

THE ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISTS' PREFERENCES REGARDING ACCOMMODATION

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Abstract

Traveling is mandatory for everyone's life. Even though it is done for a long or short period of time, internal or international, it is a regular activity practiced worldwide. For this reason, the way every person chooses its journey, influences the entire tourism industry.

This research paper aims to find out the factors that determine tourists to choose a certain accommodation in which they spend their holiday, the characteristics it must have, the location where it must be, but also the price they are willing to pay. The results of the survey are based on the responses of 766 people, addressed to different age groups, different income levels and different occupation, through 14 representative questions. The revealed results are going to be analyzed individually, in order to create a clear image of the touristic preferences of the interlocutors.

Keywords: *tourists, preferences, accommodation, travel, economy, holiday*

1. The research methodology

For conducting research, methodology is the key factor in approaching the proposed theme. The methodology used in the present scientific approach considers the use of a complex of knowledge accumulated in order to obtain results and achieve the developed objectives. The survey was the main method of obtaining primary information, on the basis of which the scientific approach was carried out.

The survey tool, the questionnaire, contained 14 questions. The questions in the content of the survey, the answers to which generated primary data for the research, were both open ended and closed (dichotomous, with a single choice of answer). The survey was applied online during November 2020, over the course of 14 days, and the average time to complete it was 4 minutes.

2. The objectives of the research

Starting from the particularities of the tourist services, the study aims to analyze the preferences of tourists regarding accommodation.

The main purpose of this research paper is to reveal tourists' preferences regarding accommodation, as well as to analyze the factors that determine their decision.

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The objectives of the research were formulated in accordance with the proposed theme and taking into account the specific features of the field, of the existing specialized literature, as well as of the changes observed during other researches in the consumption behavior of the tourists.

Among the main objectives of the research can be listed: the factors that determine tourists to choose a certain lodging; the essential characteristics, facilities and services that are expected by the client; the proper location for an accommodation; the price every traveler is willing to pay per night; the correlation between the category of tourists and their choice.

3. The analyzing method

An important step in conducting the research, after the data collection stage, constituted the processing of the information obtained, which involved the systematization of data and processing from a statistical point of view.

The results of the survey are based on the responses of 766 people, containing 14 representative questions, belonging to different age groups, different income levels and different professions.

The revealed results are analyzed individually, in order to create a clear image of the touristic preferences and tastes of the interlocutors.

4. Presentation and data processing

The first questions concerned the proposed objectives, so that at the end the identification questions are left.

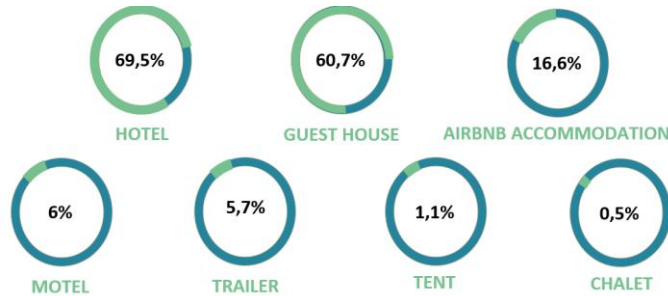
The survey started with the following question „**What kind of accommodation do you prefer?**”.

At this question, taking into consideration all the 766 responses, it can be observed that 532 people, which means 69,5% prefer hotels when they plan a holiday. This number reveals people's taste for a basic form of accommodation, which involves a sort of included service.

The second form of accommodation preferred by 397 (51,8%) of the respondents is the guest house. This represents a private house that it is rented entirely or individually by every client. More than a bedroom and a bathroom, it can offer a courtyard, a garden with fresh vegetables, a restaurant or even a self-service kitchen, parking and mostly important, common areas. It is ideal for small groups of friends, or pupil groups who need a big open space for socializing and entertainment.

The Airbnb concept is the third option chosen in the survey, by 127 people (16,6%). It shows that renting a flat or a house during a holiday is an alternative for many people, especially for families with more than one child. What makes people choose this kind of accommodation consists in reduced prices/night, private kitchen and intimacy, as well as a good location generally.

Figure 1: The preferences according to the typology of accommodations



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

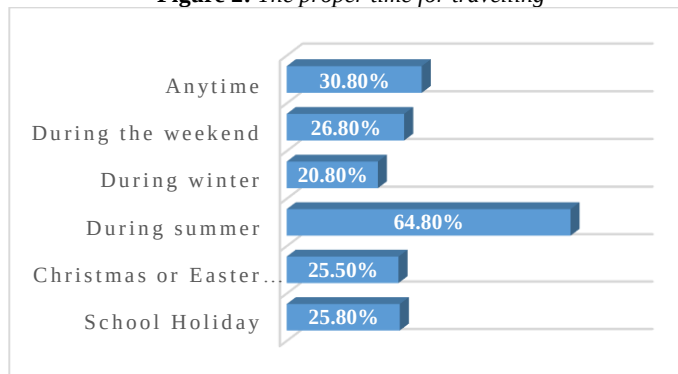
Motels are the first option for 46 people (6%), chosen by teenagers who do not want to spend a huge amount of money on lodging. It offers less facilities than a hotel, it has less stars and it is usually located at the outskirts of the city, being perfect for bikers and travelers.

Seeking freedom and independence, 44 people (5,7%) decide on spending their holiday on a trailer. Even if it is rented or owned, it offers a unique experience and enables the travelers to adapt their trip constantly. With basic facilities and reduced prices, it is a perfect choice for families and couples.

The second question concerned the preferred period of travel: “**When do you travel?**”

Taking into consideration the fact that more than 87% of the responders are students, it is obvious that, for them, the proper time for travelling is during school holidays. For this reason, 496 (64,8%) of people prefer to travel during summer and 159 (20,8%) in the winter.

Figure 2: The proper time for travelling



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

These tendencies are creating two major peak seasons in tourism, that generate huge spending and touristic fluctuation worldwide. But, even though, the economy is advantaged, there can be some inconveniences such as overcrowding and overbooking, that can create discomfort for both tourists and citizens. In general, this category of people opts for a minimum of 5 days in a destination and adjust their spending to their income.

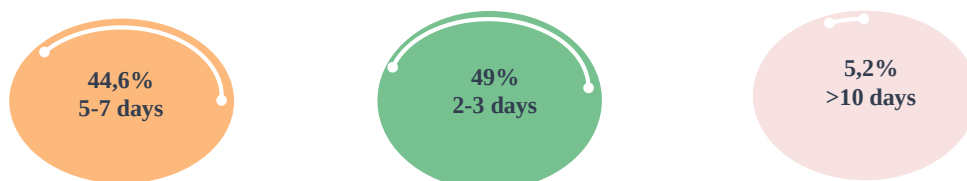
For those who do not have a very fixed schedule, traveling is an activity that can be done any time. 30,8% (236) of people choose to travel whenever they have some free time, not depending on the period or season.

It is well known that city breaks are increasingly preferred for people with less free time and because weekends are free for everyone, 205 (26,8%) respondents travel frequently at the end of the week. This alternative involves reduced prices, especially when the destination is close to the residence, and it is also a form of escaping from the ordinary life.

The third question concerned the average length of stay: **“What is the average of time spent on a holiday?”**.

In general, the average of time spent on a holiday is influenced by a couple of factors. The most important factor is the free time, which is usually influenced by the travelers' occupation. That is why, student and workers have less free time than retired people. Another aspect that influences the length of a trip is the financial one. The more money people have, the more they spend on a holiday. Analyzing the monthly income of the responders, it can be noticed that 51,8% of them earn less than 1.500 RON, which explains the time spent on a holiday that is between 2 and 3 days on average for 49% (375) of them.

Figure 3: Number of days for holiday



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

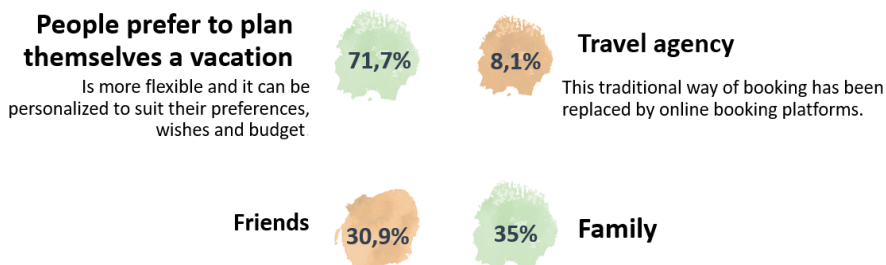
The other category, which values 44,6% (342) of total responses, prefers to spend between 5 and 7 days on a holiday.

There are some people who spend generally more than 10 days in a destination.

The fourth question considered how to book: **“Who plans your holiday?”**.

In the last few years, it has been observed a new tendency regarding the planning of a trip.

Figure 4. The planning of a trip



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

The traditional way of booking, which involves the collaboration with a travel agency, has been replaced significantly by online booking platforms. This tendency is

confirmed in the survey through the small percentage of the people who choose a travel agency to plan their holiday, only 8,1% (62).

The other 549 (71,7%) people prefer to plan themselves a vacation, including the flight and accommodation. This alternative is convenient for many of them because is more flexible, it can be personalized to suit their preferences, wishes and budget. Generally, online booking platforms such as Booking or Airbnb are used for accommodation, an Skyscanner or Esky for booking a flight.

Because more than 90% of the responders are under 25 years, they do not plan a trip by themselves, usually. Among them, 237(30,9%) appeal for friends' help and 268(35%) for family' help. In this situation are students who cannot book a holiday by their own and teenagers who delegate a friend or a family member to make the decision.

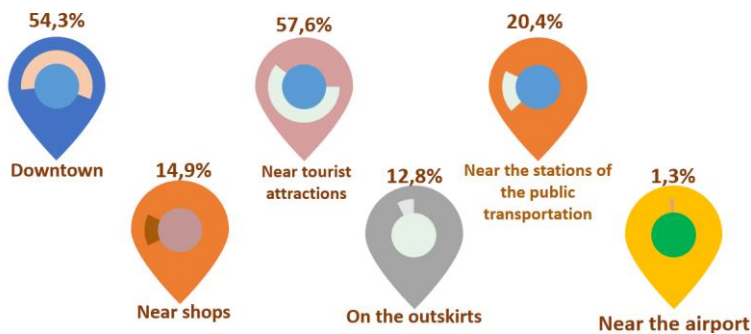
In identifying the preferences of tourists, especially for investors in the hotel industry, it is important to know the preferred locations of tourists in choosing accommodation, so the next question was: **“Where do you prefer to be the accommodation located?”**.

Location is one of the most important criteria when choosing an accommodation. Wherever the destination is, 57,6% (441) of tourists want to be as close as possible to the main tourist attractions of that area, so that they can enjoy their time at the highest level.

While travelling to a city, 54,3% (416) tourist prefer to be accommodated in the city center in order to feel the vibe of that area better, to be closer to the most important tourist attractions and to have all the facilities nearby. This phenomenon can create a sort of inconvenience to the residence as overcrowded can occur, especially in big cities. But, on the other hand, economy benefits significantly from the internal tourism.

The third preference of 20,4% (156) people regarding the location of the accommodation is near the airport. This option is ideal especially for those who have to make short stopovers, who want to pay less money or for stewards and pilots.

Figure 5: *The location for accommodation*



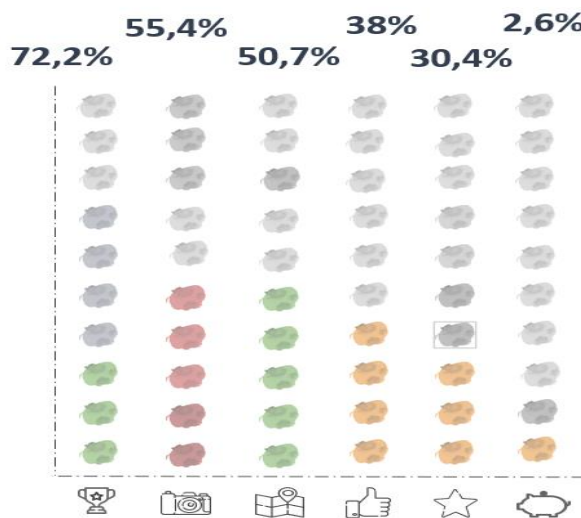
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

A form of tourism that is very popular especially among teenagers is shopping tourism. So that, 14,9% (114) of them want to be located near the malls and commercial centers.

Another category, which is less pretentious, has a limited budget or does not like the crowding, 12,8% prefers to stay at the outskirts of the city. 12,8% (98) on average opt for this.

Today, tourists are very well informed, they have many sources of information at hand. So, when making the reservation decision, they take into account several elements. The next question was to identify these criteria: **“Which criteria do you take into consideration when choosing an accommodation?”**

Figure 6: The channels of information for choosing of accommodation



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Nowadays, there is a vast variety of options regarding accommodation, especially on the internet. For this reason, tourists have to take a hard decision whenever they want to book a room. That is why, there are some important criterion that influence their choice.

The most relevant way of classification for 72,2% (553) of responders are the reviews. This feedback helps them to have more trust and to know what to expect from their fallowing accommodation. What assures them the concordance with the reality is the sincerity of the reviews and precision.

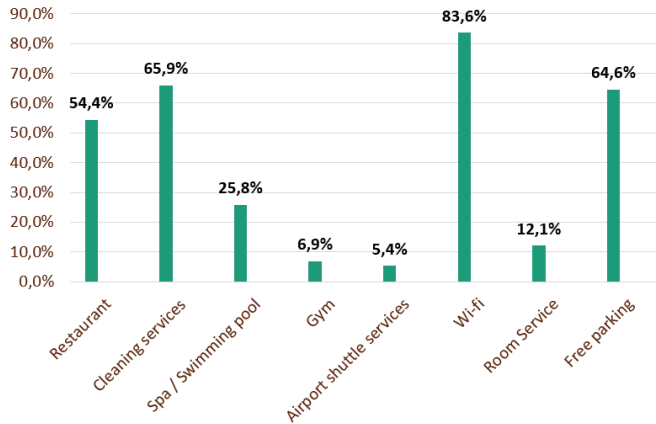
Another aspect that has a huge visual impact are photos. For 424 (55,4%) people questioned in the survey, this information influences their final decision. Even though it is a matter of taste and preferences, the visual aspect makes the difference many times.

30,4% (233) of responders are influenced by the number of stars awarded to an accommodation. It is like that because this classification enables them to know what to expect and to know which segment suites their budget. Moreover, stars classification is relevant for identifying the facilities and services that are associated with each category.

What minimum mandatory facilities do tourists look for in a hotel is a question that hoteliers are constantly asking themselves, so the next question was: **“Which are the mandatory facilities at an accommodation?”**

In an era of technology, where nothing can be done without the internet, for 640 of responders, Wi-Fi is a must for every accommodation they choose. It allows them to remain connected with their friends, to work remotely and to share their touristic impression through social media.

Figure 7: The mandatory facilities desired by tourists for accommodation



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Because every tourist wants to have all the comfort on a holiday, 504 people say that housekeeping services are very important. It is like this because no one wants to waste their travelling time with cleaning.

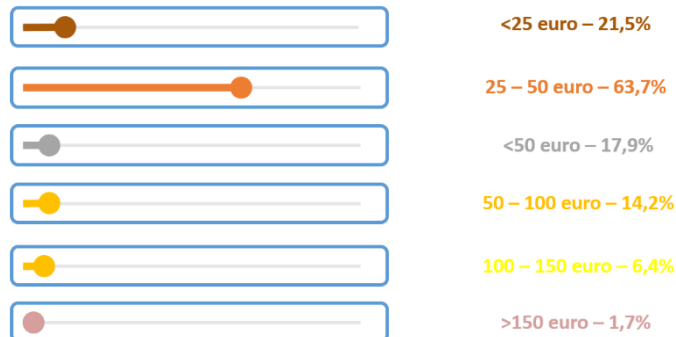
If choosing to travel by car or by bike, it is mandatory to have a free parking at the accommodation. This facility assures travelers that their vehicle is in no danger. For this reason, 495 of them prefer to choose an accommodation with parking included.

417 of the answers reveal the necessity of a restaurant at the lodging. It is more comfortable to choose the local restaurant whenever is necessary because it takes no time for the way and enables the clients to pay the check at the end of the stay, even though the prices can be a bit higher.

The eighth question concerned the financial availability for one night's accommodation: **“Which is the average price spent per night?”**.

Taking into consideration the fact that the majority of the responders are unemployed students, 63,7% of them are willing to pay between 25 and 50 euros per night. This is a median price which offers a minimum of services included in an accommodation.

Figure 8: The average price spent per night



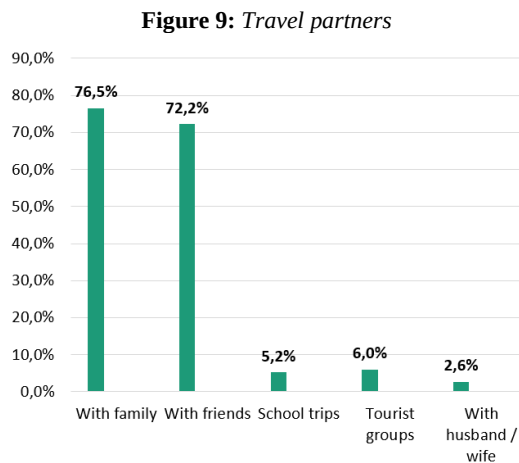
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Another 17,9% of people pay more than 50 euros per stay and 14,2% of them pay between 50 and 100 euros. These prices involve higher standards of lodging as well as a bigger number of facilities included such as spa and swimming pool.

There is another category of people who pay less than 25 euros per night because they do not put accent on spending a huge amount of money on accommodation.

The next question concerned the type/number of people with whom tourists prefer to travel: “**Who are you usually travelling?**”.

Travelling is about moments spent together with dear people, it is about experiences and memories. The possible answers were: family, friends, school trips, tourist groups or husband/ wife.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

For this reason, people do not usually go alone on a holiday. More than 76% of the responder travel with their family. At a young age, family trips are mostly common because children cannot go alone on a holiday, especially when they are under eighteen years old.

Generally, teenagers that are over eighteen years old become more independent and prefer to travel with their friends. In this category are 553 of the interlocutors that are searching entertainment and fun activities.

The preferred means of transport for the holiday is another very important element in achieving the profile of tourists, but also for improving the management of transport in a destination. Thus, in this survey the question related to the means of transport to or in the destination was not omitted, so the question was: “**What means of transport do you usually use?**”.

In nowadays society, there are no boundaries when talking about travelling. For this reason, transportation is an essential part of everyone’s life. What makes the difference between them is: comfort, rapidity and accessibility. The mostly preferred means of transport by the responders is the personal car. More than 65,8% of them prefer to travel by car as it is more accessible, comfortable and it offers a sort of freedom because the itinerary can be changed constantly.

Figure 10: Means of transport preferred by tourists

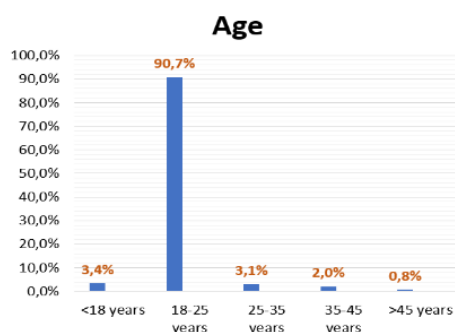
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Undoubtedly, the fastest way of transport is plane. It is essential for long distances in a short time and is preferred by 11,7% of interlocutors.

For internal trips, train is frequently chosen by teenagers without a driving license. Even though it is slower than the other alternatives, it is free for students. This is the reason that it is the first option for 16,7% of responders.

In order to identify the profile of the respondents to the survey, identification questions were asked. The first was related to the age of the respondents: “**How old are you?**”.

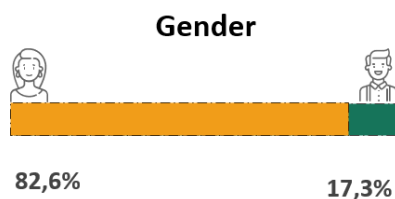
An average of 90% of responders are between eighteen and twenty-five years old.

Figure 11: The respondents age

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

In order to observe who travels more between women and men, the question of identification related to the sex of the respondents was also asked: “**What is your gender?**”.

Generally, women are responsible for making a reservation and planning a holiday. This tendency can be also noticed in the survey as more than 80% of responders are women.

Figure 12: The gender of respondents

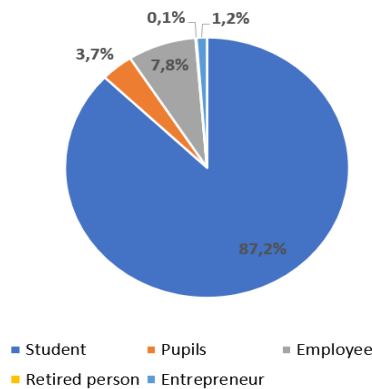
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

The professional category is also important to know in order to achieve a more complete profile of tourism consumers. So, the next question was: “**What is your profession?**”.

This survey has been shared especially on email or social media (facebook, whatsapp), in groups of teenagers, young adults (friends, colleagues) or adults.

For this reason, 87% of the responders are students. The majority of them are under eighteen years old and do not plan a trip by themselves and are unemployed. Only 7,8% of them are working so they can be independent.

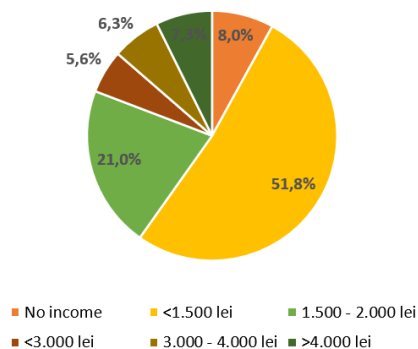
Figure 13: The occupation of respondents
Occupation



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Taking into account the correlation between the accommodation, the average length of stay, the expenses for one night of accommodation and the means of transport used, it is important to know the income of the respondents, our potential tourists. So, the fourteenth question was about income: “**What is your monthly income?**”.

Figure 14: The income of respondents
Monthly income



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the answers obtained in the survey

Because the majority of the interlocutors are unemployed, for 51,8% of them, the monthly income is under 1.500 lei. It reveals the fact that they depend on their parents, for this reason they cannot pay themselves an accommodation. In general, this category of people has not high preferences when choosing a lodging.

Only 7,3% of responders have an income more than 4.000 lei per month. They can be easily distinguished from the others through their higher preferences, tastes and facilities when choosing an accommodation.

5. The results of the survey

After analyzing every aspect related to this research paper, a conclusion has been reached. The results of the survey reveal an important connection between all the factors that contribute to a final decision made by tourists regarding accommodation.

It is shown that responders' favorite form of lodging is the hotel because it offers mandatory facilities such as free Wi-Fi and housekeeping services. Moreover, clients usually choose their accommodation units in relation to their monthly income and professional status.

Because the majority of the interlocutors are students, the best time for travelling is during summer, generally with friends or family. Frequently, they plan their trips by themselves, using online platforms, with a budget they are willing to pay being on average between 25 and 50 €/per night for a 2 to 3 days trip.

In conclusion, the purpose of this research has been achieved, each result being analyzed and interpreted in order to achieve the purpose of this survey.

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