

Youth: Possible Segment of the Movement for Sustainability in Tourism

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Abstract: Young people are dynamic, energetic, eager to socialize and to have fun. Based on these considerations, young people are an important segment of the tourism sector. At the same time, these characteristics can lead to the practice of unsustainable forms of tourism. The present study aims to highlight whether young people are prone to sustainable tourism or are in the sphere of influence of overtourism. The study is based on a questionnaire with 20 questions and a statistical analysis based on calculating the correlation ratio (R - Multiple R) and the coefficient of determination (R^2 - R square) between certain dependent variables (tourist variables) and certain independent variables (socio-economic variables) but also performing a simple regression. The results indicate that young people are not necessarily followers of sustainable tourism and that the age is not a variable with a large influence on young people's tourism preferences.

1 INTRODUCTION

Over time, it has been shown that tourism is a dynamic phenomenon and a large resource-consuming industry (human, financial, material, etc). The dynamic character gives the tourist phenomenon the possibility to meet the requirements of tourists, and the consumption of resources is a factor that brings some difficulties in the proper management of local resources. Roxas et al. (2020) argue that tourism stakeholders need to be synergistic on three issues, namely: rules, living standards and conservation. Good understanding between stakeholders can limit the possible negative impact of tourism on resources.

Specialist studies have shown that tourism can have a social impact in terms of tourist destinations, manifested by advantages such as increasing the notoriety of the local community and by disadvantages such as degradation of the cultural identity of the local community (Pavlic, Portolan, & Puh, 2015), but also at the economic level, manifested by advantages similar to increasing the number of jobs and by disadvantages such as increasing the cost of living (Minseong & Brijesh, 2018). It should be noted that both the advantages and disadvantages

generated by the tourist phenomenon can be related to the number of tourists arriving in a certain tourist destination, for example: a large number of tourists contributes to increase the notoriety of the tourist destination, but at the same time, can contribute to the degradation of the cultural identity of the local community. One of the most effective methods of managing tourist destinations has proven to be the sustainable development (Gkoumas, 2019), as it involves managing resources so that the needs of individuals are met while respecting cultural integrity and essential living conditions (SgROI, 2020). Of particular importance in the management of local resources are tourists, especially the way they perceive the consumption of resources.

Through this study we want to highlight the predisposition of young tourists to practice forms and activities of sustainable tourism or their membership in overtourism, starting from the following general hypotheses: sustainable tourism involves a lower consumption of local resources than overtourism, which forces local communities to increase the tariff of the tourist product; young people prefer more crowded and low-priced tourist destinations.

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2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism

In the age of technological advancement, all industries must adapt to new expectations and new consumption patterns. As tourism is one of the most important sectors of the international economy, it must have the capacity to respond to the new demands of individuals, but with the indispensable condition of managing local resources in a sustainable way. The activities of "consumption" of tourist resources must be carried out responsibly, so that both tourists and local communities have the opportunity to benefit from those resources in the future.

At the same time, the conservation of local resources, whether they are local traditions or elements of the natural environment or other types of resources, offers the possibility for the local community to benefit from certain economic advantages such as new jobs, but also offers unique experiences for tourists (Cotifava, 2013). The importance of tourist resources also derives from their ability to regenerate, in the sense that "renewable resources come from an infinite stock, and non-renewable resources come from a finite stock" (Aluculesei & Nistoreanu, 2013). This perspective is not only valid for the field of tourism, but has a sphere of influence on all economic sectors. The link between resources and sustainable tourism is indisputable, as resources are one of the variables underlying the definition of sustainable tourism. In order to define sustainable tourism, a brief clarification of the concept of sustainable development is required. According to the General Dictionary of the Romanian language, the term development is assimilated either with a movement from simple to complex, or with an increase in proportion of the studied aspects, and the term sustainable has synonyms such as durable or resistant (Breban, 1987). The central event in substantiating the concept of sustainable development is the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983, by the United Nations. The commission was also called Brundtland because it was named after the Norwegian prime minister. The Commission produced a famous report, entitled the Brundtland Report, in which it is formulated the most comprehensive definition of sustainable development, namely: "Sustainable development is the ability of the present generation to meet their needs without restrict the right of posterity to meet and satisfy their own needs " (World

Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). In view of this universally accepted definition, it can be admitted that the present generation is directly responsible for the economic and socio-cultural situation of the future generation. With such a great responsibility, the current generation must manage their lifestyle, actions and consumption with great caution. A pragmatic and optimistic approach to the concept of sustainable development is offered by Orecchini (2007) who states that: "sustainable development does not consume resources, but uses and reuses them indefinitely". The previous definition highlights resources and consumption. According to another approach, sustainable development can be "the interaction that maintains the balance of stakeholders' interests and involves the survival of posterity" (Buzko, Vartanova, Trunina, & Khovrak, 2019). According to this approach, a good understanding between current stakeholders leads to the "survival" of the next generation, but this balance must be correlated with a responsible consumption of resources.

Gareth (2017) observed that the meaning of sustainable development varies depending on the "actor" who interprets the meaning of the concept and the industry in which it operates. Also, the implementation of the principles of sustainable development may differ from one industry to another, but, what is most important, is the universally expected effect, namely the improvement of the quality of life. In the opinion of Buzko et al. (2019) among the principles of sustainable development are: maintaining the integrity of ecosystems; potting natural resources; equal opportunities; social justice and cultural diversity. A comprehensive set of principles of sustainable development was also developed by the United Nations at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference.

In 2015, at the New York Summit, the United Nations developed 17 goals on sustainable development, which Mika (2016) classifies into the following categories:

- a. „ Primary needs: food, health, water and energy;
- b. Equality between people: without poverty, education, gender equality and reduced inequalities;
- c. Efficiency and sustainable production: economic growth, innovative industry, responsible production and consumption, climate action;
- d. Endangered landscapes: cities, marine and terrestrial life;
- e. Global cooperation: partnerships, peace and justice" (Mika, 2016).

Achieving all the above objectives causes changes on three essential and specific elements of sustainable development, namely the economy, the natural environment and society. This view is also supported by Mensah (2019) who states that "sustainable development is based on economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability", but also by Munasinghe (1993) who stated that sustainable development can be seen from three points of view, namely economic, social and ecological. From this point of view, the field of tourism falls within the scope of sustainable development, as it involves economic aspects (jobs, wages, etc), and environmental issues (natural resources), but also social aspects (strengthening cultural identity of tourist destinations, poverty reduction, etc). Bâc (2013) states that the basis of sustainable society is the principle of equitable distribution and democratic participation. The principle of equitable distribution affects resources, as it refers to their fair distribution. Democratic participation is a principle that emphasizes the importance and need for society / people to take part in the decision-making process.

In accordance with the definitions of tourism and sustainable development, the notion of sustainable tourism has appeared in the literature, in the sense that this notion can be seen as "the application of the principles of sustainable development in tourism" (Bâc, 2013). Given that tourism also has negative effects on society (erosion of local traditions, congestion, etc) and the environment (pollution, irresponsible and continuous consumption of local resources, etc), we can admit that it was imperative to find solutions. Against the background of the negative aspects of tourism, the concept of sustainable tourism appeared. Bâc (2013) admits that "sustainable tourism is a reactive notion, which aims to eradicate the negative impact of tourism". This approach aims at the goal of sustainable tourism. A holistic approach to defining the concept is provided by the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Program, which have formulated the following definition: "Sustainable tourism is the type of tourism that focuses on its present and future socio-economic situation"(United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, 2005). The two international authorities highlighted the fact that sustainable tourism falls under the umbrella of sustainable development, through the prism of tourists, industry, environment and communities that fall into the main components of sustainable development: economy, society and environment.

All forms of tourism can enter the sphere of sustainable tourism (Ioan, Rădulescu, & Cojocă, 2012), but there are also several distinct forms, including ecotourism, rural tourism, pro-poor-tourism (Bâc, 2013). In addition to these forms of tourism, other ones have been studied in the literature, for example voluntourism, which in recent years has seen an upward trend (Pompurova, Marcekova, Sebova, Sokolova, & Zofaj, 2018) or cultural tourism, which Zoran (2018) concludes that "is a form of tourism that educates people about the history, art and architecture of a tourist destination." Also, Zargham (2007) considers that cultural tourism is one of the most intense forms of sustainable tourism, because through the interest of tourists for this form of tourism is stimulated the reconditioning of historical vestiges.

The study of sustainable tourism indicators is not a new topic in the literature. Given the fact that sustainable tourism can be approached through the prism of sustainable development pillars (economic, social, environmental), its indicators can be categorized according to these pillars, a special importance having the environmental pillar. For example, Lozano-Oyola et al. (2012) includes in the environmental pillar several indicators of sustainable tourism, including: „, percentage of protected areas, percentage of energy consumption from renewable sources, amount of waste produced at a destination, density of buildings, noise level during the day , the number of tourists in an area etc".

2.2 Overtourism

From an economic point of view, the numerous tourist flows have advantages for local entrepreneurs, at least in terms of revenues. That is the reason why most local entrepreneurs show a positive attitude towards tourists and make considerable efforts to increase their number. At the same time, the large number of tourists from a tourist destination brings advantages for the local population, in the sense that a large number of tourists generates the need for staff, which leads to new jobs. This is an optimistic approach to the impact that tourism can have on a tourist destination, but there is also a pessimistic approach that can be described in terms of the concept of overtourism.

According to the World Tourism Organization, overtourism is "the impact that tourism has on a tourist destination and that negatively influences the quality of life of residents and the experiences of tourists"(World Tourism Organization, 2018). By comparison, overtourism is the antithesis of sustainable tourism, as the latter positively influences

the quality of life of residents, while overtourism has negative influences on both residents and tourists. A concise definition of the concept of overtourism is provided by Avond et al. (2019), namely: "the presence of many tourists in the same place at the same time". However, overtourism is not limited to the large number of tourists and their distribution in space and time, but rather refers to the effect of their behavior and actions. Zmyslony, Kowalczyk-Aniol and Dembinska (2020) evoke, based on the literature, several effects of overtourism, including "changes in the structure of local trade, congestion, pollution and waste, violation of fundamental laws, etc". These effects lead to higher prices and tariffs, higher amounts of waste, higher resource consumption, noise, irritation of residents and difficulties for local authorities to manage congestion. Drapela (2020) claims that rural areas are also affected by overtourism, the main reason being that tourists choose well-known destinations. And other authors (Gowreesunkar & Seraphin, 2019) consider that overtourism is a danger to well-known destinations. Causes of overtourism include the press, low tariffs and prices in certain destinations, hospitality of hosts, free crossing of the border, expansion of technological equipment, successful promotion campaigns, different opinions and interests of the local community (Gowreesunkar & Seraphin, 2019). At first sight, it can be admitted that the aspects mentioned above bring only advantages, but they are also the basis for generating overtourism.

2.3 Youth and Forms of Manifestation of Tourist Demand

From a theoretical point of view, there is a form of tourism specific to young people, even called youth tourism, and Minciu (2004) places it in the sphere of social tourism, which defines as follows: „form of tourism specific to people with modest incomes, which involves facilities such as tariff reductions, subsidies, etc". In the case of young people, the financial component is often a disadvantage, but they have the advantage of the physical component and various aspects of the social component, such as knowledge of foreign languages, ability to adapt quickly, openness to the new, etc.

The World Tourism Organization attributes the following characteristics to young people:

- „ Adventurous;
- Sociable and willing to interact with other young people;
- They want to travel and experience new areas;
- They have low incomes, but they have free time;

- They travel for long periods" (World Tourism Organization; World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, 2016).

In this regard, tourist units must pay special attention to the online promotion. According to law no. 350/2006 called the Youth Law, in Romania, young citizens are considered to have the age between 14 and 35 years (The Romanian Parliament, 2006).

In 2015, the arrivals of young tourists accounted for 23% of all international arrivals (World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, 2015). It seems that young tourists are an important segment in the structure of global tourist demand. Moisă (2010) argues that the tourist demand from the segment of young tourists differs from other types of demand, through the following aspects: "high degree of mobility, length of stay, various reasons for travel, budget allocated to travel". Regarding the allocated budget, at the level of 2014, a young tourist spent on average 1591 euros for tourism (World Tourism Organization; World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, 2016). Moisă (2010) mentions that most of the budget goes to the transport service (40%), then to the accommodation service (18%), the food service (15%), the leisure service (12%), other services (15%). This allocation fully reveals the low level of the travel budget for young tourists.

Being characterized by dynamism, it can be said that young tourists practice all forms of tourism, but in close connection with their reasons for travel there are several forms of tourism that they practice mainly, including educational tourism, volunteering, sports tourism, tourism adventure and work and travel programs (Moisă, 2010). This point of view is also supported by Demeter and Brătucu (2014) who came to the conclusion that "young European tourists are interested in cultural exchanges and voluntourism, while young Romanian tourists are interested in work and travel programs, tourism and leisure, adventure and sports tourism". According to the forms of tourism mentioned above, several travel reasons for young tourists can be deduced, including relaxation and fun, studies and service. In other words, the reasons for young people's travel can be framed in four dimensions: knowledge, challenge, escape and novelty (Blomgren & Ljungstrom, 2018).

The segment of young tourists has a great potential for development and therefore, the tourism authorities and the providers of tourist services should pay more attention to the needs of young people, so

as to contribute to their socio-professional development and channel them to practice forms of sustainable tourism.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on the application of a questionnaire among young people who are members of a student association and among two classes of high school students. The questionnaire contains 20 questions and was distributed through the online survey platform between October 24 and November 6, 2020.

The aim of this study is to find out if young tourists are willing to practice sustainable tourism. In this sense, a response grid was developed, based on the study of the literature. Also, in order to achieve the goal, two research questions were formulated: There is a correlation between the dependent variables: travel reasons (preference for visiting highly publicized tourist attractions) - A; the types of tourism practiced - B; the types of transport (preference for using one's own car or relatives on tourist trips - C, and independent variables (monthly income - W, level of education - X, place of origin - Y, occupation - Z) and to what extent the variables dependents mentioned are influenced by age.

- Hypothesis 1: Most young people choose well-known and crowded destinations;
- Hypothesis 2: Young people are not interested in local products (dishes, traditions, etc);
- Hypothesis 3: Young people attach great importance to low tariffs in tourist destinations.

Simple regression was used to answer these research questions, and the Regression function in Microsoft Office Excel was used as the method for calculating simple regression.

Table 1: Response grid - sustainable consumption vs non-sustainable consumption.

Sustainable tourism	Overtourism
Preference for less publicized, less known tourist destinations	Preference for mediated tourist destinations (known nationally and or internationally)
Local dishes	Industrialized culinary preparations
Knowledge of the local community and its traditions and observation of nature	Visiting known tourist attractions
Increased attention to resource consumption	Lack of attention to resource consumption

Adapting the behavior according to the situation in the tourist destination	Adopting common or asuperior behavior
Use of public transport and less polluting: train, bus	Use of own means of transport
Making expenses within the local community	Tracking prices and low tariffs

The classification of young tourists in the sphere of sustainable tourism or in the sphere of overtourism is made according to the answers that occupy the first position.

4 RESULTS

The questionnaire was completed by 136 young people. The socio-economic profile of the young people surveyed is as follows:

Table 2: Profile of respondents.

Characteristic	Percentage of respondents
They come from urban areas	71.3%
Their monthly income is between 1-1000 lei	48.5%
Most are pupils and students	76.4%
Most are between 19-25 years old	53.7%
Most graduated from high school	38.2%
Most of them are female	60.6%

As mentioned above, only the responses that occupied the first position in the preferences of young people were taken into account. Following the application of the questionnaire, we obtained the following answers:

Table 3: Respondents' answers.

Nr. Crt.	Answer	%
1	Most young people are largely informed about local traditions and laws before visiting a particular tourist destination.	39.7
2	Most young people usually visit nationally known destinations	59.6
3	Most of the young people would spend their stay in the city of Cluj-Napoca.	40.4
4	Among the reasons for travel, the visit of highly publicized tourist attractions ranks first in the preferences of young people.	-
5	Most of the young people practice rural tourism and cultural tourism.	31.6

Table 3: Respondents' answers (cont.).

Nr. Crt.	Answer	%
6	When traveling for tourism, young people most often use their personal or relatives car.	-
7	Most young people are slightly influenced by local traditions and the local community in choosing a tourist destination.	39%
8	Most of the young people visit well-known tourist attractions when they go on vacation.	41.2
9	Most young people prefer local dishes when they go on vacation.	75.7
10	Most young people take into account the amount of electricity and water consumed in the accommodation units.	43.4
11	For most young people, when they go on vacation, the people who accompany them are the most important aspect.	-
12	Most young people responded that when they are in a tourist destination they try to adapt their behavior according to the local situation.	51.5

The following table shows the classification of the answers according to the proposed answer grid:

Table 4: Framing the answers.

Nr. Crt	Sustainable tourism	Overtourism
1	Answer 1	
2		Answer 2
3		Answer 3
4		Answer 4
5	Answer 5	
6		Answer 6
7		Answer 7
8		Answer 8
9	Answer 9	
10	Answer 10	
11		Answer 11
12	Answer 12	
Total	5	7

According to the answers, it can be seen that young people are not prone to sustainable tourism, as they prefer crowded and mediated tourist destinations such as Cluj-Napoca or Brasov and mostly use their own means of transport, which means that the first hypothesis is confirmed. Young people also prefer local dishes, but are not interested and not influenced by local traditions, which is why hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

Although most of the young people do not have a monthly income higher than 1000 lei, they do not position the low tariffs from a destination as the main reason to travel, nor do they attach high importance to this aspect when visiting a tourist destination, which means that hypothesis 3 is refuted.

Following the application of the Regression function between the dependent variables and the independent variables, we obtained the following results:

Table 5: Correlation ratio (R) and coefficient of determination (R²).

Variable	W	X	Y	Z	R
					R ²
A	0.10 **	0.18 **	0.06 *	0.09 *	R
	0.01	0.03	0.003	0.009	R ²
B	0.20 **	0.18 **	0.09 *	0.19 *	R
	0.04	0.03	0.008	0.03	R ²
C	0.07 *	0.18 **	0.003 *	0.13 *	R
	0.006	0.03	0.000009	0.01	R ²

* statistically significant; ** statistically insignificant

The fisher test was used to test the significance of the correlation ratio. According to the previous table, there is a weak correlation between the environment of origin (Y), occupation (Z) and the reasons for travel (A). The same happens in the case of the types of tourism practiced (B). Also, there is a weak correlation between the monthly income (W), the environment of origin (Y), the occupation (Z) and the means of transport used (C). In other words, young people do not choose the reasons for travel, types of tourism and means of transport based on monthly income, level of education, environment of origin or occupation, which means that young people are influenced by other variables when making decisions about on a possible tourist trip. Thus, a simple regression between the age of the respondents was applied, as an independent variable and the dependent variables mentioned. Following the calculations in Excel, we obtained an invalid regression model between age and types of tourism and a valid model between age and preference for visiting highly publicized tourist attractions, but also between age and preference for using your car in travel for tourism.

Thus, the first model is:

$$Y = 0.26 + 0.15 \text{ age range} + e_i \quad (1)$$

where Y is the preference for visiting highly publicized tourist attractions and e_i are the errors.

Thus, as the age increases by one interval, the preference for visiting tourist attractions will increase by 0.15 units. Since the coefficient of determination between the two variables is 0.04, we can say that 4% of the variation of the preference for visiting highly publicized tourist objectives is explained by the variation of age.

The second model is:

$$Y = 0.24 + 0.13 \text{ age range} + e_i \quad (2)$$

where Y is the preference of using one's own car or that of relatives in tourist trips and e_i are the errors. Thus, as the age increases with an interval, the preference of using one's own car or that of relatives in tourist trips will increase by 0.13 units. Since the coefficient of determination between the two variables is 0.02, we can say that 2% of the variation of the preference of using one's own car or that of relatives in tourist trips is explained by the variation of age.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Due to the fact that young people prefer to visit more crowded tourist destinations, it can be admitted that they are part of mass tourism. Another aspect that removes young people from practicing sustainable tourism is the preference for using a personal car or that of relatives when traveling for tourism. Also, the weak correlation between the dependent variables, the independent variables and the weak influence of age on the studied dependent variables strengthen the premise according to which young people are spontaneous and dynamic people. Thus, the tourist behavior of young people is influenced quite a bit by the independent variables used in this study, which is determined precisely by the dynamic and spontaneous nature of young people.

In essence, based on the responses received and the statistical links between the variables, young people tend not to be advocates of sustainable tourism, but it is not appropriate to say that they are not willing to practice sustainable tourism, as their preferences are dynamic, spontaneous and in some places contradictory.

6 THE LIMITS OF RESEARCH

The present research could be affected by the heterogeneity of the sample, as the young people who responded are pupils, students, employees or

households. The research may also be affected by the fact that many closed questions have been used. A possible research topic would be why young people put more emphasis on the people who accompany them and less on tourism activities or the local community.

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