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ANALYSIS OF TOURISM INDICATORS IN BIHOR COUNTY DURING 2007-2013

Case
Study

Keywords

Bihor County
Accommodation capacity
Number of overnight stays
Number of tourist arrivals

JEL Classification

L83

Abstract

This paper presents the trend of tourist indicators in Bihor County, during the period 2007-2013, in terms of: tourist accommodation establishments; existing tourist accommodation capacity (number of availabilities); tourist accommodation capacity in service (thousands of availabilities - days); number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments; number of tourists arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments; index of net use of accommodation capacity in service and the average length of stay. Based on information provided by the National Statistics Institute we have defined six tourist areas (Oradea, hydro spa area, mountain area, urban area, rural area and border area) in order to observe, which was the most developed area in terms of tourism, during 2007-2013. To this end, the average percentage of the analysed indicators was calculated, the calculation method being as follows: we divided the total of the indicator analysed in an area by the total of areas analysed (for each year separately), and then we added the indices obtained for each of the seven years and divided them by their number.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the activities by which resources of local communities can be capitalized on. In Bihor County, tourist activity could be extremely beneficial if the activities performed pursued a sustainable development and not purely an economic one. The geographical diversity (plains, hills, depressions and mountains) of Bihor County renders this area the opportunity to develop an important tourism destination for the north-western region of Romania. Municipalities should conduct not only a destination marketing but also a marketing for area specific attractions (Kotler, 2001, p.224). Given this purpose, Bihor County Council, University of Oradea and the Bihor Mountain Rescue Association have started procedures for setting up an association called "Bihor Destination Management Agency". According to the Chief of the Cabinet of the Bihor CC President, Horia Car i , actions of the association will not be limited only to the tourist advertising of the area, but rather will aim at developing a tourism strategy (according to eBihoreanul newspaper, dated 04.01.2015) which would place Oradea/Bihor County among the favourite destinations of domestic and international tourists.

The study was conducted for the period 2007-2013 based on the analysis of indicators related to tourism supply and demand in Bihor County. Analysis of indicators was broken down in the main tourist areas in Bihor, respectively:

- ✓ Oradea (Bihor County seat);
- ✓ Hydro spa area (Sînmartin with B ile Felix and I Maihydro-thermal resorts)
- ✓ Mountain area (Bratca, Budureasa, Bulz, Pietroasa, unciuiu and Vadu Cri ului);
- ✓ Urban area (Beiu , Marghita, Salonta, Nucet, S cuieni, tei, Valea lui Mihai);
- ✓ Rural area (Biharia, Hidi elu de Sus, O rhei, Remetea, S c dat, Sîmb ta, Sîrbi, Tinca);
- ✓ Border area (Bor and M d ras).

Demarcation of areas was performed based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (www.insse.ro)

2. Development of indicators as regards to tourist supply in Bihor County

To present the tourist supply in Bihor County for the period 2007-2013, development of indicators for the following was observed: tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County, existing tourist accommodation capacity (number of availabilities) and tourist accommodation capacity in service (thousands of availabilities - days) – information available on the website of the National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro .

In chart no. 1, we can observe an upward trend of the number of accommodation establishments (except for 2008 and 2013), such numbers recording an increase by 71% in 2012 compared to 2007.

Analysis of the development of tourist accommodation establishments shows that, in Bihor County, during the period:

- 2007-2008, the highest percentage (over 50%) is represented by hotels and tourist villas;
- 2009-2011 is dominated by the number of hotel units and agri-tourism lodging, representing over 59% of the total tourist accommodation establishments;
- 2012-2013, leading place belongs to agri-tourism lodging which, together with hotel units, cover over 70% of the tourist accommodation establishments.

According to chart no.2, during the period 2007-2010, we observe a continuous decline in the existing accommodation capacity (number of availabilities), followed, during the period 2010-2012, by an upward trend in terms of their number, increasing by 1.6% in 2012, compared to 2007.

According to chart no.3, during 2007-2008, tourist accommodation capacity in service increased by approximately 4.4%, followed in 2009 by a 12% decrease compared to 2008. During the period 2009-2012 the situation recovers, following a continuous increase of the tourist accommodation capacity in service, in 2012 their number increasing by 20% compared to 2009.

Based on statistics provided by www.insse.ro for the analysed period (2007-2013), we calculated the average percentage of the aforementioned indicators, having as a result the following information:

- the average percentage of tourist accommodation establishments was of 38% in hydro spa area, 19% in Oradea, 17% in the mountain area, 13% in the rural area, 11% in the urban area and 2% in the border area;
- the average percentage of the existing accommodation capacity was of 58% in hydro spa area, 14% in Oradea, 12% in the mountain area, 8% in the urban area, 6% in the rural area, and 2 % in the border area;
- the average percentage of tourist accommodation capacity in service (no. 3 of availabilities-days) was of 67% in hydro spa area, 18% in Oradea, 5% in the mountain area, 5% in the urban area, 2% in the rural area, and 3% in the border area.

3. Development of indicators as regards to tourist demand in Bihor County

To present tourist demand in Bihor County during the period 2007-2013, we observed the development of indicators in terms of: overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments; net use index of accommodation capacity; tourist arrivals in the tourist accommodation establishments and average length of stay (information available on the website of the National Institute of Statistics, www.insse.ro).

According to chart no.4, during the period 2007-2010 there was a continuous decline in the number of overnight stays, in 2010 the decrease being of 29% compared to 2007. In the period 2010-2012 a new upward trend was recorded, without reaching, however, the value recorded in 2007.

Based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in the analysed period (2007-2013), we calculated the average percentage of overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County, with the following results in the areas defined: 78% in hydro spa area, 13% in Oradea, 2% in the mountain area, 2% in the urban area, 3% in the rural area, and 2% in the border area. As observed, over 91% of overnight stays were recorded in Oradea + Sînmartin (hydro spa area).

According to chart no. 5, it can be noted that, in 2007, in most of the analysed tourist areas, the maximum level of net use of the accommodation capacity was reached. During the analysed period (2007-2013) the highest level of net use index of the accommodation capacity in service was recorded in the hydro spa area (famous for B ile Felix and 1 Mai hydro-thermal resorts), between 52% (in 2007) and 46% (in 2013). Despite the fact that the number of overnight stays in Bihor County has increased during 2010-2012, use indices of the tourist accommodation capacity show, however, a downward trend. In 2011-2013, the only areas showing an upward trend were the rural and urban areas to the detriment of the mountain area where, in 2013, the lowest value was recorded for the net use index of the accommodation capacity in service, of only 11.72%.

Reasons for recording such low values in the mountain area can be multiple: poor quality of road infrastructure, underdeveloped signage, lack of camping facilities, poor development of related tourism services, limited means of public transportation, etc.

According to chart no.6, during the period 2008-2010, there was a continuous decline in the number of arrivals, in 2010 the decrease being of 18% compared to 2008. During the period 2010-2012, there was a new upward trend, the highest number of arrivals being recorded in 2012.

Based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in the period analysed (2007-2013), the average percentage of arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County, for each of the defined areas, is as follows: 51% in hydro spa area, 36% in Oradea, 3% in the mountain area, 3% in the urban area, 3% in the rural area and 4% in the border area. The analysis shows that over 87% of tourists are recorded in Oradea + Sînmartin (hydro spa area).

According to chart no.7, the highest value was reached in 2007 in the rural area, the average length of stay being of 10.7 days. It can be noted that during the period 2008-2013 the hydro spa area significantly stood out compared to the other areas analysed, the average length of stay ranging from 7.34 days (in 2007) to 6.11 days (2013).

4. Conclusions

Based on the statistical analysis performed as regards to tourism demand and supply in Bihor County, we can conclude the following:

- ✓ geographical diversity of Bihor County offers this area the opportunity to become a major tourist destination both nationally and internationally;
- ✓ the most developed area in Bihor County in terms of tourism infrastructure is the Oradea + Sînmartin area, in 2007-2013 the average percentage of tourist accommodation capacity in service (no. of availabilities-days) in this area being of 85%.
- ✓ During the period 2007-2013, Oradea + Sînmartin area was the main attraction for tourists, this area recording an average of 91% of all overnight stays and 87% of all arrivals. Such data confirms that tourism demand in Bihor is associated with the Oradea + Sînmartin area.

Tourism projects (ongoing) in Oradea, alongside tourism facilities offered by hydro-thermal resorts (B ile Felix and 1 Mai) in Sînmartin, could place the Municipality of Oradea in the foreground of Romanian tourism. The purpose of the project initiated by the Municipality which provides the integration of Sînmartin village in the administrative area of Oradea is *“the joint development of the two localities, by numeric increase of the population, in order to ensure economic development, tourism revival by highlighting the architecture of the city and by developing the hydro-thermal resorts of B ile Felix and 1 Mai, located within the area of Sînmartin commune, respectively by attracting European funds”* (according to the document: *Oradea and Sînmartin – Merger for prosperity*). Thus, upon a favourable outcome to the referendum of 10 May 2015, Oradea could become *the capital of hydro-thermal tourism in Romania* therefore

representing an important tourist attraction, both nationally and internationally.

In the document entitled *Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Bihor County, for the Period 2014-2020*, Bihor County Council has established two possible tourist destinations in Bihor County: Oradea area and Apuseni Mountains. Nevertheless, of the analysis performed it can be noted that, in the mountain area, there is a high deficit in terms of accommodation, which limits the influx of tourists and the length of stay in this area. Therefore, in order to boost tourism in mountain areas, greater attention is required both in terms of tourism infrastructure, and road infrastructure. Moreover, despite the fact that 44% of the surface of Bihor County is represented by plains, limited attention is given to rural tourism and agri-tourism.

Acknowledgment

“This paper has been financially supported within the project entitled „*SOCERT. Knowledge society, dynamism through research*”, contract number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/132406. This project is co-financed by European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013. **Investing in people!**”

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Appendices



Chart no.1 Tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR101C>

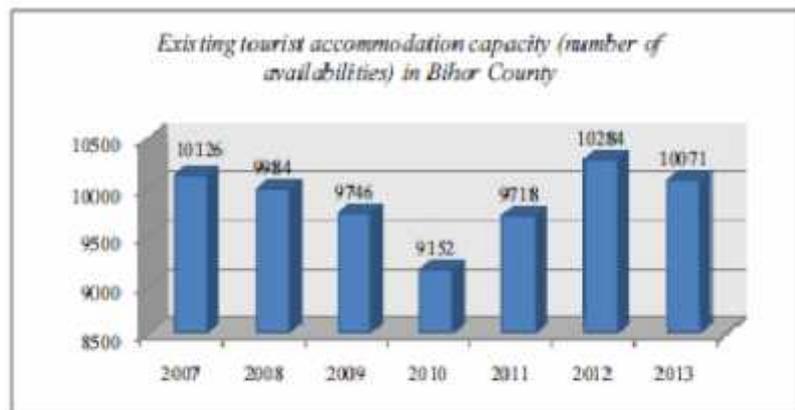


Chart no.2 Existing tourist accommodation capacity (number of availabilities) in Bihor County

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR102C>

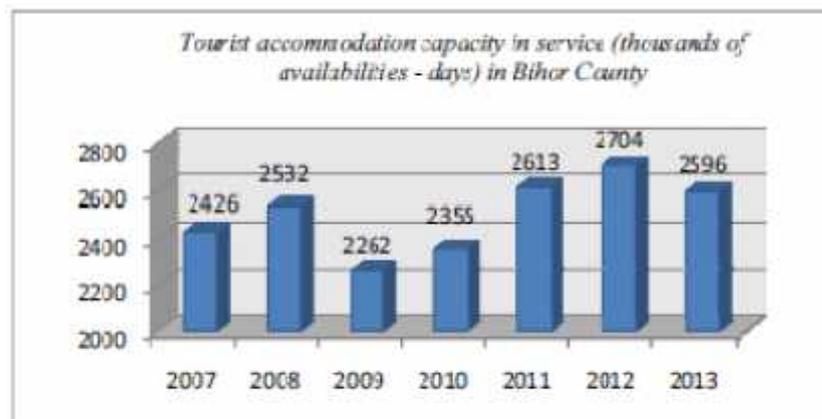


Chart no.3 Tourist accommodation capacity in service (thousands of availabilities - days) in Bihor County

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR103B>

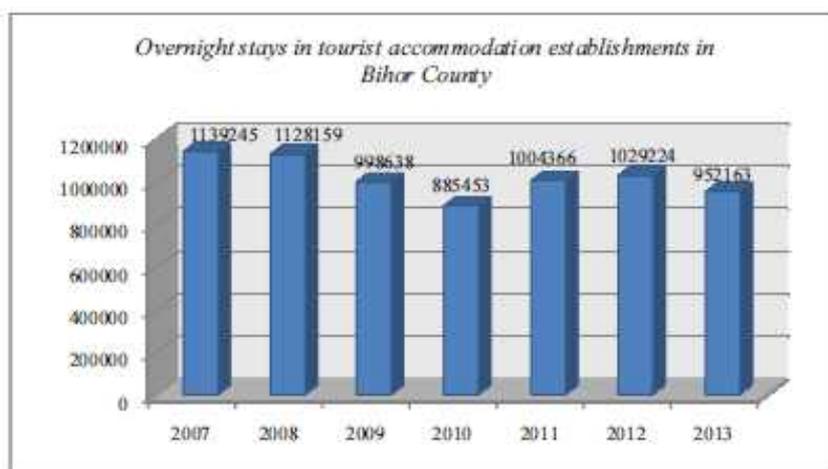


Chart no.4 Overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County (number of overnights)

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR105E>

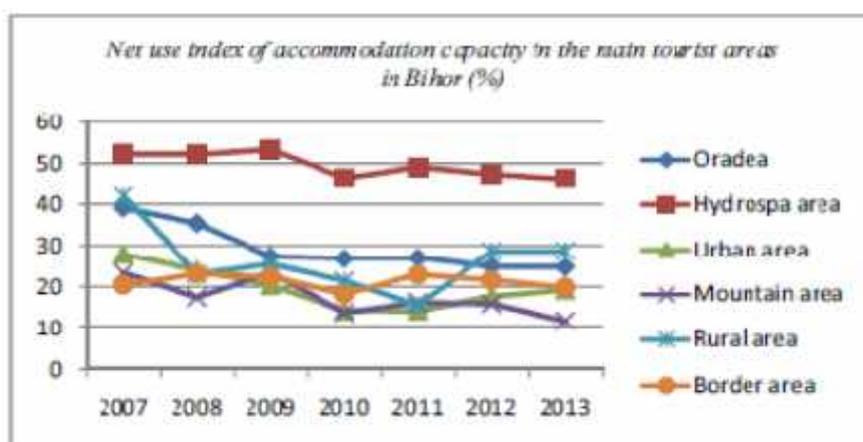


Chart no.5 Net use index of accommodation capacity in the main tourist areas in Bihor (%)

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: www.insse.ro

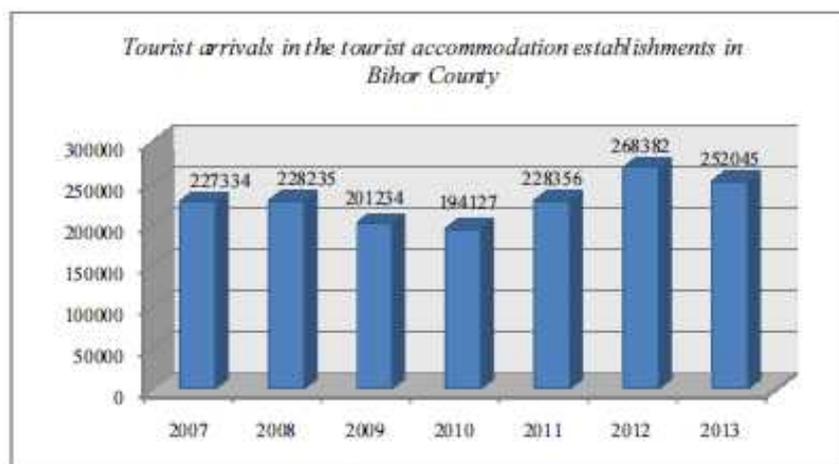


Chart no.6 Tourist arrivals in the tourist accommodation establishments in Bihor County (number of tourist)

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR104E>

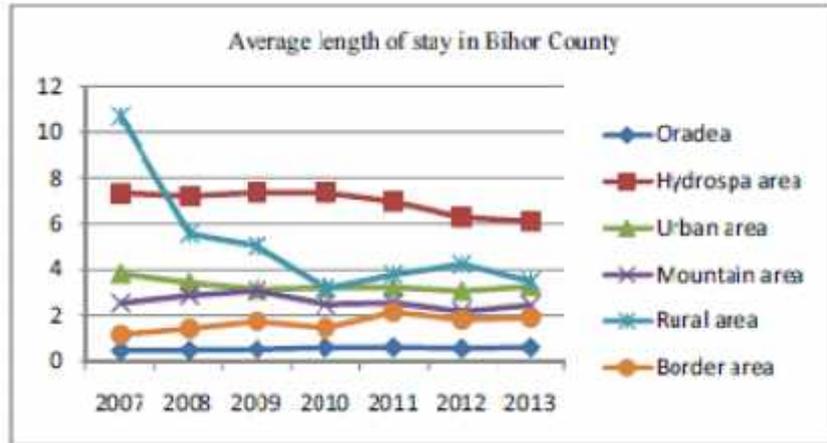


Chart no.7 Average length of stay in Bihor County (number of days)

Source: made by author, based on the information provided by the National Statistic Institute, available online at: www.insse.ro