gastronomy, infrastructure, landscape, events, shopping, etc. Therefore a successful destination is the one that can accommodate all the touristic needs in a short period of time, at a reasonable cost and provide various forms of entertainment. It should be mentioned that a well developed touristic infrastructure is crucial for increasing the visitor flow.

Suceava is a very complex touristic destination, bearing the brand of Bukovina as it's main attraction but having an impressive multitude of other touristic attractions that encompass the area. Bukovina is a historical region that covers most of the Suceava county but also contains the Ukrainian city Chernivtsi. This local brand is used for promotional purposes at a local and global level and it refers to the local culture, mainly covering the following cities : Rădăuți, Suceava, Gura Humorului, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Vatra Dornei, Siret and Vicovul de Sus. Bukovina is considered to be the essence of the Romanian spirit în the North-East region of the country, conveying the rustic and traditionalist spirit of the historic land.

In the present moment, the touristic diversity of Bukovina is growing briskly. Modernization of the old objectives or the adding of new attractions (such as the Mega Zip-line from Palma) are very alluring for the new wave of tourists. Furthermore, as the old touristic forms get rejuvenated , new categories of curious tourists are starting to consider Suceava county as an interesting destination on their travel list.

II. TOURISM TYPES

Tourism can be practiced in a multitude of ways, from any point of view and by any category of travelers. In Suceava county, the most important types of tourism are the cultural, religious ,geotourism, sports tourism and medical tourism.

1. Cultural tourism

Due to being a very historically rich county, Suceava has a impressive amount of cultural heritage that attracts tourists every year.

- The Princely Fortress of Suceava is an important national monument, having been the main residence of Moldavia's most important rulers in the past 200 years. Across the Suceava city lay remains that are

interconnected with the landmark's history, such as : the ruins of Șcheia Fortress and the ruins of the Royal Court.

- Other important medieval monuments in Suceava city are the Zamca Monastery, which is a medieval monastery of the Armenian Apostolic Church, dating from the 15th century.
- Worth mentioning are also Equestrian statue of Ștefan cel Mare , the “Șipote Park”, The Village Museum of Bucovina and all of the museums, memorial houses dispersed throughout the city.

2. Religious tourism

The most important churches in suceava county, included in the UNESCO World Heritage since 1993 are as follows: (Bisericile si mănăstirile din Bucovina-patrimoniu UNESCO-<http://www.floaredecamp.ro/bisericile-si-manastirile-din-bucovina/>)

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ➤ Church of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist | ➤ “Saint Nicholas” Church |
| ➤ Church of Assumption | ➤ “Saint George” Church (Suceava) |
| ➤ “Annunciation” Church | ➤ “Saint George ” Church (Voronet) |
| ➤ Church of the Holy Cross | ➤ Church of Resurrection |

These religious gems are open most time of the year and can be accessed through a pilgrimage tour or by visiting during their working hours, although the best visiting times might be religious holidays .

3. Geotourism

Due to it's size, Suceava county has a vast variety of landscape forms. Since mountain ranges represent 2/3 of all relief and the other resources are balneal touristic means and natural meadows, we can consider the next mountain ranges as the most important in the Suceava county :(Relieful-<https://judetulsuceava.ro/descopera/date-generale/relieful/>)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| • Munții Suhard | • Munții Călimani |
| • Munții Țibăului | • Munții Stânișoarei |
| • Obcinile Bucovinei | • Munții Giumalău |
| • Munții Bârgăului | • Munții Rarău |
| • Subcarpații Moldovei | |

These mountain massifs are usually used for hiking, horseback riding or 4x4 vehicle exploring. Being a naturally beautiful area, tourist are attracted to the multitude of paths available. Also in this areas sports as hunting, river-rafting, mountaineering , fishing and mountain-biking are available

4. Sports tourism

In Bukovina sportive tourism represents a vast area of available touristic options . Skiing or rafting, hunting or mountain-biking, this county has all touristic sports available. In the winter, snow sports are available and during summer time sports like fishing and rafting take their place.

Also a lot of touristic attractions offer an alternative to natural sport, “Ariniș Park” in Gura Humorului being an important attraction for artificial climbing. This adventure establishment offers 8 routes of different difficulty for all kind of travelers to test their ability at climbing.

Motorsports are also available in the Gura Humorului region, where quads can be rented for forest routes or even 4x4 vehicles for off-road experiences.

In the same category can also be included the mega zip line from Palma which can be an adrenaline rush for tourists visiting the area. Horseback riding can be accesed în Rădăuți or in Humor region.

Also a multitude of regions offer sportive fishing including Fălticeni area, Humor and Rădăuți. This areas are proud to offer the Rainbow Trout as the main capture and the catch can be prepared in the fishermen restaurants.

5. Medical tourism

Medical tourism in Suceava county has as representatives the salt baths from Salina Cacica and the mineral waters from Vatra Dornei.

Tourist can enjoy speleotherapy inside the saline mines , and get a remedy for their locomotor diseases in Cacica. The high concentration salt waters have an anti-inflammatory effect that help with healing.

III.OVERVIEW OF SUCEAVA COUNTY AS A TOURISTIC DESTINATION

Suceava has a vast variety of attractions which include places, monuments, villages, cities and so much more. Hence to accommodate all tourists in the table below is presented the evolution of touristic unities in Suceava County for the past five years. As numbers stay almost constant and a slight change can be seen in 2020, the difference can be seen in the number of nights spent in Suceava.

Table 1- Accommodation Units Suceava(insse.ro)

Search results - Structuri de primire turistica cu functiuni de cazare turistica pe tipuri de structuri, judete si localitati							
Type of establishment of touristic reception	Counties	Localities	Years				
			Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020
			MU: Number				
			Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Hotels	Suceava	TOTAL	46	48	48	49	52
Hostels	Suceava	TOTAL	11	12	14	15	17
Motels	Suceava	TOTAL	6	6	6	6	6
Touristic villas	Suceava	TOTAL	16	17	18	21	22
Touristic chalets	Suceava	TOTAL	13	13	14	12	11
Bungalows	Suceava	TOTAL	3	3	3	3	4
Holiday villages	Suceava	TOTAL	1	1	1	1	1
Campings	Suceava	TOTAL	4	4	3	4	4
Touristic halting places	Suceava	TOTAL	3	3	3	3	3
Houselet type unit	Suceava	TOTAL	1	2	3	3	5
Touristic boarding houses	Suceava	TOTAL	88	107	115	117	122
Agroturistic boarding houses	Suceava	TOTAL	151	225	232	235	249

Following the index regarding the nights spent in Suceava provided by insse.ro we can see that the best destinations that required accommodation in Suceava county are as follows. Furthermore, analyzing the numbers it can be seen that 2019 (the year COVID-19 started) was a very good period for Suceava accommodation units as the numbers almost doubled in most cities and villages but in 2020 a drop can be noticed in nights spent at a destination. The best performing in nightly accommodation is Șcheia as it’s close to Suceava but prices are lower. Vatra Dornei and Moldovita are on the second most wanted destination and the third best option is Mănăstirea Humorului ,known for it’s picturesque beauty and quietness.

Table 2- Best destinations as per nights spent in touristic accommodations Suceava County

Search results - Staying overnight in the establishments of touristic reception by counties and localities							
Type of establishment of touristic reception	Counties	Localities	Years				
			Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020
			MU: Number				
			Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Total	Suceava	147526 CACICA	14641	14228	18144	22948	13304
-	-	148202 DORNA CANDRENILOR	21132	19648	19786	24381	11359
-	-	148131 DORNA-ARINI	10192	16486	21846	21842	15133
-	-	149370 MANASTIREA HUMORULUI	15436	22416	20793	23915	11725
-	-	149539 MOLDOVITA	357	551	902	996	28
-	-	149851 POIANA STAMPEI	393	518	874	725	1278
-	-	146432 SCHEIA	34707	39611	40541	41469	28468
-	-	150418 SUCEVITA	25005	27643	33412	33901	18690
-	-	150935 VAMA	12922	14263	18954	18140	11760

An very important period, the COVID-19 year (2019) changed the Suceavan tourism and in order to see the results from the pandemic, this table can be brought up presenting the data regarding the reason to travel in Suceava. It can be easily observable in this table that the quantity of trips has reduced by the visits to friends and family had increased in 2019. Also business and trips for personal reasons peaked briskly in 2019 showing that the virus had a positive impact on traveling. Because in the period of restrictions people were not allowed to travel and visit loved ones, in the last months , when restrictions were lifted, the traffic increased and almost doubled all number. These facts are visible on all tables shown.

Table 3-Number of trips by purpose

	Trips		Overnight stays	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Total	19094492	19975960	73876673	79893254
Holidays	17309808	18063657	64465302	69841203
Visits to friends and relatives	8826046	8815992	29342968	30419007
Business and personal reasons	484485	471367	2591477	7090016

To conclude this chapter, Suceava has enough accommodation for tourists and a wide variety of types to chose from. The pandemic did not affect the touristic area as hard as the prognosis was showing and land can flourish with great marketing and touristic partnerships.

IV.CASE STUDY REGARDING TOURISTIC SATISFACTION IN SUCEAVA COUNTY

This case study was performed on a group of citizens mostly composed of students learning at the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava. In Figure 1, it can be determined that the majoritarian group that answered the survey has the ages of 18 to 24 and more than 35 placing the target population at the development years of adulthood. Taking into consideration the participating group age range , 40% of them voted as students in Figure 2. and in the following answers were in almost equal measure employees and master’s students.

Accounting for the target group of participants ages and occupation, it is noticeable that the range of vacation periods is from once a year (59,4%) to 2-3 times a year (37,5%). Following this idea, and using the net accommodation index by months provided by The National Institute of Statistics (www.insse.ro) it noticeable that from 38,2 (August 2016) this index rose to 37,8 (August 2017), 42,3 (August 2018), 44(August 2019) and had a sudden drop in August 2020, landing at 31.7. Following this 5 year graphic it’s clear that August is the main period Romanian citizens choose for vacation, followed by it’s prior months of June and July at a lower accommodation index.

Considering that the target group is created of two main categories (students and workers-most having furlough in August) and that August has the highest rate of accommodation demand, it’s clear why Figure 4 shows a high affinity for sea-side tourism. On places second and third are mountain tourism (geotourism and winter sports) with a rate of 37,5% and cultural/historical tourism with a rate of 34,4%. Figure 5 also confirms that sea-side is one of the most wanted destinations among this target group, almost 40% of the responders choosing it as their first option. The second most voted result stated that the landscape form is not important when choosing a destination and the third result (with the lowest percentage of 29%) stand for people that choose mountain areas.

Visiting the touristic index regarding the number of Romanian tourists per regions on INSSE website, it can be noticed that in the last 5 years the sea-side was the most visited region with the tourist number doubling during 2018-2019 (from 340949 to 643545). Comparing this number to Suceava county region where mountain and religious tourism in practiced it’s observable that religious tours have lost popularity, dropping from 21014 (in 2016) to 11341 (in 2020). Mountain tourism was also hit, the number of annual tourists dropping from 76758 (in 2016) to 35653 (in 2020). Considering how the COVID-19 pandemic affected people , a rise in the graphic is noticeable as almost all the numbers in 2019 are higher than the anterior years.

Taking into consideration that because of the pandemic the government supplemented the means of Romanian tourism by the use of holiday vouchers , the result can be seen in Figure 6, as 54,8% percent of the study participants are choosing to have their holidays in Romania. In the closely related Figure 8, a chart shows that people choose their natal country as a travel destination because of two main reasons : The short distance from home and the familiarity of culture and language. The third most well liked choice was the price of the touristic packages. Relating to this , in Figure 11 a quarter of participants choose to only buy the accommodation package but as the figure is almost split in quarters, the main opinions have in common the need for accommodation, people providing their own means of transportation.

Returning to Figure 7 , almost half of the participants voted for the classic 5-7 days touristic stay. The second most liked option was the “more than 7 days touristic stay”. Using the TUR105E index regarding the number of people staying overnight in Suceava, it’s viewable that since 2016 the numbers grow from 759754 of tourists to 1014447 during the pandemic year of 2019 and plummeting in 2021 to 540165 tourists that spend the night at an accommodation unit.

Since most of the participants are Romanian tourists from Suceava county (at an incredible 77,4% - Figure 9) they answered that they wish to continue visiting Romania in Figure 10 with 38,7% . In the same

figure it can be visible that 32,3% also do not want to continue visiting the natal country and 29% are unsure. Regarding the information about the next place to visit, the study participants choose the internet as the main resource of information (66,7% -Figure 12) and the second best information source were friends and colleagues standing at almost 30%.

Forming a profile of the tourists answering the survey ,it's worth adding that even if they are from the same county, they still consider Suceava as an attractive touristic destination, with 93,5% responding positive at Figure 13). At this point, a recapitulation is needed to create a touristic profile. Furthermore the participants are from Suceava mostly, enjoying the country, having at least a month of free time and are attracted towards good offers from 5-7 days.

Although it's noticeable that tourist enjoy Suceava even if they are residents of the county, in Figure 14, 45% said that they practice tourism in Suceava rarely. The second most voted answer with 22,6% shows that some of them practice it very often, enjoying the region and the attractions it has to offer. On the other hand, even if Suceava residing tourists do not practice it very often, when they do, they stay between 1 and 7 days at least. (Figure 15).

Figure 18 is one of the most important figures in the study as it shows the most practiced types of tourism in Suceava. The first choice was the winter sports tourism, scoring at 38,7%, followed immediately by the istoric and cultural tourism (35,5%). The third choice was the religious tourism standing at 19,4%. Taking into consideration the fact that the participants are mostly students and relatively new in the field of work, the income does not seem to be an issue when traveling. To sum up everything before the best touristic attractions are chosen, the touristic profile represents mostly young participants that wish to enjoy an active and very dynamic holiday filled with fun activities at a low rate, traveling by personal vehicle and trying to spend at least a week in their natal county.

Having a variety of cities and villages to visit, a handful of them were chosen to be used in this questionnaire. The answers are as follows : Ciocanești is the most wanted location (32,3%), followed by Vatra Dornei (25,8%), Suceava (12,9%) and Câmpulung Moldovenesc (12,9%). (shown in Figure 16).

Suceava has a lot of touristic attractions that can satisfy even the most critical tourist, from the most important , 7 touristic attractions were presented to the participants. In Figure 17, they choose as the best attractions the winter sports resorts from Gura Humorului and Vatra Dornei (35,5%). The second best attractions were considered the religious monuments (19,4%) and the third most wanted attraction was The Princely Fortress of Suceava (16,1%).

To sum up the survey, most of the participants mention that they are satisfied by the touristic services in Suceava county (last Figure) with 77,4% level of satisfaction and a 22,6% of very satisfied participants. No person partaking in this survey was dissatisfied with Suceava as a touristic destination.

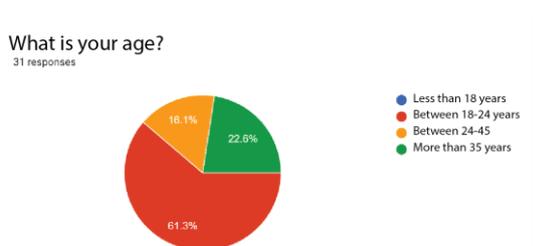


Figure 1-Participant age



Figure 2-Main occupation

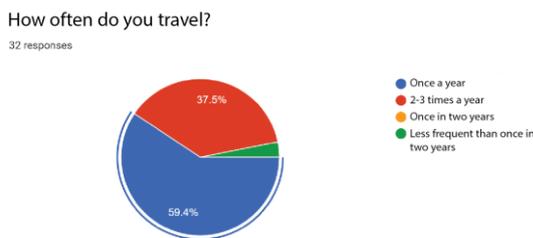


Figure 3-Vacation frequency

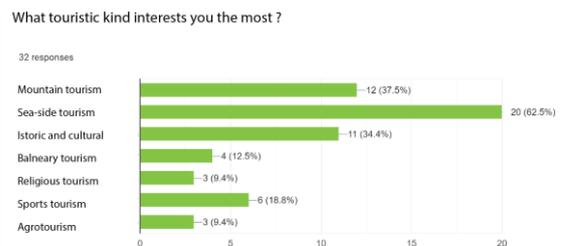


Figure 4-Tourism passions

Do you prefer mountainous areas or seaside areas?
31 responses

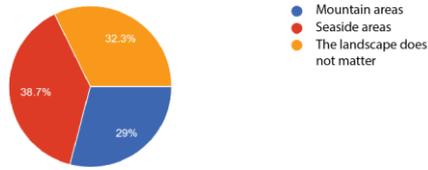


Figure 5-Landscape preference

Where do you prefer to go on vacation?
31 responses



Figure 6-Vacations choice national/international

What types of touristic packages do you prefer?
32 responses

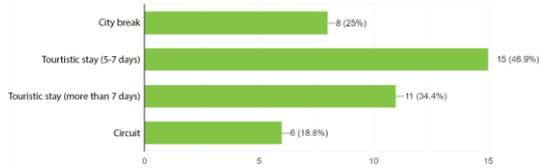


Figure 7-Type of touristic packages

What are you reasons for traveling through Romania?
28 responses

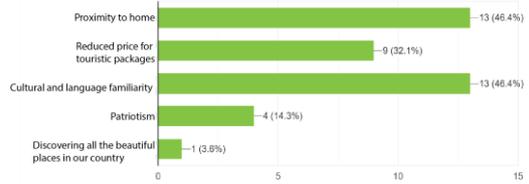


Figure 8-Reasons to travel in Romania

What touristic category describes you the best?
31 responses

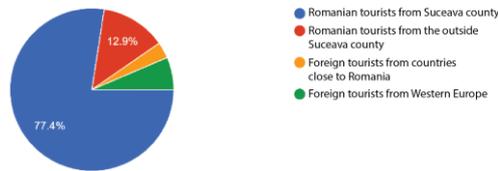


Figure 9-Tourist category

Do you want you next vacation to be in Romania?
31 responses

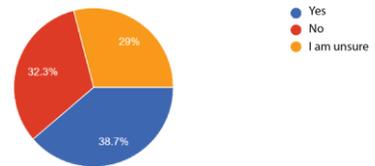


Figure 10-Next vacation choice

How do you organize your vacation?
31 responses

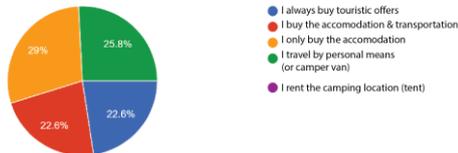


Figure 11-Vacation organization

Where do you get your information from when traveling in Romania?
30 responses

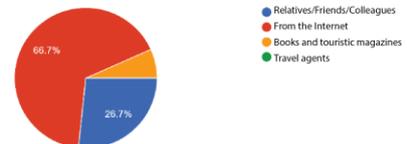


Figure 12-Vacation information

Do you consider Suceava county to be an attractive touristic destination?
31 responses

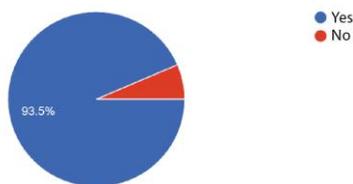


Figure 13-Suceava as an attractive county

How often do you practice tourism in Suceava county?
31 responses

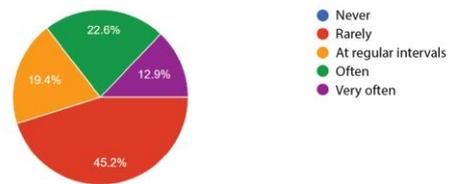


Figure 14-Tourism in Suceava county

How much time do you spend in Suceava when visiting ?
31 responses

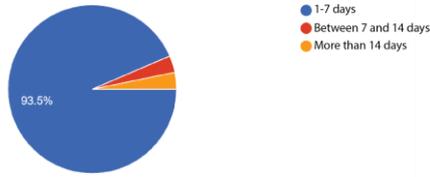


Figure 15-Time to visit Suceava

Which of the following areas have the most touristic potential?
31 responses

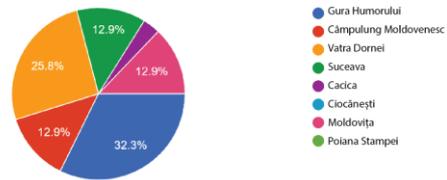


Figure 16-Touristic potential

Which of the following touristic attractions are the most important for touristic development in Suceava county?
31 responses

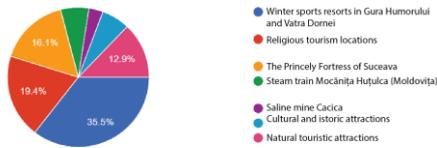


Figure 17-Best attractions

What type of tourism did you practice in Suceava?
31 responses

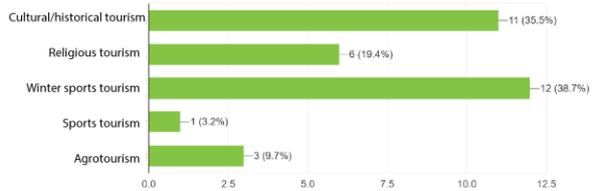


Figure 18-Main touristic types

Are you satisfied by the touristic services received in Suceava County?
31 responses

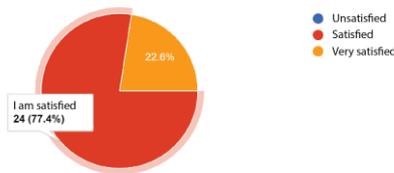


Figure 19-Satisfaction level

V.CONCLUSION

Starting from the beautiful area that Suceava County covers, a land blessed by beautiful geographical and architectural gems bound together by customs, to the touristic types and statistic data it can be considered that the touristic level of development in Suceava can be very high. Taking into consideration that all the accommodation units can host a high number of tourists and the Bukovina brand can be a starting point in this journey, it can be concluded that the development of the county just started.

Basing the result of the study on the survey, it can be noticed that the winter sports of the area should be promoted more and the UNESCO monuments need to have a better presentation on the international plan.

In order to improve touristic development, I consider that marketing should be sponsored and focused on all the attractions mentioned. In my opinion most attraction can benefit from more sponsoring and rehabilitation in order to have a better presentation. Furthermore culinary tourism is underdeveloped in the area and can be a big point of interest for international tourists.

To conclude my study, I consider that the level of touristic development can and should be improved, leveraging of Bukovina Brand and the attractions of the area.

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