

Attractiveness and Competitiveness of the Romanian Carpathian Mountains Destinations: A study of Perception of Generation Y

Elena MATEI^{1a}, Felicia-Aurelia STĂNCIOU^b, Iuliana VIJULIE^a, Gabriela MANEA^a, Roxana CUCULICI^a

^{1a}*University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography, Av. N. Bălcescu, 1, Bucharest, Romania*

^b*Academy of Economic Studies, Marketing Faculty, No 6, Piața Romană, 6, Bucharest, Romania*

Abstract: The Carpathian Mountains, an undeniable element of the Romania's tourism brand, have a great variety of attractions, accessed by over half of domestic visitors. At the same time, they are subjected by inappropriate development, which affects the supply and demand. Therefore, the study aims to analyze the perception of Generation Y (GY) regarding the tourism attractiveness and competitiveness in the Romanian Carpathians mountain units in order to identify a benchmarking of directions needed to improve the development of these destinations. The research is based on the survey method, applied to a sample of Millennial(s)/GY, processed in SPSSv.17 and evaluation using aggregate indexes. The results show that young tourists consider the attractiveness to be high for tourist resources and satisfactory for facilities. Performance of their experiences is influenced by outdoor relaxation, photos, and trekking activities. Despite some lacks regarding the winter sports facilities, accommodation, GY is still interested to visit or revisit different mountain units. Thus, the stakeholders must take in consideration the issues of facilities for winter sports, walk, mountain bike, and races events, to reshape and adapt all aspects related to the mobility, accommodation, promotion and quality of experiences in the Carpathian Mountains to meet much more to GY's expectations.

Key words: *Attractiveness, Competitiveness, Generation Y, Romanian Carpathian Mountains, Tourism*

1. Introduction

The Carpathian Mountains, which cover one third of the Romania's surface, rank as the first option of domestic tourists, with more than two-thirds of their flow (Matei, 2011). Apart from these, the uncontrolled flow of tourists is added (Matei et al. 2013), especially one-day stays, usually unrecorded in official statistics. Definitely, the high rate of visitors is influenced by their attractiveness, widely promoted in/formally and often debated in academic literature. Thus, in Romanian studies, the attractiveness is analyzed mainly from the perspective of the resources that have the potential to be included in tourism of an area. Thus, some authors argue that the Carpathians landforms have remarkable geomorphosites consisting in many complexes of rocks (Comănescu & Nedelea, 2010; Comănescu et al., 2013) while others underline the highly biodiversity capitalized in protected areas which stimulate the development of ecotourism (Matei, 2011; Dincă & Erdeli, 2011). It also recognized that the wealth of water resources favored the spreading of health resorts or spas since ancient times (Stăncioiu et al., 2013), and the mountain communities are focused on agro-tourism as villages preserve unique traditions for centuries (Turnock, 1999; Dezi, 2008; Vijulie et al., 2013; 2018). These all could be correlated with the attraction's power for tourists seen by business and infrastructure

¹Corresponding author: Elena MATEI; E-mail: elena.matei@g.unibuc.ro, Received: May 2019, Revised: September 2019, Published: October 2019