

## QUANTITATIVE MARKETING RESEARCH REGARDING THE PROMOTIONAL IMPACT ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONSUMERS OF TOURISTIC SERVICES IN THE COUNTY OF COVASNA

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of quantitative marketing research is to determine the attitudes and opinions of tourists who visit the Centre region regarding its touristic attractiveness and to identify the possibilities of attracting as many tourists as possible for a longer period of time. The touristic experience is the totality of the elements in which the tourist participated and came in contact with natural and anthropogenic resources, access, hospitality, technical and material basis, services.*

**Keywords:** *research, promotion, tourist, results.*

**JEL Classification:** *M31, M37, O30.*

### 1. Introduction. Methodological considerations regarding the quantitative marketing research

In evaluating the touristic attractiveness of a region, the following major components are taken into account (Câdea, Erdeli, Şimon, 2000): natural touristic resources, anthropogenic touristic resources, technical and material basis, services and hospitality. The quantitative research was realised on the basis of a random sample survey consisting of 30 questions. The structure of the questionnaire considered the principal and secondary objectives presented in Table no. 1.

The data collection took place between the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 2017 and 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, 2018. The questionnaires were applied by the receptionists of the tourist accommodation units.

**Table no. 1. Principal and secondary objectives of the quantitative marketing research**

Principal objectives	Secondary objectives
1. Determining the attitudes and opinions of tourists regarding the attractiveness of the Centre region	1.1. Determining the main reason for tourists visiting the Centre region
	1.2. Identifying attractions and forms of tourism that are considered the most representative for the Centre region by tourists
	1.3. Determining the attitudes of tourists regarding the local population, the staff working in tourism and the connection between quality - price.
	1.4. Determining the attitudes of tourists regarding the existing transport infrastructure and identifying proposals to improve it.
	1.5. Identifying tourists' opinions about the quality of different types of services in the Centre region.
	1.6. Determining the degree of satisfaction of tourists after the visiting the Centre region
2. Identifying tourists' expectations and preferences regarding the stay in the Centre region	2.1. Identifying the most popular accommodation units according to their degree of comfort.
	2.2. Determination of tourists' preferences regarding freedom of travel during a stay
	2.3. Identifying the reasons for dissatisfaction of tourists during the stay in the Centre region
	2.4. Identifying the average duration of the stay spent by foreign and Romanian tourists in the Centre region
3. Identifying the profile of the tourist who visits the Centre region	
4. Identifying the best ways to promote the Centre region	

Based on these objectives, the general and statistical assumptions were established. The general assumptions have the aim to establish some research directions. These hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- The majority of tourists consider the stay spent in the Centre region as a pleasant experience;
- The satisfaction of tourists is influenced by the quality of the services from which they have benefited;
- The main reason for dissatisfaction of the tourists who visit the Centre region is the transport infrastructure;
- The construction of the airport from Ghimbav as well as a motorway that links the Centre region to the main areas of the country are considered equally important for the tourist attractiveness of the region;
- Tinovul Mohoş and the spas are the most visited and representative attractions of the region;
- Most tourists are informed about their holiday destination on the Internet.

## 2. Choosing the method of sampling

In the first phase, the underlying variable of stratification was established which is the type of tourist accommodation unit. At the level of the Centre region, three main categories of tourist accommodation units were identified: hotels, pensions, villas and apartments. A second variable that was considered was the number of rooms in each type of tourist accommodation unit. Depending on the total number of rooms in each type of accommodation unit, the sample size was calculated.

**Table no. 2. The structure of the sample of each accommodation unit**

Tourist accommodation unit	Accommodation capacity in the county of Covasna (number of rooms)	Accommodation capacity in the county of Covasna (percentage)	Sub-sample size
Hotels	7874	49%	196
Pensions	6763	42%	102
Villas and apartments	1457	9%	86
Total	16094	100%	384

Source: Own data source taken from the National Institute of Statistics

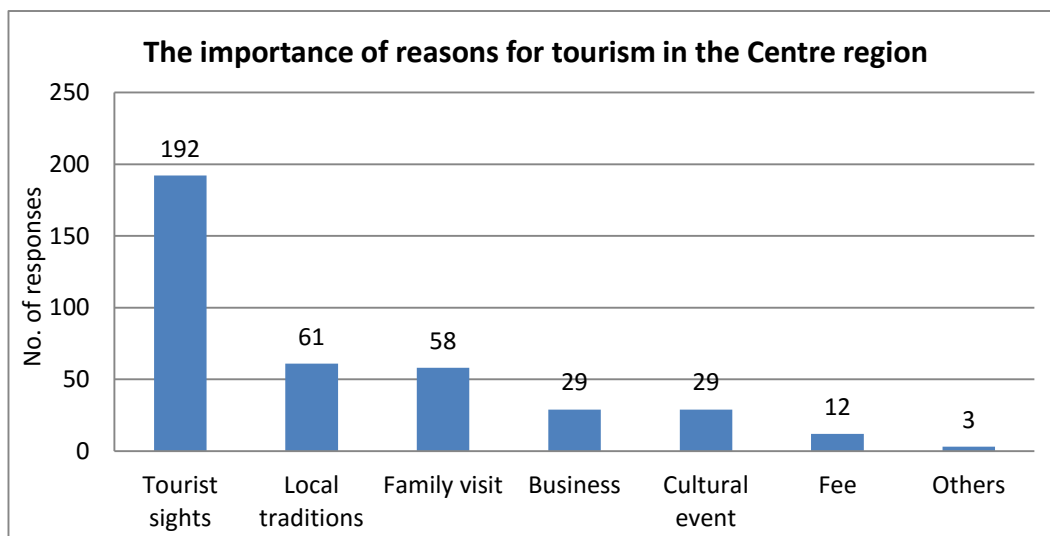
In the county of Covasna, there are accommodation units classified into different categories: from minimum comfort to superior comfort, namely accommodation units classified from 1 to 5 stars. Thus, two accommodation units in each category were randomly chosen.

## 3. Results of quantitative marketing research

Marketing research had the below results according to the objectives under consideration. Graphics and tables resulted from the analysis of the data obtained in the sample.

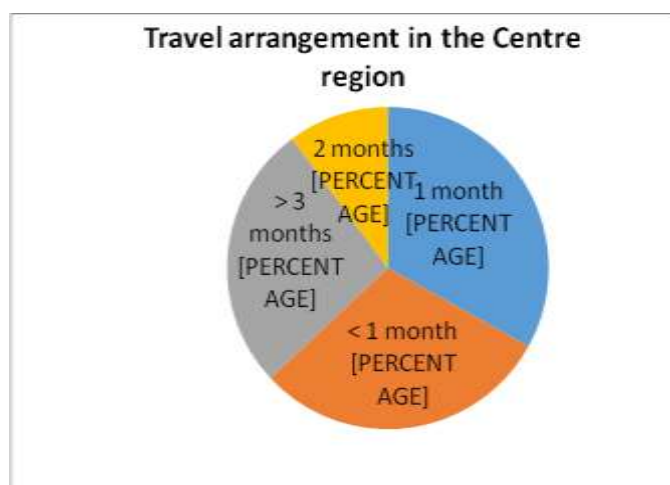
The first objective of the research is to determine the attitudes and opinions of the tourists regarding the attractiveness of the tourist destination, the Centre region.

**Figure no. 1. The importance of reason for tourism in the Centre region**



Visiting the tourist sights is the main reason for the tourist destinations in the Centre region. Figure no. 1 shows the reasons and expectations of tourists in descending order in the Centre region.

**Figure no. 2. Travel arrangement in the Centre region**



The planning of stay in the Centre region shows that 63% of the interviewed tourists plan their trip a month or less than a month before. The remaining 37% of respondents find it more important to plan the stay in the Centre region. It can be concluded that they reserve rooms for spa treatment in the Centre region, and a proportion of 27% more than three months before.

**Table no. 3 The frequency of looking for information**

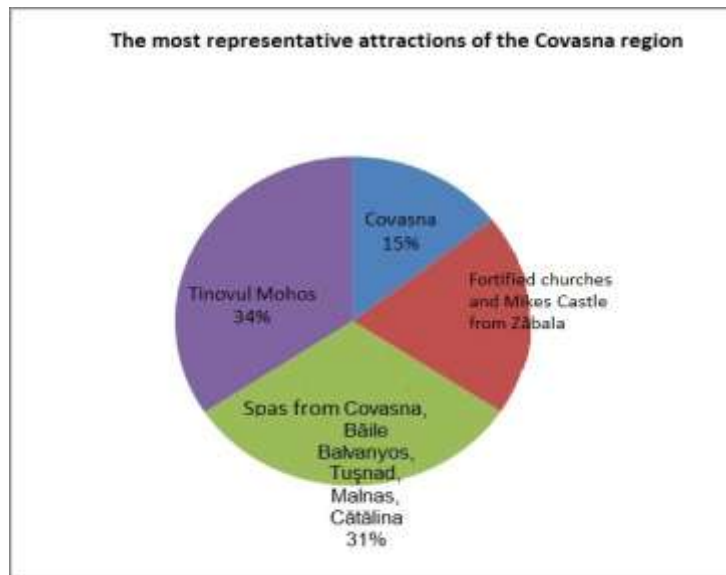
Modalities of information	Frequency					Total	Average
	Very rarely	Rarely	Nor rarely / nor often	Often	Very often		
	1	2	3	4	5		
Travel agencies	19.00%	16.00%	20.00%	<b>26.00%</b>	20.00%	100.00%	3.1
Internet	3.00%	5.00%	13.00%	27.00%	<b>52.00%</b>	100.00%	4.2
Family and friends	6.00%	11.00%	24.00%	<b>36.00%</b>	23.00%	100.00%	3.6
Total	9.00%	11.00%	19.00%	<b>29.00%</b>	<b>32.00%</b>	100.00%	3.6

Travel agencies are *often* (26%) and *very often* (20%) consulted, but the Internet is the most often used (52%). Family and friends are *often* consulted (36%). If the answers *often* and *very often* are considered, family and friends are consulted in a proportion of 59%, compared to 46% of the travel agencies at the same frequency. However, the Internet remains the solution which is used in a proportion of 79%, *often* and *very often*.

The averages obtained by evaluating the responses with scores from 1 to 5, given from *very rare* to *very often*, show that family and friends (average 3,6) have priority over agencies (3,1), but not over the Internet, the average of which is above 4, that is to say *often* and *very often*.

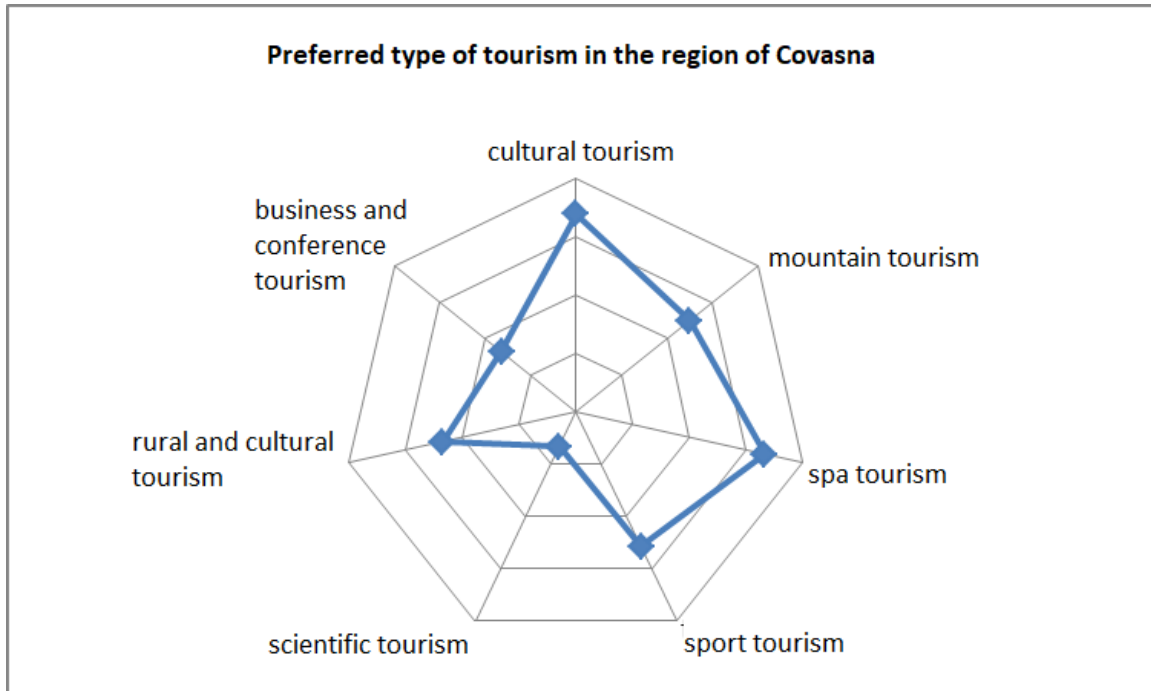
Generally, 61% of respondents are *often* and *very often* informed, regardless of the modalities of information, over the 20% who are *rarely* and *very rarely* informed, and 19% have an indifferent attitude. The average of 3.6 is placed over half the interval between *nor rarely / nor often* and *often*.

**Figure no. 4. The most representative attractions for the region of Covasna**



According to the analysis, the most representative tourist attraction is the *Tinovul Mohoş* with 34.33% of 100 scores, followed by *spas* with 31.42%, *fortified churches* 19.82% and *the town of Covasna* with 14.43%.

**Figure no. 5. The preferred type of tourism in the region of Covasna**



The most representative types of tourism in the Centre region are: cultural tourism, spa tourism, mountain tourism, sport tourism, rural and cultural tourism.

It can be noticed that the most respondents are satisfied with the quality of accommodation, mass, agreement and information in a proportion of 97%.

The average of 3.97 shows that the accommodation is ranked first, followed by mass of 3.95, information of 3.59 and agreement of 2.98.

According to the responses, the most common means of promotion was the *Internet* of 55%, followed by 17% of *media* and 9% of *promotional materials*.

The usefulness of *promotion on the Internet*, considering the responses *extremely useful* and *useful* - has the highest share of 72%, compared to only 7% of the respondents who consider that the promotion is *useless* and *completely useless*.

The averages obtained by evaluating the responses with scores from 1 to 5, granted from *extremely useful* to *completely useless*, show that promotion on the Internet (average 4,34) has priority over promotional materials (average 3,93) , organizing festivals (3,74), tourism fairs (3,78), advertising clips (3,53).

It can be noticed that the transport infrastructure is considered *nor high nor weak* by 36% of tourists and 31% consider it *high*, 18% consider that transport infrastructure is *poor* and 8% *very poor*. It can be noticed that the level of transport infrastructure is below the expectation of European standards, but there are opportunities for improvement.

In the survey, tourists were asked to categorize the issues related to improving the access to the region of Covasna by allocating 100 scores according to the importance. It was found that the importance of building an airport is in the first place, the construction of a motorway that links the region of Covasna to the main areas of the country is in the second place and the improvement of the rail infrastructure is in the third place.

It is noted that most tourists agree that the local population in the region of Covasna is hospitable with a *total agreement* of 33% and a *partial agreement* of 43%; together with the two types of agreement, 77% of the respondents agree that the area is hospitable, 75%

agree that the staff involved in tourism in the region of Covasna are well prepared and the tariffs of tourist services in the area reflect the quality in a proportion of 66%.

It can be noticed that respondents' complaints about the transport infrastructure are 50%, but most of them are satisfied with the quality of services and the staff.

The tourists expressed their opinion about the degree of their satisfaction - as a global indicator - after the stay in the region of Covasna. The -3 value represents a very high degree of dissatisfaction, and the value of 3 is a very high degree of satisfaction.

It is noted that most tourists have indicated positive values, which means that they had a pleasant tourist experience. 40% of the respondents chose value 2 as the indicator of global satisfaction after their visit to the Centre region. The maximum satisfaction level (3) was indicated by 39% of the respondents. Thus, about 80% of respondents said they were satisfied and very satisfied.

#### 4. Conclusions – The profile of the tourist who visits the Centre region

The results of the analysis of the identification questions are as follows:

- The majority of respondents (80%) are Romanian and 20% are foreigners.
- In terms of gender, most of the respondents are women (57%) and 47% are men.
- Most of the respondents said that the monthly net income of their family is higher than 2,001 lei, 26% of respondents would range it between 1,001-2,000 lei and 10% of them range it between 1,001-1,500 lei.
- The largest percentage of 32% is represented by tourists aged 36-45. The second largest percentages are represented by the 26-36 years old (27%) and 46-55 years old (26%), and the proportion of 18-25 years old (9%) is the lowest, tourists aged over 56 (7%).
- Most majority of the respondents said that they graduated from university, and 24% of tourists said they graduated from high school.

Most respondents prefer to travel *with friends*, 42% of them, 30% prefer to travel *with family*, 18% want to be accompanied by *colleagues* and 10% travels *alone*.

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