

ASPECTS REGARDING FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHOICE OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY TOURISTS

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Abstract: *We take decisions every day, all the time and sometimes the consequences have major impact on our life. Even when we are planning our vacation we take one or more decisions starting with the budget we allocate, period, transportation and ending with choosing the destination. Normally, the choice of the destination is based on a previous experience, a strong motivation or an offer which cannot be refused provided by a supplier of tourism services. But what determines us to choose a specific destination? This is the question the authors are trying to answer by using a survey distributed to 225 persons from Timisoara. So, the purpose of the article is to identify factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations by tourists.*

Key words: *decision, tourism destination, tourists*

INTRODUCTION

Considered one of the nicest periods of the year, the vacation makes us think since the beginning of the year to the place we are going to spend it and to be very careful in choosing it.

Selecting the destination means to fulfill two main stages: to establish a set of selection criteria and to identify the touristic destination.

Generally, the criteria used for organizing the vacation are:

- The purpose of the vacation: resting, practice some sports, participation to artistic and cultural events, visiting touristic objectives, testing local gastronomy or shopping;
- The natural environment where to spend the vacation (mountain, seaside, continent, island, rural or urban environment etc);
- The way of organizing the vacation (personal organization, involvement of tourism agencies etc);
- The accommodation type (hotel, villa, apartment, personalized room, camping, bungalow, agro-touristic pension etc);
- The transportation means (plane, train, bus, personal car etc);
- The comfort degree of the accommodation unit;
- Meals services (all inclusive, all meals, one meal etc);
- Other desired services (pool, SPA, internet, beauty center, treatment facility, bar, fitness etc);
- The persons with whom to spend the vacation (family, friends, colleagues, groups etc);
- The desired period;
- The available time;
- The allocated budget.

The identification of the vacation destination involves different sources of information necessary to choose the touristic destinations; the most frequent are the tourism agencies, the acquaintances network, the specialized publications and the internet. The internet seems to be the most used source of information. The information from the internet can be found in travel forums or blogs, on the tourism agencies sites, on encyclopedia sites, on accommodation sites, on touristic information sites, on sites especially dedicated to some vacation destinations, mass – media publications sites, online vacation guides.

So, we can say that choosing the vacation destination is a dynamic, rational process where based on proper information we choose an action plan from a certain number of alternatives in order to obtain a specific result.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Studying different publications from the specialized literature and using as research method the survey, followed by data processing and analysis, the authors will try to identify factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations by tourists.

The survey was realized using the application provided by Google Docs and in order to complete it the respondents had to access the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1YcWktWz9xqv-WPfcNfjxGjwBssepvTp-EO2fNjKDFU/edit?usp=drive_web#

The survey has 9 questions divided in two sections (General information and Factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations by tourists). The first section, the general information, has 4 questions about the participants (gender, age, education level, income level). The second section tries to obtain information about the factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations by tourists. The 5 questions from this section are closed questions with a single answer (1, 2), closed questions with multiple answers (3) and open questions (4, 5). So, participants answered to the following questions:

1. How often you go on vacation during a year?
2. Which is the budget allocated for 2014 vacation?
3. Which are the sources of information you use in order to choose a tourism destination?
4. Which are the factors contributing to the choice of the tourism destination?
5. Which are the tourism destinations you prefer?

RESEARCH RESULTS

The survey was sent to different people from Timisoara in period 1st March 2014 – 31st March 2014. 255 people answered to the survey, 46% of the participants are female and 64% male. Related to the age of the participants 25% are younger than 30 years, 31% are aged between 31 and 40 years, 22% are aged between 41 and 50 years, 13% are aged between 51 and 60 years, and 9% are over 60 years (figure 1). Also, 36% graduated high school, 46% graduated university and 18% graduated post-university (figure 3). Considering the level of income the situation is as follows: 25% have a monthly income lower than 1500 lei, 43% have a monthly income between 1501 lei and 2500 lei, 19% have a monthly income between 2501 lei and 3500 lei, and 13% have a monthly income over 3500 lei.

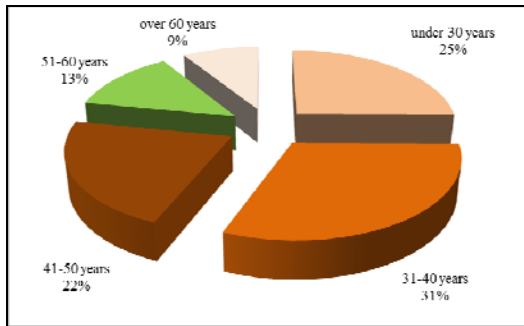


Figure 1 Structure of respondents by age group

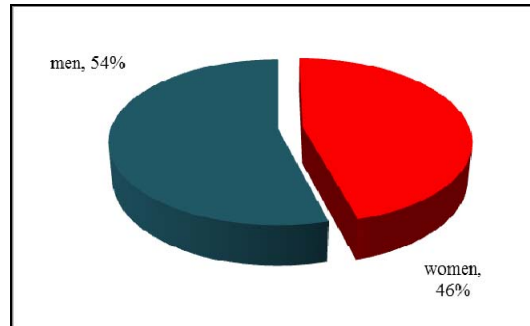


Figure 2 Structure of respondents by gender

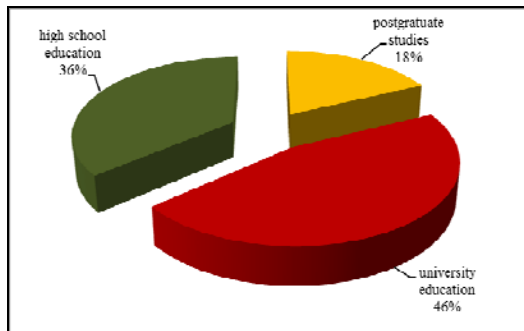


Figure 3 Structure of respondents by educational level

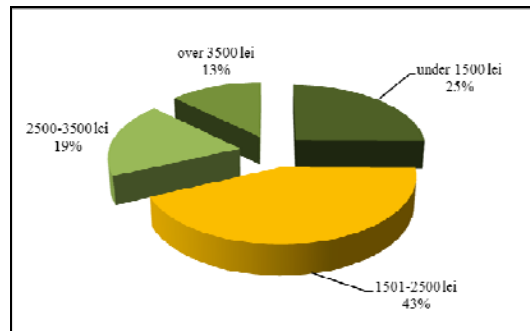


Figure 4 Structure of respondents by level of incomes

Question: “How often you go on vacation during a year?”, as we can notice in figure 5, 47% of the participants go on vacation once per year, 34% twice per year and 19% more than three times per year.

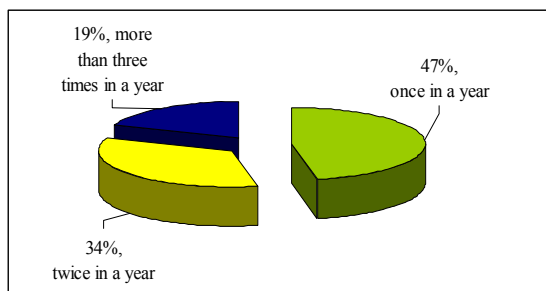


Figure 5 How often do you go on holiday?

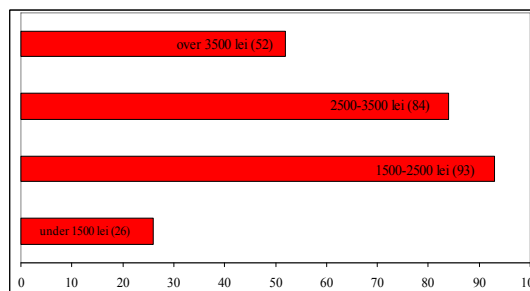


Figure 6 What is your budget in 2014 for holiday?

Related to the allocated budget for 2014 vacation, 26 of the participants allocate less than 1500 lei, 93 between 150 and 2500 lei, 84 between 2500 and 3500 lei and 52 more than 3500.

Asked which are the information sources used when choosing the touristic destination, the majority of the participants answered the internet (blogs, forums, travel sites), the tourism agencies' offers or friends opinion.

Question: Which are the factors contributing to the choice of the touristic destination? Most of the participants answered: price, quality of services, travel agencies offers, friends review, others (sites, specific publications).

The touristic destinations preferred by the majority of the participants are countries like: Greece, Turkey, Spain, Cyprus, Malta, but also Romania. All these destinations are appreciated by the tourists mainly during summer for the natural environment (sea, beach, and islands) and the quality of the services. Another category of tourists prefer countries like: Austria, Switzerland, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Nordic countries. These tourists are those who, when choosing the vacation destination, want to visit specific touristic objectives or to practice specific sports, and in the same time they take into account the offers from the tourism agencies. We should not neglect those tourists who prefer our country as tourism destination, generally these tourists organize their selves the vacation, search for accommodation in pensions or private houses and during the circuit they combine the relaxation with sightseeing.

CONCLUSIONS

The choice of the tourism destination is an important decision which, most of the time, is based on previous experience and serious information. Also, the choice of the tourism destination is a multi-criteria decision, because the tourists take into account several criteria when deciding where to spend the vacation.

The internet is the main source of information when identifying and deciding the vacation destination.

The main factors that contribute to the choice of tourism destinations identified by tourists are: price, quality of services, travel agencies offers, friends review, others (sites, specific publication).

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