

Tourism Heritage – An Important Dimension for Assessing/Shaping a City’s Image. Study Case: Bucharest

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Abstract. *In a world where, lately, on one hand, more destinations can be “replaced” one for the other and the tourists’ desire to find a mean of expressing their own identities (Morgan, Pritchard, 2004, pp. 50-80) is more and more evident, and, on the other hand, the image is gradually replacing the identity, leads to the fact that the authenticity of every single aspect that one community has needs to be assessed and reassessed from an economical and socio-cultural point of view.*

Keywords: tourism destination; tourism image; regional tourism brand; forms of tourism; destination marketing.

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Introduction

In general, the perception/formation of a city's image is a long and complex process that involves a set of different images/perceptions, namely: an *a priori* perception (a “mental construct within the space of knowledge” of an individual without him visiting the “physical” place), an *in situ* perception (on arrival at the destination while “experimenting” that place) and an *a posteriori* perception – after “consuming the experience” of the specific elements of the visited place (Di Marino, 2008, p. 4).

The *a priori* perception of a city is formed from different angles (geographical-territorial, urban-economic, demographic, cultural, etc.) which are specific to that person's social status, moral, culture or personality, as was the case, from ancient times, for some metropolitan cities (Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, etc.), “whose mere evocation awakened interest, aroused curiosity for those who have never been there”. In time, however, due to the changes they suffered, their image obviously changed as well. Some of them, usually those who “see their future for tourism”, always work to “reawaken the past who left a particular impression on everyone and a certain character as well” (adapted after Dragicevic-Šešić, Stoicov, 2002, pp. 60-65). Even if the past was not only full of... beauty and glory! ...

Destination marketing, which is an integral part of urban marketing if that city (place) wants to become a successful tourism destination, is given a central place; its starting point is represented by the inventory of its “tourism heritage” (an important component being its cultural heritage) and its perception by different market segments, starting with its direct beneficiaris – the inhabitants (whether permanent and/or casual).

Methodological framework

The perception of a tourism destination, with its specific forms of tourism (cultural, historical, business, leisure etc.), is important for the marketer in order to shape its image, thus necessary for developing a marketing/urban development strategy, with the purpose to provide appropriate tourism products in accordance with consumers' demands and desires, caused/determined among other things by their socio-cultural identity (hence, the need for a permanent investigation on various categories and market segments). The undertaken research aimed to identify main forms of tourism, that respondents from different regions of the country – young people aged 20 to 24, current and potential tourists – can associate to Bucharest.

In October-December 2010 – January 2011, a statistical survey was conducted within several Universities from Romania (Bucharest, Braşov, Craiova, Sibiu, etc.). The main objectives of the research were:

- a) to identify the predominant form of tourism for Bucharest;
- b) to identify the representative form of tourism for Bucharest, taking into account the region of origin of the respondents;
- c) to highlight the tourism potential (natural and anthropic) of Bucharest;
- d) to identify some representative tourism attractions that may contribute to the image of the tourism destination.

The sampling of the statistical survey was represented by 1.887 young people, aged between 20 and 24 years, persons with ongoing studies. In terms of age category and territorial distribution for Romania, according to the methodology established in the speciality literature, the sample is representative.

The method used was the statistical survey and the instrument was the semistructured written questionnaire completed by the respondent.

Research results

According to the classification of the forms of tourism proposed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO/UNO) in 1979, which starts from the reasons guiding the choice of tourism destination (business and professional tourism, cultural tourism, leisure tourism, visiting friends and relatives and other forms of tourism), respondents were able to select the main form of tourism prevailing in that region.

When it comes to the repartition of the tourism forms for Bucharest, the results are as follows: 75.2% of respondents considered *business and professional tourism* to be representative for the country's capital, 8.4% opted for *cultural tourism*, 7.9% chose the form of tourism *visiting friends and relatives*, 5.6% opted for leisure tourism, while 2.9% of respondents chose *other forms of tourism* (Figure 1).

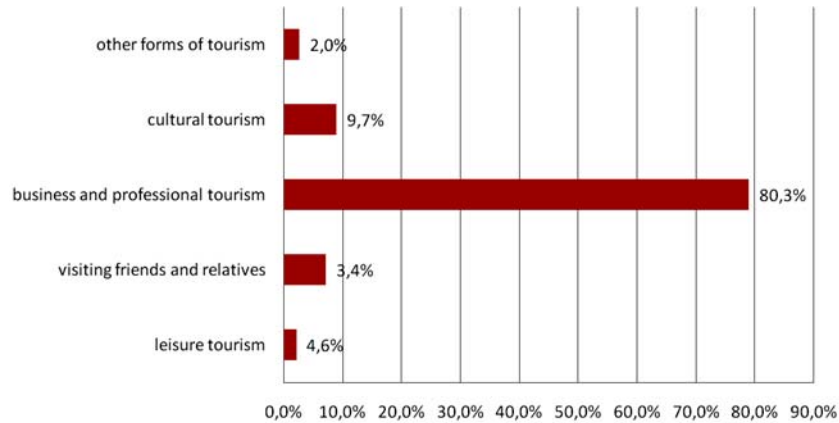


Figure 1. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest

It is notable, after taking into account the respondents' region of origin, that *business and professional tourism* is constantly top-ranked as the main form of tourism for the city of Bucharest, which is frequently followed by *cultural tourism*. So, the situation is as follows (Table 1):

1) Bucharest as region of origin (Figure 2):

- 82.5% of the respondents chose the *business and professional tourism* as the representative tourism form for the capital city;
- 10.3% chose *cultural tourism*;
- 3.0% opted for the form of tourism visiting friends and relatives;
- 2.7% opted for the leisure tourism;
- 1.5% of the respondents chose other forms of tourism.

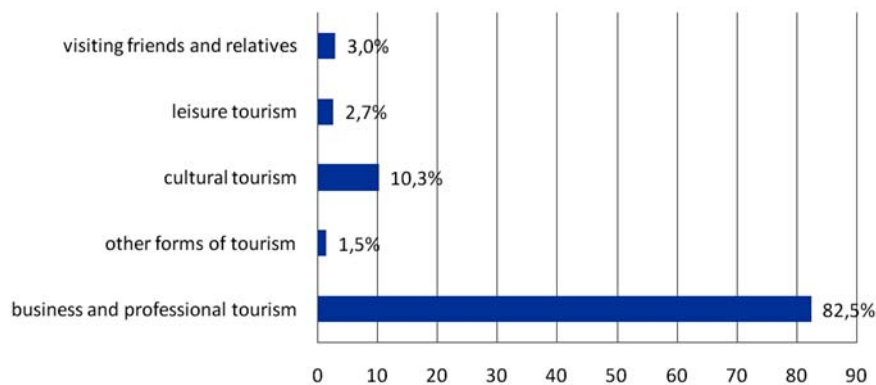


Figure 2. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Bucharest

- 2) Muntenia region of origin, except Bucharest (Figure 3):
- 79.0% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative for Bucharest;
 - 8.8% opted for *cultural tourism*;
 - 5.7% chose leisure tourism;
 - 5.0% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
 - 1.5% of respondents – other forms of tourism.

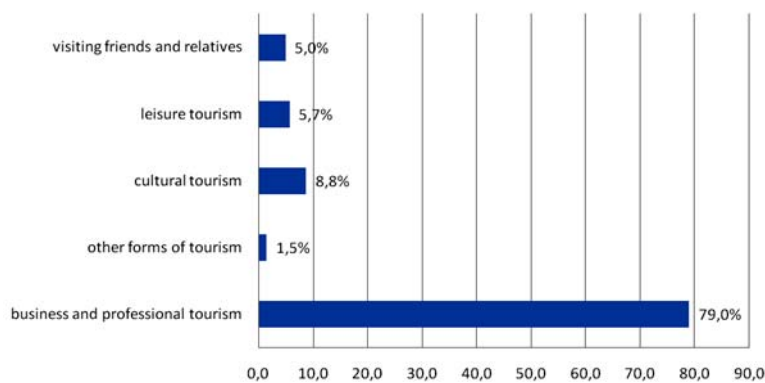


Figure 3. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest.
Respondents' region of origin: Muntenia (except Bucharest)

- 3) Oltenia region of origin (Figure 4):
- 57.2% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
 - 23.5% opted for *visiting friends and relatives*;
 - 9.1% chose leisure tourism;
 - 8.4% opted for other forms of tourism;
 - 1.8% of respondents – cultural tourism.

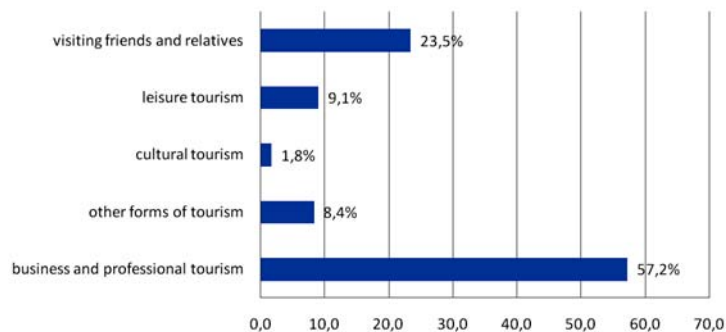


Figure 4. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest.
Respondents' region of origin: Oltenia

4) Transylvania region of origin (Figure 5):

- 83.1% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
- 7.1% chose *cultural tourism*;
- 4.2% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 2.8% opted for *visiting friends and relatives*;
- 2.8% of respondents – other forms of tourism.

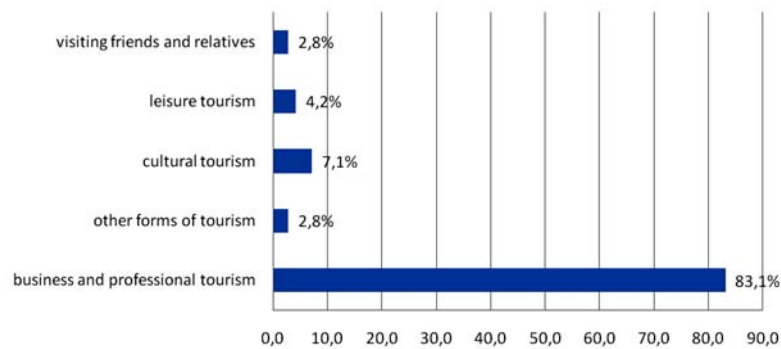


Figure 5. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Transylvania

5) Banat-Crișana region of origin (Figure 6):

- 57.3% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
- 20.2% chose *cultural tourism*;
- 12.4% opted for *visiting friends and relatives*;
- 7.9 chose *leisure tourism*;
- 2.2% of respondents – other forms of tourism.

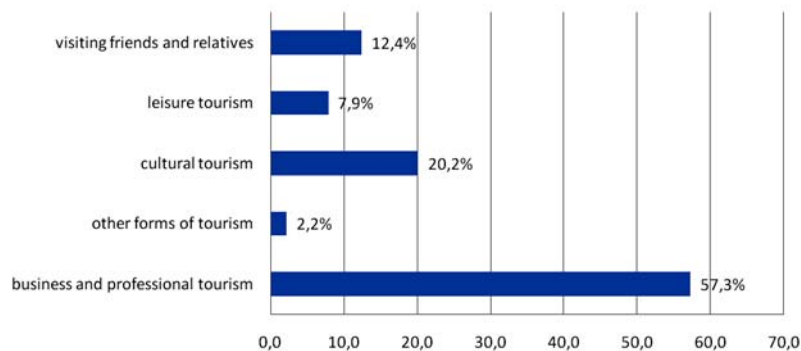


Figure 6. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Banat-Crișana

- 6) Moldavia and Maramureş region of origin (Figure 7):
- 76.4% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
 - 12.3% chose *cultural tourism*;
 - 6.6% opted for leisure tourism;
 - 2.8% chose other forms of tourism;
 - 1.9% of respondents opted for visiting friends and relatives.

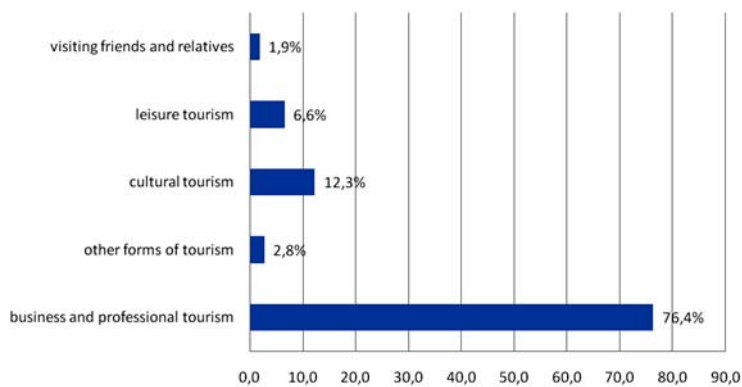


Figure 7. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Moldavia and Maramureş

- 7) Bucovina region of origin (Figure 8):
- 67.7% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
 - 14.7% chose *cultural tourism*;
 - 8.8% opted for other forms of tourism;
 - 5.9% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
 - 2.9% of respondents – leisure tourism.

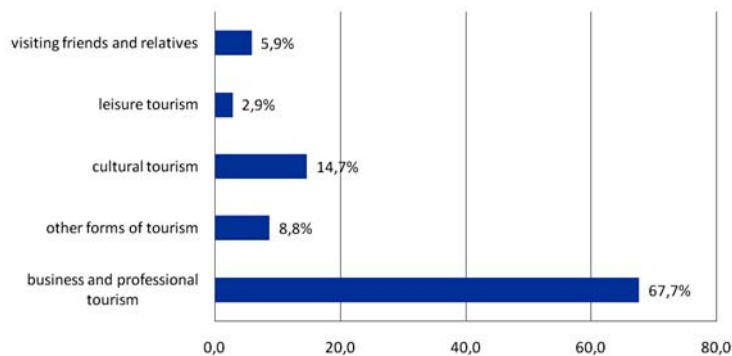


Figure 9. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Bucovina

8) Dobrogea region of origin (Figure 9):

- 73.8% of respondents chose *business and professional tourism* as representative form of tourism for Bucharest;
- 11.5% chose *cultural tourism*;
- 6,5% chose leisure tourism;
- 4,9% chose other forms of tourism;
- 3,3% of respondents opted for visiting friends and relatives.

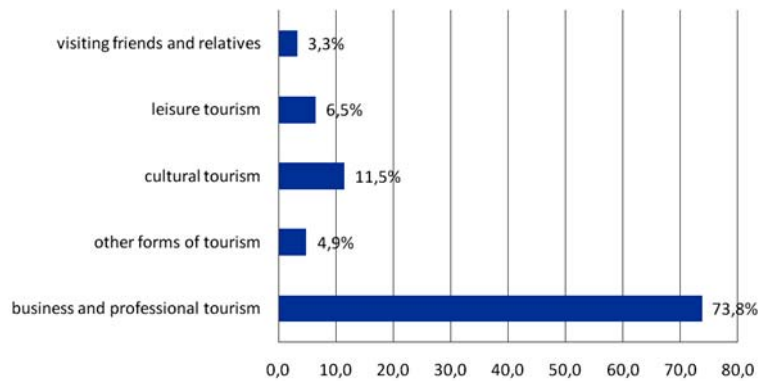


Figure 9. The distribution of the forms of tourism for Bucharest. Respondents' region of origin: Dobrogea

Table 1

The distribution of the responses by forms of tourism and by region of origin of the respondents

Forms of tourism \ Respondents' region of origin	(%)				
	Business and professional tourism	Other forms of tourism	Cultural tourism	Leisure tourism	Visiting friends and relatives
Bucharest	82.5	1.5	10.3	2.7	3.0
Muntenia (except București)	79.0	1.5	8.8	5.7	5.0
Oltenia	57.2	8.4	1.8	9.1	23.5
Transylvania	83.1	2.8	7.1	4.2	2.8
Banat-Crișana	57.3	2.2	20.2	7.9	12.4
Moldavia and Maramureș	76.4	2.8	12.3	6.6	1.9
Bucovina	67.7	8.8	14.7	2.9	5.9
Dobrogea	73.8	4.9	11.5	6.5	3.3

The respondents' option for *business and professional tourism*, as predominant form of tourism for the capital city, can be explained mainly by the presence of numerous (national and international) prestigious organizations, as a result of a good infrastructure (especially the existence of two airports and

a rail node), but also due to the fact that the existent university environment offers highly trained workforce in various fields.

Associations of natural and anthropic resources that are associated to Bucharest are presented, by the order of importance, in Figure 10.

A. NATURAL POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>hydrography</i> : Dâmbovița River, Herăstrău Lake	0,2
B. ANTHROPIC POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>historical traces and art monuments</i> : Palace of the Parliament, Arch of Triumph, Cotroceni Palace, Șuțu Palace, Curtea Veche, Ghika Palace, Victoria Palace, Casa Scânteii (The House of the Free Press), etc.	29.7
<i>important areas of the city</i> : historical center (Lipscani)	2.7
<i>museums</i> : Village Museum, „Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, Museum of the Romanian Peasant, National Museum of Romanian History, The National Museum of Art of Romania, National Museum of Contemporary Art, National Geology Museum, „King Ferdinand I” National Military Museum, „George Enescu” Museum, „Prof. Ing. Dimitrie Leonida” Technical Museum, etc.	12.0
<i>cultural – artistic institutions</i> : Romanian Athenaeum, Romanian National Opera, theatres (National Theatre Bucharest, Țândărică Theatre, „Ion Dacian” National Operetta Theatre), Palace Hall, Romanian Patriarchal Cathedral from Bucharest, monasteries (Radu-Vodă Monastery), churches (Sf. Anton church/St. Antons’s church, Sf. Gheorghe church/St. George’s Church), Romanian Cultural Institute, Globus Circle, art galleries, cinemas, etc.	5.5
<i>cultural – artistic events</i> : fairs and exhibitions, conferences, concerts, festivals, International Festival „George Enescu”, Tuborg Green Fest, etc.	2.1
<i>contemporary constructions</i> : National Bank of Romania, Palace of Justice, Romexpo, Botanical Garden, Zoological Garden, shopping centers (malls), business centers, C.E.C. Palace, Romanian Commodities Stock Exchange, Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, university center (Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Polytechnic University of Bucharest, University of Bucharest), parks (Herăstrău Park, Cișmigiu Park, Carol Park, Tineretului Park), lux hotels (Intercontinental, J.W. Marriot, Howard Johnson, Pullman, Radisson, Hilton, Rin Grand Hotel, Capșa), restaurants, Casa Oamenilor de Știință, Hanul lui Manuc, subway, airports, embassies, bars, etc.	20.5
<i>economic units</i> : numerous (national and international) prestigious organizations, factories.	3.2
C. MISCELLANEOUS	% of respondents
<i>personalities</i> : Nicolae Ceaușescu, Ion Mincu.	0,1%
<i>other associated words</i> : capital city, metropolis, crowd, agitation, pollution, Little Paris, people (inhospitable, gloomy, depressed), affiliation (home, grandparents, family), opportunities, fun, traffic, modernization, (economic) development, etc.	24,0%

Source: adapted after Minciu, R. (2001). *Economia turismului*, Ed. Uranus, p. 161

Figure 10. “Tourism heritage” of Bucharest

Bucharest enjoys a rich and diverse cultural offer, the respondents frequently stating the following attractions (Table 2):

Table 2

Top 10 attractions of Bucharest

No.	Tourist attractions in Bucharest	Associations from all answers (%)
1	Palace of the Parliament	24.9
2	Historical Center of the City (Lipscani district)	2.6
3	Village Museum	2.5
4	Arch of Triumph	2.1
5	Romanian Athenaeum	2.0
6	„Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History	1.9
7	Museum of the Romanian Peasant	1.9
8	Herăstrău Park	1.5
9	National Museum of the Romanian History	1.3
10	Cotroceni Palace	0.9

The results presented in the table above suggest that respondents have superficial knowledge of Bucharest’s tourism heritage, although these tourist attractions organically fit. Thus, the most frequent responses show that the Palace of the Parliament is leading compared with the following by over 20% (which was promoted by three characteristics, namely, the largest office building for civil use, the most expensive and the heaviest building in the world). Top 10 attractions include the Historical Center, the Village Museum and the Arch of Triumph, etc., the last being Cotroceni Palace.

In order to sustain a proper tourism development of the Bucharest city, beside its people (personalities or ordinary citizens) and tourist attractions (natural and anthropic), the infrastructure has also an important role, but if it is inadequate or missing the tourist may choose other tourism destination.

Research limitations

Without claiming that the present research by its results would reflect a complete image of Bucharest, it can be viewed as a starting point for a future research, a permanent one, more detailed, on the one hand, and by covering more market segments (with different ages and education levels) on the other hand, thus providing the basis for the “architecture” of a successful brand.

Conclusions

The results show that, in general, the two dominant forms of tourism, located on top regardless of the region from which respondents come from, business and cultural tourism, can influence each other, and from this perspective, Bucharest can be an attractive European city, since it has an “old” identity and rich tourism heritage, its only problem being that, as our great historian Nicolae Iorga said, “we live in a town that we do not understand and therefore we do not care for and often develop it in ways that should remain forever foreign to us, thus ruining, helped by our additions and changes, a character that, despite many shortages and slatternlinesses, was preferred to in the past by foreign visitors”. (Iorga, 2008, p. 5)

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