

SPA TOURISM RESSOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ECONOMIES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

The study aims to identify the SPA tourism contribution to the development of local economies in Romania, during 2000-2012, a period in which Romanian tourism has seen a spectacular dynamic. Spa tourism has become today one of the major forms of the international tourism, generating an increase in the local systems of functional complexity. The study aims also to examine the importance of the SPA tourism in Romania territorial systems, which have been developed based on the SPA resources. The study is based on analysis of a rich bibliography on the development of health tourism, as well as a quantification of this process, for the period 1993-2012. The Spa tourism phenomenon was measured based on the evolution of the number of tickets issued (National House of Health Insurances - CNAS), tourist traffic in the SPA's, and the evolution of the accommodation, made by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania. A database of NACE (Classification of National Economic Activities) was built, for the period 2000-2012, to analyze the evolution of the number of firms, number of employees and the annual growth business and profit. The database was built for the SPA's and the total local economy also. The results confirm the working hypothesis of the importance of the SPA tourism in the sustainable development of local economies that have specific resources.

Keywords: territorial systems, SPA tourism, functional complexity, local economies.

1 INTRODUCTION

Romania has today a great potential for a great complexity tourism development, the SPA branch having a major contribution to the optimal structuring of this sector. Before 1989 the development of the SPA tourism has been extensively done, with a strong social dimension. According to the National Development Plan, at present, in Romania, there are about 160 local SPAs that have mineral resources, of which 15% are resorts of national interest, and the others are of local interest. The SPA tourism occupies the second rank in the tourist offer of Romania, accounting for about 15.4% of the tourism national capacity (National Development Plan, 6th section).

The evaluation of health tourism development resources potential health tourism is a major concern of policy makers, concerned with the increasing complexity of the local economies. Moreover, many studies have confirmed that this sector can bring significant economic benefits by creating jobs, revenue growth and infrastructure development. The advantages of the SPA tourism are obvious on the social component by increasing the standard of living (Jurowski et al, 1997; Ross, 1992).

As the globalization process is present in tourism too, it becomes extremely as popular as the income increases and the access to knowledge and technological innovation becomes easier (Cormany & Baloglu, 2011). Analysis of spa tourism in developing local economies is important because of the complex economic influences, manifested both vertically and horizontally, in the economic system of local economic systems (Ianoş et al., 2012; Peptenatu et al., 2011; 2012). Studying the role of health tourism in developing local economies becomes particularly important in establishing sustainable management strategy on medium and long term, so that socio-economic benefits to be evident in local communities. Thus, through an effective management policy to improve services, coupled with a proper marketing policy of this type of tourism, it can bring significant economic benefits with positive impact on these communities (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

2 METHODOLOGIES

Studying the importance of spa resources in developing local economies started with extensive analysis of bibliography that included strategies to develop the trainees, from different periods and a lot of published papers.

Quantifying the importance of health tourism in developing local economies was achieved by creating a database of all the spas in Romania. This database was done at NACE (National Classification of Economic Activities) for the period 2000-2012. Based on this statistical support was intended: the evolution of the number of firms, number of employees, turnover and profit dynamics, however by each resort, by reference to the total local economy.

3 RESULTS

For all the spas in Romania, the evolution of the number of tourists was not the same with the evolution of the number of tourist at national level, so that for the period under review, the number remains relatively constant, around 10% of the total number of tourists registered in Romania (Fig. 1a). Analyzing national tourist traffic, can be observed that the total number of tourists has decreased for the period 1994-2003. In this period the tourism sector is marked by significant structural change. At the end of this period, the number of tourists begin to rise with slight oscillations, peaking in 2008 with values slightly exceed 700,000 tourists (Fig. 1 b). Ratio of the number of nights and number of overnight stays in resorts show that the duration of stays for health tourism is higher than the national level, for the period under review, ranging between 20 and 30% of total overnight stays at the country level (Fig. 1c). Analysis of the total number of tickets and spa treatment tickets, by state insurance, shows an overall upward trend, but it have been observed an oscillatory evolution, related to the socio-economic aspect, in general (Fig 1 d). The ratio of specific indicators for spa sectors (number of firms, number of business, profit and number of employees) and the same indicators, show the increasing role of the spa sector in developing local economies (Fig 2 a, b, c, d). Analysis of turnover in spas activities, reported to the total turnover shows a fluctuant evolution, the overall trend being downward. The trend is explained by the high values obtained by other economic sectors, but they are in a deep connection with the spa activities (commercial activities) (Table 1).

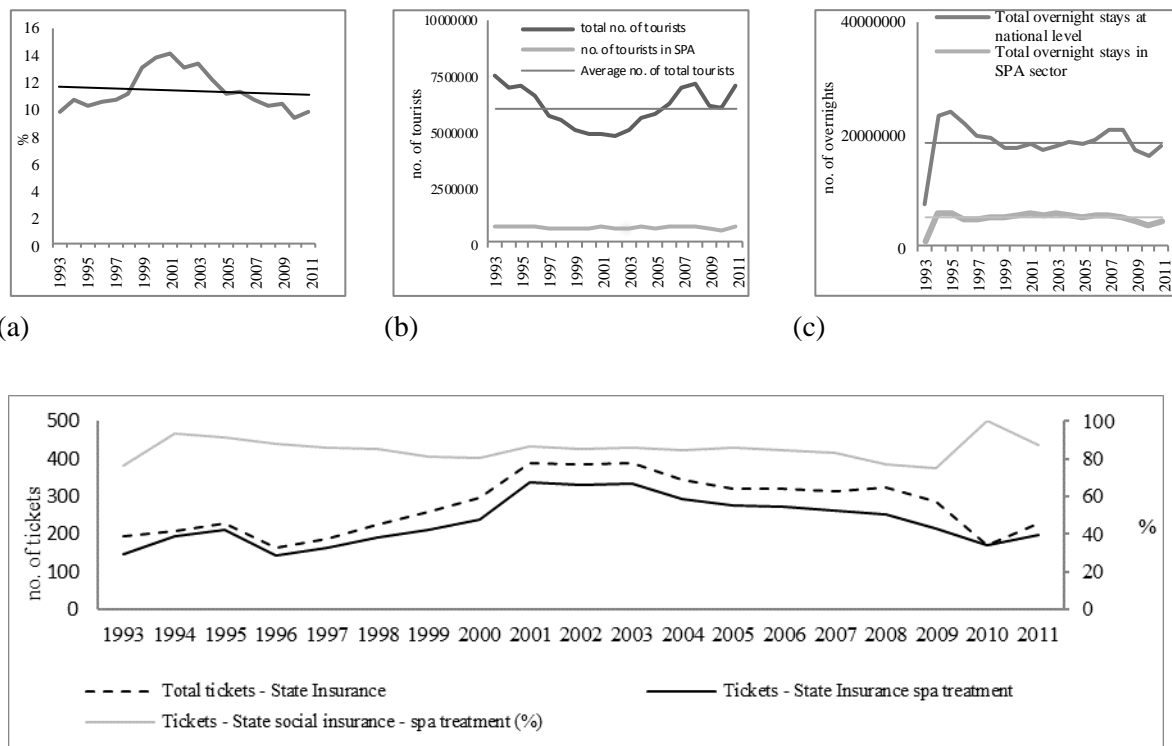


Figure 1. (a). Share of tourists from resorts in the total number of tourists; (b). The evolution number of tourists in resorts; (c). Evolution of the number of overnight stays in health resorts (1993-2011); (d). The evolution of the the number of tickets for leisure and spa treatment, granted by state insurance.

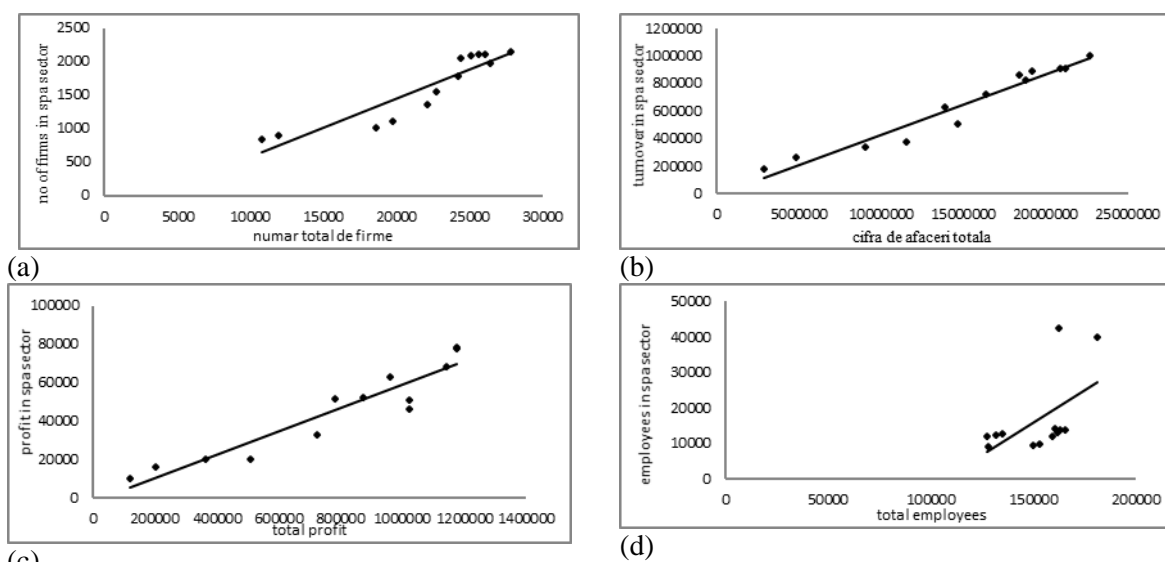


Figure 2. (a) ratio of the number of firms in the spa and the total number of firms; (b) ratio of turnover in the total turnover of the spa and X1000; (c) ratio of profit in the spa and the total profit; (d) ratio of the number of employees in the spa and the total number of employees.

Table 1. Share of turnover from spa sector in total turnover (%)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amara	4	5	4	5	5	6	8	6	7	6	5	3	3
Bazna	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	2
Băltățești	1	0	0	1	1	3	3	4	4	3	2	3	2
Bizusa	6	4	3	4	7	7	6	4	3	4	3	1	2
Borsec	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Borșa	8	6	6	6	7	9	8	8	8	8	5	5	5
Bughea	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Bușteni	30	27	22	17	16	15	15	10	9	8	4	6	8
Buziaș	24	16	18	8	6	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Calacea	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Călimănești-Caciulata	57	56	50	1	54	51	50	49	44	35	33	39	47
Covasna	11	12	9	11	10	9	9	9	12	11	11	11	13
Eforie	50	54	43	38	32	23	22	21	17	19	16	14	12
Felix 1 Mai	31	33	30	30	28	26	23	24	26	25	23	24	8
Geoagiu	35	40	34	34	25	24	20	22	27	24	22	21	17
Herculane	48	47	53	52	41	56	32	25	18	11	14	12	18
Lacul Sărat	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lipova	2	2	3	5	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	2	2
Moneasa	12	9	7	35	30	35	9	23	24	26	34	30	19
Monteoru	6	6	5	5	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	2
Nicolina	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Ocna Sibiului	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	11	20	7	3
Ocna Șugatag	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	11	9	9	5	7	10
Olănești	23	22	28	1	42	52	45	42	40	48	50	41	45
Predeal	41	39	28	29	32	44	31	26	26	26	29	38	41
Pucioasa	4	4	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	8	10	12	2
Săcelu	19	18	36	49	56	45	52	19	8	20	15	6	10
Sinaia	12	12	12	14	15	18	18	19	20	18	23	26	37
Slanic Moldova	7	5	21	7	20	25	37	59	42	21	40	67	44
Slanic Prahova	73	65	54	73	61	52	51	55	59	66	63	63	65
Sovata	19	16	13	11	15	13	14	14	15	15	16	18	18
Soveja	4	4	8	1	8	2	4	2	1	8	3	1	3

Stâna de Vale	43	17	12	9	3	3	2	2	3	8	11	13	14
Târgu Ocna	9	6	3	4	3	4	4	5	5	6	7	8	7
Tâșnad	5	6	7	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	4	3	2
Techirghiol	10	9	8	10	7	7	6	8	8	7	2	1	1
Tinca	2	21	20	17	19	7	6	7	6	6	4	3	2
Turda	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	2
Tușnad	75	77	67	64	65	64	64	61	52	47	36	42	48
Vatra Dornei	7	8	8	7	8	8	7	9	8	9	8	7	7
Vălenii de Munte	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voineasa	7	6	6	1	3	1	3	3	4	4	2	2	1

Data source: BORG DESIGN

The evolution of the number of firms in the total number of firms, in each resort, shows a general upward trend, but detailed analyses have shown that the light is not sufficient evidence to show the importance of health tourism in the local economy. For instance for Slanic Prahova, although there is a reduction in the weight of the number of firms in the spa, the turnover recorded a growth trend (Table 2). The evolution of the number of employees of the SPA sector, in the total number of employees shows a direct correlation, with turnover, obtained from the spa (Table 3).

Table 2. Share of Health tourism sector firms in the total (%)

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amara	8	8	6	6	7	8	8	7	9	9	8	8	9
Bazna	11	11	5	5	10	17	18	15	16	10	11	10	17
Băltățești	9	8	6	8	12	12	15	14	13	12	13	12	14
Bizusa	5	5	4	6	9	8	8	9	9	8	7	8	8
Borsec	16	16	16	14	15	16	20	19	17	22	23	25	24
Borșa	12	11	10	12	12	13	14	14	13	13	13	13	13
Bughea	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
Bușteni	14	14	12	14	15	15	15	14	15	15	16	16	18
Buziaș	17	17	20	11	12	12	11	13	13	14	14	13	13
Calacea	3	3	4	1	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
Călimănești-Caciulata	23	20	16	1	18	19	21	20	20	19	19	19	19
Covasna	5	6	4	5	7	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	8
Eforie	31	31	25	25	27	28	30	29	29	30	31	30	32
Felix 1 Mai	14	14	11	12	11	13	16	16	16	16	16	15	15
Geoagiu	20	19	15	14	12	14	15	16	17	18	17	19	22
Herculane	11	12	11	11	14	20	16	18	24	24	21	22	24
Lacul Sărat	7	6	4	4	5	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	4
Lipova	13	12	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	8
Moneasa	29	29	27	28	32	30	31	34	29	28	28	26	25
Monteoru	10	13	9	9	8	10	11	10	11	11	11	12	12
Nicolina	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Ocna Sibiului	6	5	6	7	5	6	8	9	10	10	10	8	9
Ocna Șugatag	8	6	8	7	13	14	11	10	11	14	15	16	16
Olănești	25	28	22	1	22	21	26	25	26	29	29	31	30
Predeal	40	38	27	29	28	32	35	37	36	36	35	36	36
Pucioasa	6	6	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Săcelu	13	22	13	14	14	17	15	17	13	13	13	13	12
Sinaia	15	14	11	13	14	17	18	18	19	19	19	18	18
Slanic Moldova	6	6	3	6	8	13	19	20	21	21	21	21	20
Slanic Prahova	9	8	7	7	6	6	9	10	10	11	9	7	6
Sovata	25	22	15	16	16	18	20	19	19	18	17	18	18
Soveja	7	7	9	1	9	9	9	8	8	11	10	9	10
Stâna de Vale	19	19	14	12	10	9	10	9	11	11	15	15	15
Târgu Ocna	7	6	4	5	5	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9

Tâșnad	12	12	10	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	13	12	12
Techirghiol	14	15	11	11	11	13	14	15	15	16	15	12	11
Tinca	7	8	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	8	7	6
Turda	5	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Tușnad	45	44	36	34	42	37	36	32	34	40	40	37	40
Vatra Dornei	12	11	10	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	12	11	12
Vălenii de Munte	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Voineasa	13	12	6	1	9	8	11	13	17	17	17	16	18

Data source: BORG DESIGN

Table 3. Share of the employees from SPA sector in total (%)

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amara	12	9	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	10	10	3	4
Bazna	3	3	2	2	2	3	5	6	5	4	6	8	8
Băltățești	1	1	0	0	2	4	7	7	8	7	8	6	8
Bizusa	6	3	2	3	8	7	6	5	5	6	6	3	2
Borsec	3	0	5	3	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Borșa	12	12	10	10	12	19	20	16	14	12	8	10	10
Bughea	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4
Bușteni	27	28	24	22	22	24	27	24	23	96	22	18	26
Buziaș	14	14	36	17	14	16	19	15	16	15	14	16	16
Calacea	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	3	2
Călimănești-Caciulata	52	56	57	1	58	51	50	41	31	30	32	28	51
Covasna	21	21	17	16	16	15	14	15	18	15	16	15	18
Eforie	46	52	40	45	44	35	38	37	33	34	32	33	41
Felix 1 Mai	57	53	44	45	46	46	42	46	46	47	50	47	24
Geoagiu	19	21	19	22	20	24	21	22	38	38	39	38	33
Herculane	60	64	66	68	63	76	56	48	40	31	31	20	23
Lacul Sărat	1	3	3	4	5	4	3	3	4	5	5	4	4
Lipova	5	5	4	5	6	6	7	6	6	8	6	6	6
Moneasa	16	16	25	37	41	21	32	34	34	42	42	46	26
Monteoru	3	4	3	8	16	16	11	16	14	13	13	14	14
Nicolina	2	33	2	2	3	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Ocna Sibiului	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	24	35	4	3
Ocna Șugatag	0	0	0	1	3	3	6	10	13	16	14	16	20
Olănești	10	30	31	1	50	47	49	48	44	48	47	48	48
Predeal	55	52	45	41	43	44	42	41	38	37	41	45	49
Pucioasa	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	4	5	9	14	15	12
Săcelu	0	0	33	50	22	38	11	20	14	10	12	7	10
Sinaia	21	22	18	19	22	25	27	30	31	29	35	34	36
Slanic Moldova	13	13	18	6	39	35	47	44	39	34	33	35	38
Slanic Prahova	72	55	38	39	43	41	52	53	50	55	54	53	55
Sovata	21	18	15	18	18	17	16	15	17	18	18	20	21
Soveja	6	3	0	1	18	5	7	4	0	3	3	0	7
Stâna de Vale	73	32	22	15	12	11	8	8	12	9	9	31	28
Târgu Ocna	6	5	4	6	7	9	6	7	7	10	12	12	9
Tâșnad	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	8
Techirghiol	15	13	17	15	9	11	8	10	9	14	14	11	9
Tinca	3	21	21	17	17	13	12	10	14	17	14	10	10
Turda	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
Tușnad	78	76	59	60	74	68	68	69	59	59	49	41	21
Vatra Dornei	7	4	7	8	10	12	15	16	16	19	17	17	19
Vălenii de Munte	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Voineasa	21	19	13	1	5	2	3	2	8	5	7	5	3

Data source: BORG DESIGN

4 DISCUSSIONS

Spa tourism is a fundamental component of local economic systems, based on the exploitation of specific resources. In these systems, SPA tourism contribute to the development of other economic sectors, developed as a result of its tourist flows. Researching the role of the health tourism to see its contribution to the local economies develop has today to face many obstacles, the most important being the lack of statistical data. So, a lot of useful data, is missing, such as a valuable information on the results achieved at the level of functional SPAs.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Spa tourism, developed in those territorial systems that have specific resources is the main driver of the development of local economies, although in many cases other economic sectors recorded significant increases.

The lack of a national strategy made the SPA resorts of Romania, although they have significant resources for such tourism development, not to register significant increases. Under these conditions, the specific infrastructure has degraded and SPA resources have not benefited from protection against pollution and overexploitation.

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