A STUDY ON TOURIST ACCOMMODATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN TOURIST RESORTS LOCATED IN THE IALOMIŢA SUBCARPATHIANS

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Abstract: The Ialomiţa Subcarpathians form a high hillside area, which present complex economical-geographical characteristics which offers them a semblance of unity within the Curvature Subcarpathians. Given the complexity of the tourism potential of natural and anthropogenic phenomena that generate and sustain tourism in the region, this study presents the tourist accommodation infrastructure in tourist resorts Pucioasa, Câmpina and Breaza. The study analyzes the evolution of the number of tourist accommodation units, the dynamics of the tourist accommodation establishments, the index showing the variation in time of the existing tourist accommodation capacity, the indicator of the operating tourist accommodation capacity and the net index showing the usage of the operating tourist accommodation capacity.

It is noted that the tourist accommodation infrastructure is the most important element in tourism infrastructure, being a direct influence in both the intensity of tourist flow and the emergence of new forms of tourism. In the same time, the degree of development of tourist accommodation infrastructure is directly related to the size of the tourist demand, therefore contributing to the ranking of the tourist areas.

Keywords: development, indicators, accommodation units, degree of development

1. Introduction

In the Ialomiţa Subcarpathians, the towns of Pucioasa, Câmpina and Breaza were declared tourist resorts, out of which Pucioasa is ranked as a national tourist resort.

The tourism infrastructure is defined by the properties and means through which the touristic potential of a territory is exploited, referring to tourist accommodation establishments, recreation and leisure facilities, alimentation facilities and tourist access roads (Cocean, P., 2010). According to the National Statistics Institute, a tourist accommodation unit is any kind of building or establishment that provides tourists with permanent or seasonal accommodation and other facilities.

The classification of tourist accommodation units used in this study took into account the most recent rules, certifying that the following tourist accommodation establishments can function in Romania: hotels with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 star ratings; apartment hotels with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 star ratings; motels with 3, 2, 1 star ratings; hostels with 3, 2, 1 star ratings; villas with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 star ratings; bungalows with 3, 2, 1 star ratings; tourist cabins with 3, 2, 1 star ratings; campsites, holiday villages, tourist stops and camping cottages with 4, 3, 2, 1 star ratings; pensions and agro-touristic pensions having 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 star/daisy ratings; apartments or rooms for rent with 3, 2, 1 star ratings and accommodation units on river or sea vessels with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 star ratings (Ielenicz, M., Comănescu Laura, 2006).

The study is based on both field research and analysis of statistical data for the period 1999-2009, taken from the statistical institutions of Prahova and Dâmboviţa counties, targeting all the tourist accommodation establishments located in Pucioasa, Câmpina and Breaza.
2. The dynamics of the number and type of tourist accommodation units

Tourist accommodation establishments in tourist resorts located in the Ialomița Subcarpathians have evolved slowly, the first forms of accommodation being the villa (house for leisure and treatment), the tourist inn (now the motel) and lastly the hotel, all having modest comfort requirements in the beginning.

In the period 1999-2009 the number of tourist accommodation units greatly increased in the tourist resort Breaza, while indicating a reduced growth in Pucioasa and registering decline in the tourist resort Câmpina (Fig. 1).

Therefore, in the tourist resort Breaza the accommodation units’ number doubled in the period 1999-2004, afterwards increasing by 20% until 2009. In the tourist resort Pucioasa, the number of tourist accommodation establishments decreased by 25% in the first period, after which it increased slightly (10%) in the second period. In the tourist resort Câmpina there was a decrease of 30% in the number of tourist accommodation establishments in the period 1999-2009, due to the closure of some of the touristic pensions.

As for the type of tourist accommodation, it is noted that the predominant focus was towards hotels and motels in the first part of the studied time interval, whilst in the second part the focus was placed on touristic pensions (Fig. 2a, Fig. 2b).

Differences were observed between the three resorts, indicating that while in the Breaza resort the predominant type of tourist accommodation units is the touristic pension, in Pucioasa and Câmpina the hotel-type are the most common. Also, it is to be mentioned that in Breaza there are 4-star hotels, such as the ones in the Green Lake complex, whose tourists benefit from the existence of an internationally approved golf course. The other resorts do not have hotels with ratings higher than 3 stars, most of the tourists in Pucioasa being interested in spa-treatment based on the sulfurous mineral water springs.
Regarding the **dynamic number of places of touristic accommodation** it was found that this indicator has evolved differently from one resort to another, depending on several factors (Cândea Melinda, Simon Tamara, 2006). Thus, in the tourist resort Breaza the number of places of tourist accommodation has increased by 30% between 1999 and 2009, mainly due to the opening of more urban touristic pensions, while in the tourist resort Câmpina the number decreased by 32% due to the closure of several tourist inns (Fig. 3). In this period of time, the number of accommodation places has increased by 10% in Pucioasa, due to the expansion of the hotel and touristic villa accommodation type.

### 3. The analysis of the existing tourist accommodation capacity

The existing tourist accommodation capacity is the number of tourist accommodation places listed in the last act of reception, approval and classification of the tourist accommodation, excluding additional accommodation places that can be installed if necessary.

Overall, it has been observed that the existing accommodation capacity in tourist resorts in the Ialomița Subcarpathians had an upward trend in the period 2000-2009 (Fig. 4).

Analysis on each case shows that in the tourist resort Breaza the increase in existing accommodation capacity is continuous, starting from 2000 until 2009, this big percentage being attributed mostly to the occurrence of new hotels and urban touristic pensions.

In the Pucioasa tourist resort, the existing accommodation capacity increased by 13% between 2000 and 2005, after which it decreased by 3% until 2009. A downward trend of the existing accommodation capacity for the entire period analyzed is recorded in the tourist resort Câmpina, where the recorded percentage is 36%, due to the closure of some of the tourist inns.

Compared with the recorded data in the counties of Prahova and Dâmbovița, where existing accommodation capacity decreases in the same time-frame, tourist resorts in the Ialomița Subcarpathians register growth, mainly due to the opening of touristic pension types of accommodation.

Another important factor in the study of the infrastructure of accommodation is the **index of the variation in time regarding the existing tourist accommodation capacity**. It was calculated as the total number of accommodation accommodation places from the 1st year/the total number of accommodation accommodation places in the year 0 x 100 = x% (Neacșu, Bâltărețu, 2006).

This index shows totally different values for Prahova and Dâmbovița counties in the 2000-2009 period.
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timeframe. In Prahova county the values register growth from 93.98% to 94.46%, while in the Dâmbovița county these values decrease from 93.22% to 87.29%. The moderate increase in the Prahova County is due to the development of small-capacity accommodation units, but it is also taken into account the factor of instability in certain periods of time, in which decreases took place. In the Dâmbovița county, the index variation decrease in time of the existing accommodation capacity is explained by the major restructuration of the tourist market that resulted in the closure of some of the hotel-type units and some of the camps designed for large numbers of students.

In the tourist resorts of the Ialomita Subcarpathians, the index variation in time of the tourist accommodation capacity had a complex dynamic, from one tourist resort to another as well as from one period of time to another (Fig. 5). Thus, this index increased continuously in the tourist resort Breaza starting with the year 2001, when it was registered at 98.25% up to the year 2009, when the growth percentage is registered at 156.30%. The main reason for this growth is the high degree of attractiveness of the new hotels, caused by their high comfort standards and their convenient touristic offers. Compared to the Breaza tourist resort, in the tourist resort of Câmpina the index variation in time of the tourist accommodation capacity registers a big decline, namely from 98.27% in 2001 to 63.14% in 2009, the main cause being the closure of several student camps or motels which had a low level of attractiveness. In the tourist resort Pucioasa this index drops by 43.07% in the first part of the period considered (2004-2009) because of the time used in the remodeling of hotels. The decrease of this index in the tourist resort Pucioasa is also because of the poor state of county access roads, including the long periods of maintenance and modernization, which has made it difficult for the tourists to access the resort.

Another important indicator is the structure of the capacity of existing tourist accommodation by the type of units and number of spots of accommodation which was analyzed for 2000, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

In the Ialomita Subcarpathians region, the dominance of the hotel-type accommodations is observed, with a percentage of approx. 40% of all accommodation spots for all the years studied, except the year 2009, when the percentage falls below 40%, due to the increasing share of touristic pensions.

Compared with the Ialomita Subcarpathians region, in the tourist resort Breaza this indicator shows a higher percentage of touristic pension type units, having a growing number of accommodation spots. Thus, starting from the year 2000, the share of tourist
accommodation sites in touristic pensions increased from 38.26% to 49.66% in 2009. The share of hotels decreased from 22.61% to 17.56% in the same timeframe (Fig. 6).

In recent years the touristic pensions in the Breaza tourist resort have diversified their touristic offers by including equestrian tourism facilities, including horse riding courses and by organizing hiking trips in the surrounding areas, these offers leading to increased number of tourists.

The analysis of this indicator for the Câmpina tourist resort shows that in the period 2000-2009, the percentage of number of hotel accommodation places increased from 47.14% to 69.68%, as well as the percentage of motel type accommodation places increased from 6.29% in 2000 to 12.67% in 2009 (Fig. 7).

However, the percentage of other types of touristic establishments by number of accommodation places declined, especially because of the tourists being in transit in Câmpina, who preferred to opt for the comfort of hotels that generally offered affordable prices.

In the Pucioasa tourist resort, changes are noted in the structure of the capacity of touristic accommodation by unit types and number of spots, namely a decline in the share of the touristic villas, from 16.94% in 2000 to 4.05% in 2009, caused by the downturn of the spa treatment activities and the lack of other tourism offers (Fig. 8).

In the same timeframe, in the Pucioasa resort the share of the capacity of existing tourist accommodation registers growth in hotel units. This is because of the modernization works which now offer the tourists not only a higher level of comfort but also modern spa treatment facilities.

**4. The analysis of the operating tourist accommodation capacity**

The operating of tourist accommodation establishments capacity is the number of accommodation spots made available to tourists by the tourist accommodation units receiving tourists, taking into account the number of days these have been open, expressed in the number of accommodation places/days.

In the Ialomita Subcarpathians region the operating capacity of tourist accommodation establishments has shown a significant growth in 2000-2009, as a result of the rise in number of existing capacity of tourist accommodation, based on the local
efforts to increase the comfort in the existing units.

In the analyzed tourist resorts a varied evolution of this indicator is noted from one year to another, as well as from one tourist resort to another (Fig. 9).

Therefore, in both Breaza and Pucioasa tourist resorts, the capacity of operating tourist accommodation establishments grows continuously in the 2000-2009 timeframe. Also, it is to be mentioned that in this period of time the number of accommodation places/days is doubled in Breaza tourist resort.

The growth of the operating tourist accommodation establishments’ capacity appeared due to the following factors: there were several new tourist accommodation units opened and there was a lot of effort made by the local communities in order to reduce the seasonal aspect of the tourism.

This indicator experiences a fluctuant evolution in the Câmpina tourist resort, namely, in the 2000-2005 period it shows a slight growth, while in 2005-2009 it has an increased decline, as a result of the lessening of the tourist demand.

The analysis of the monthly values of the operating capacity of accommodation, made by comparing the values for 2006 and 2009, reveals major differences for the same tourist resort from one month to the other and for the same month in different years (Fig. 10).

Therefore, in the tourist resorts Breaza and Câmpina, the peak of the monthly tourist season of December-January grows slightly from 2006 to 2009, while the smallest values registered in February and September are almost constant (Fig. 11).

The big values of the operating capacity of tourist accommodation establishments in December-January in these tourist resorts is also explained by the convenience of winter sports practice on the Prahova Valley, favored also by the existence of school holidays in this timeframe (***, Geografia României, Vol. IV, 1992).

The monthly evolution of the operating capacity of tourist accommodation units in the Pucioasa tourist resort reveals the fact that the peak of monthly accommodation registered in July-August in 2006 is greatly attenuated in
2009. The study shows an almost constant monthly operating capacity of the accommodation establishments during the entire year. This is explained mainly by the type of practiced tourism by the majority of tourists, that is to say, spa treatment tourism (Fig. 12).

An important index studied for the resorts taken into consideration is the net index of the utilized operating capacity of tourist accommodation units, calculated as the ratio between the number of overnight stays and the operating capacity of accommodation.

This index reveals the degree of usage of tourist accommodation establishments that were open during a respective timeframe as a result of existing tourist demand.

In the tourist resorts of the Ialomita Subcarpathians, the net index of the utilized operating capacity of tourist accommodation units has the biggest values in 2009 for Pucioasa (61.81%), medium values for Câmpina (33.80%) and lower values for Breaza (14.66%). This is explained mainly by the varied tourist demand.

The analysis of the monthly values of the net index regarding the utilized operating capacity of tourist accommodation establishments for 2006-2009 indicates major fluctuations on the level of the studied tourist resorts, from one month to the other or when talking about the same month in different years.

The Breaza tourist resort has the biggest values of this indicator in July and August, this being the favorable season for hiking trips, equitation or other sport games offered by the tourist accommodation establishments (Fig. 13).

It is noted that even though important tourist units were built in recent years (hotels and tourist pensions), some of them having a high comfort level, the Câmpina tourist resort is unable to attract a larger number of tourists, mainly because of the lack of tourism programs or offers (Fig. 14).

The Câmpina tourist resort presents higher values for this indicator in autumn months such as October and November, with a percentage exceeding 50%. The lowest values are in January and February, when the percentage is as low as 25%. It is found that even though the resort has a favorable, good for leisure, mild climate, the tourist demand is modest due to the small number of recreational and public alimentation facilities (Teodoreanu Elena, 2002).
The biggest value for this indicator in the studied area is registered in the Pucioasa tourist resort, as a result of its spa treatment profile (Fig. 15). The values are bigger than 80% in July and August in all the analyzed period of time, and remain high during autumn and spring months, with percentages over 65%. The lowest values are recorded in December and January, period of time in which the potential tourists prefer to spend their time with the families, leaving the spa treatment for another period of the year.

5. Conclusions

The development of the tourist accommodation capacity in the studied tourist resorts has always been in direct relation with the tourist potential of the area in which it is situated.

It is established that the number of tourist accommodation establishments has grown in the studied timeframe and it has also diversified, especially in Breaza tourist resort. The existing capacity of tourist accommodation establishments, analyzed through the index of variation in time reveals decreasing values for Pucioasa and Câmpina resorts, while showing growth for the Breaza tourist resort. As for the indicator regarding the structure of existing capacity of accommodation establishments, a diversification of the tourist activities is noted through the emergence of new touristic pensions and villas.

The operating capacity of the tourist accommodation establishments shows a significant increase mainly due to the local effort to raise the comfort of the tourist accommodations. The analysis of the net index regarding the utilized operating capacity reveals big variations from one year to another as well as from one month to another for each tourist resort.

It is concluded that for the revitalization of tourist activities in tourist resorts, the most important factors are the development in the capacity of accommodation, the improvement of recreational facilities and the modernization of tourist access roads.

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