

Transylvania – Romanian Tourism Micro-destination*

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Abstract. *Although nowadays there are many controversies regarding the three regionalization dimensions (the positive-scientific regionalization, the symbolic- informal regionalization and the normative-formal regionalization) in terms of the modification of the third, due to the norms and principles of the accedence to the European Union and due to the access to the structural funds, the symbolic-informal regionalization (“produced in the collective mental of the individual and group self-identification, of current practices and that includes the sphere of the culture (...) being not only a factor, but also a result of the social construction” (Benedict, 2000, p. 47)) remains in the same time a supporting element in the development of the regional brand. Thus, the region of Transylvania, in accordance with the results of the conducted research, entirely corresponds with the definition that Passy (2001, p. 16) assigned to the region, namely “on the one hand, a social construction – created by economic, politic, cultural and administrative discourses and practices – but, on the other hand, it might become a power center”.*

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

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Introduction

Considered to be until now spatial organization units of the combination between positive-scientific regionalization, the symbolic-informal regionalization and in the same time of the normative-formal regionalization, the eight units of the country (Muntenia, Oltenia, Banat-Crișana, Maramureș, Transylvania, Bucovina, Moldavia, Dobrogea) benefit to the same extent from a very attractive tourism potential, in which different forms of tourism can be practiced.

The micro-destination of Transylvania covers the central part of Romania, namely the intra-Carpathian region bordered on the South by the chain of the Southern Carpathians, on the East by Moldavia through the Eastern Carpathians, on the West by the Western Carpathians (Apuseni Mountains) that separate it from Banat-Crișana and on the North by the region of Maramureș. From geographically point of view it is a high plateau with heights that not exceed 500 meters, being irrigated by the Mureș and Someș rivers, tributaries to the Tisa River, and by the Olt River, tributary to the Danube River. Regarding the administrative-territorial division, the region covers 10 counties: Alba, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Mureș, Sălaj and Sibiu. Its most important cities are Cluj-Napoca, Alba-Iulia, Brașov, Sibiu, Deva, Târgu Mureș, well-known both as cultural and tourism centers and as strong industrial centers. The tourist attractions of the region are remarkable, such as the Reunification Cathedral from Alba-Iulia, the Bran Castle, the Black Church from Brașov, the Hunyad Castle from Hunedoara, the Medieval Fortress of Sighișoara or the pre-roman capital of Dacia from Sarmizegetusa Regia.

Operational framework

The research conducted in October-December 2010 – January 2011 on a sample of 1,887 young people aged 20-24 years, with ongoing studies, aimed to identify the extent to which the perceptions of the residents coming from different Romanian regions related to the micro-destination of Transylvania helps in the development of the identity within the elaboration process of the destination marketing strategy.

According to the classification of the forms of tourism proposed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO/UNO) in 1979, which takes into account the reasons guiding the choice of tourism destination (business and professional tourism, medical spa tourism, cultural tourism, leisure tourism, visiting friends

and relatives and other forms of tourism), respondents could choose the main form of tourism practiced within the region of Transylvania.

Regarding the distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania, the results are as follows: 53.8% of the respondents considered the *leisure tourism* as being representative for this region, 24.2% opted for *cultural tourism*, 9.0% chose *other forms of tourism*, 6.7% opted for *medical spa tourism*, 4.3% chose *visiting friends and relatives*, while 2.0% of the respondents opted for *business and professional tourism* (Figure 1).

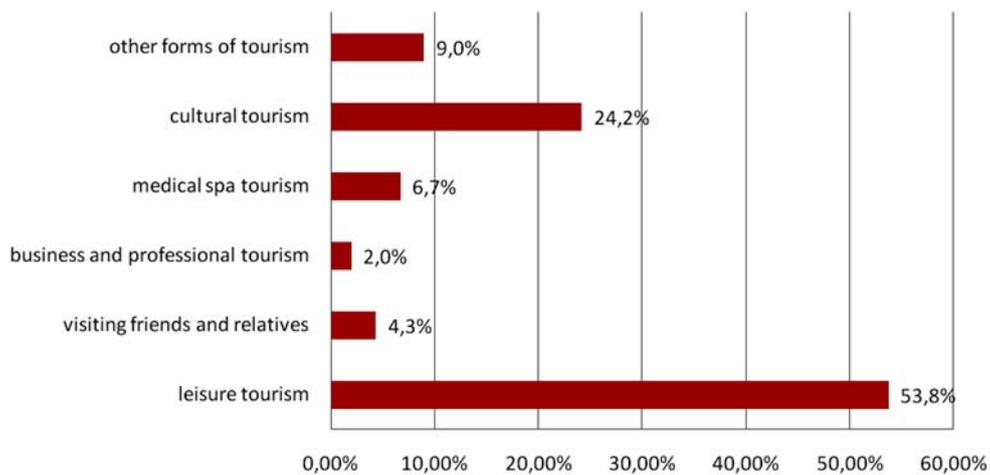


Figure 1. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania

Taking into consideration the regions of origin of the respondents, it can be observed that the *leisure tourism* constantly holds the first position as predominant form of tourism for this historical region and it is frequently followed by cultural tourism. The last place belongs in general to the business and professional tourism. Regarding the established regional structure, the situation is as follows (Table 1):

- 1) Muntenia as region of origin (Figure 2):
 - 53.6% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
 - 27.7% opted for *cultural tourism*;

- 8.5% chose other forms of tourism;
- 5.4% opted for medical spa tourism;
- 2.5% chose the business and professional tourism;
- 2.3% of the respondents – visiting friends and relatives.

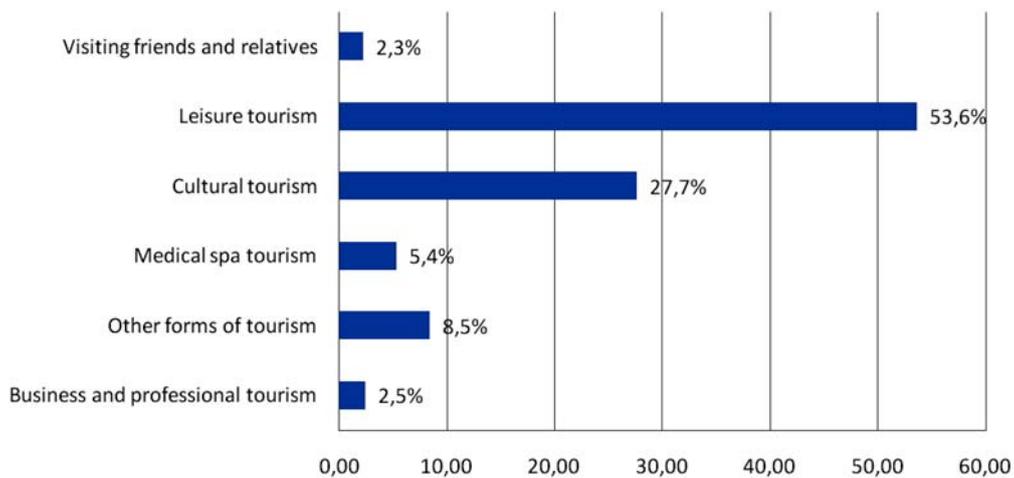


Figure 2. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Muntenia

2) Oltenia as region of origin (Figure 3):

- 52.2% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
- 14.7% opted for *cultural tourism*;
- 13.4% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 11.5% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 5.7% chose medical spa tourism;
- 2.5% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

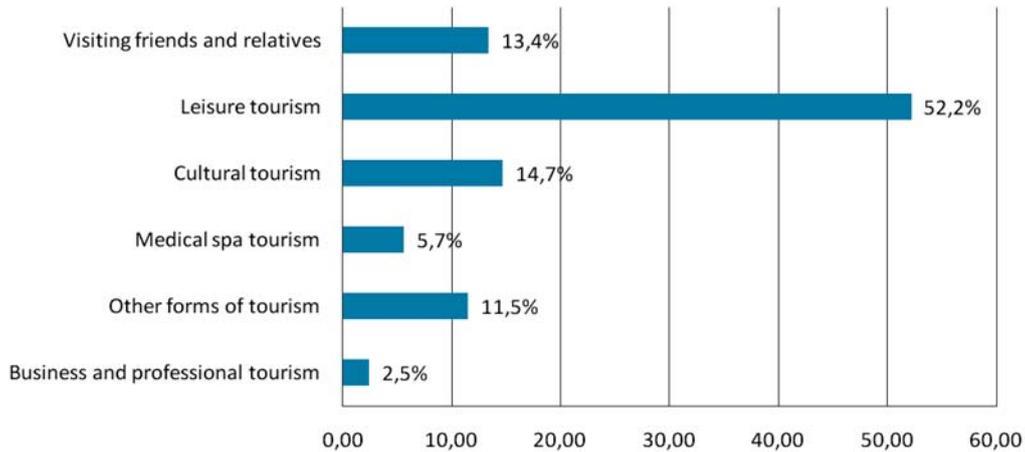


Figure 3. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Oltenia

3) Banat-Crișana as region of origin (Figure 4):

- 51.5% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
- 18.8% opted for *cultural tourism*;
- 11.9% chose medical spa tourism;
- 8.9% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 5.9% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 3.0% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

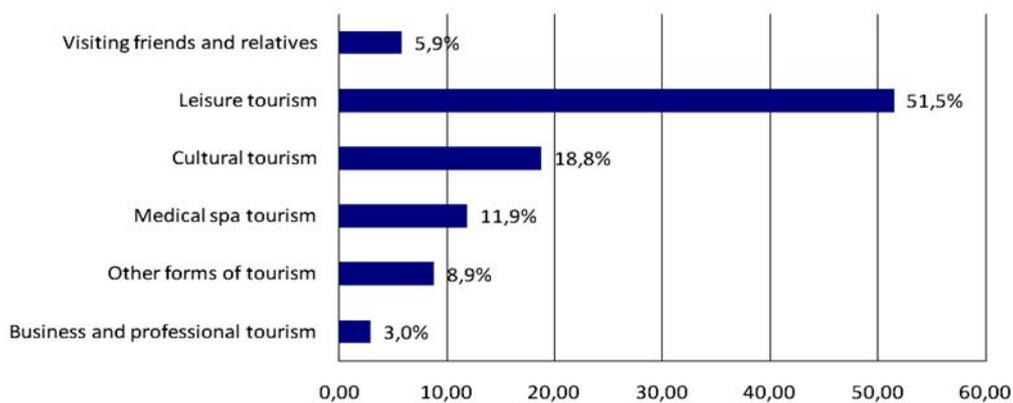


Figure 4. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Banat-Crișana

4) Transylvania as region of origin (Figure 5):

- 51.4% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for their region of origin;
- 15.6% opted for *cultural tourism*;
- 12.8% chose medical spa tourism;
- 10.1% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 7.3% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 2.8% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

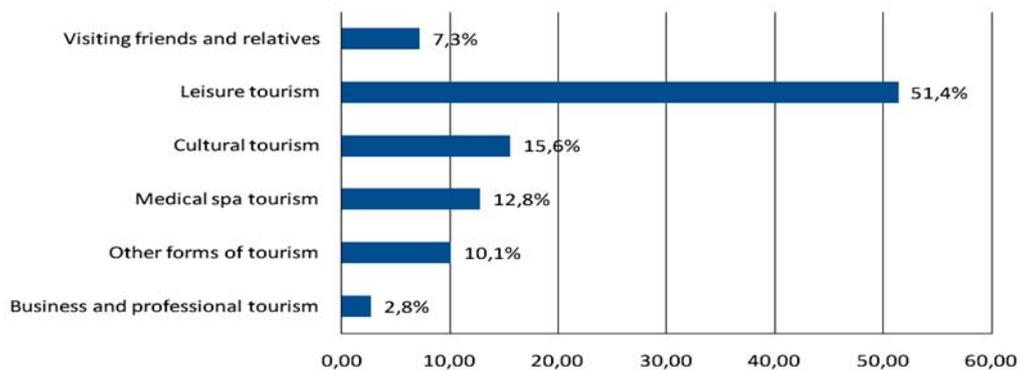


Figure 5. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Transylvania

5) Bucovina as region of origin (Figure 6):

- 48.5% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
- 18.5% opted for *medical spa tourism*;
- 15.4% chose cultural tourism;
- 10.3% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
- 5.2% chose other forms of tourism;
- 2.1% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

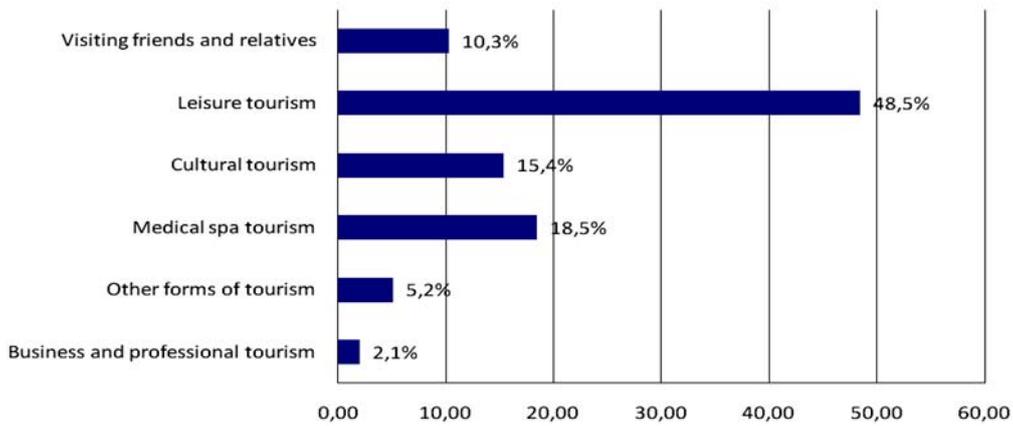


Figure 6. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Bucovina

6) Moldavia and Maramureş as regions of origin (Figure 7):

- 48.9% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
- 29.2% opted for *cultural tourism*;
- 9.4% chose medical spa tourism;
- 7.3% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 3.1% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 2.1% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

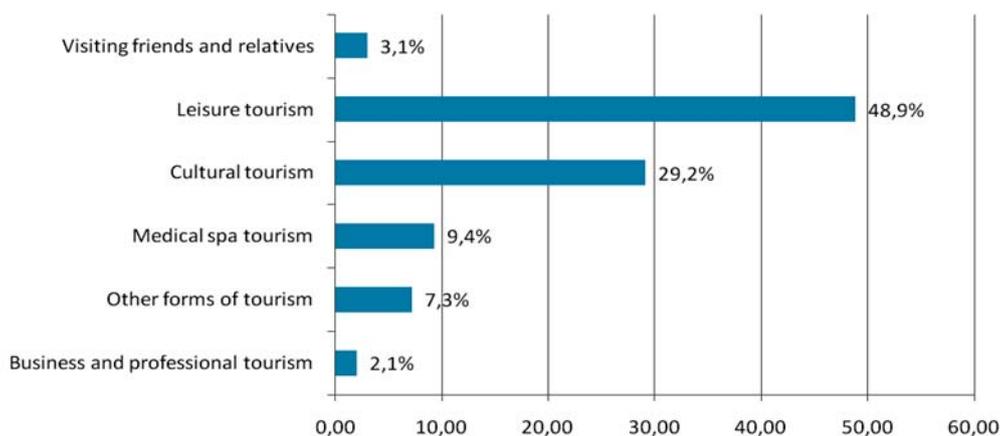


Figure 7. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Regions of origin of the respondents: Moldavia and Maramureş

7) Dobrogea as region of origin (Figure 8):

- 52.2% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Transylvania;
- 21.1% chose *cultural tourism*;
- 11.1% opted for medical spa tourism;
- 7.8% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 5.6% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 2.2% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

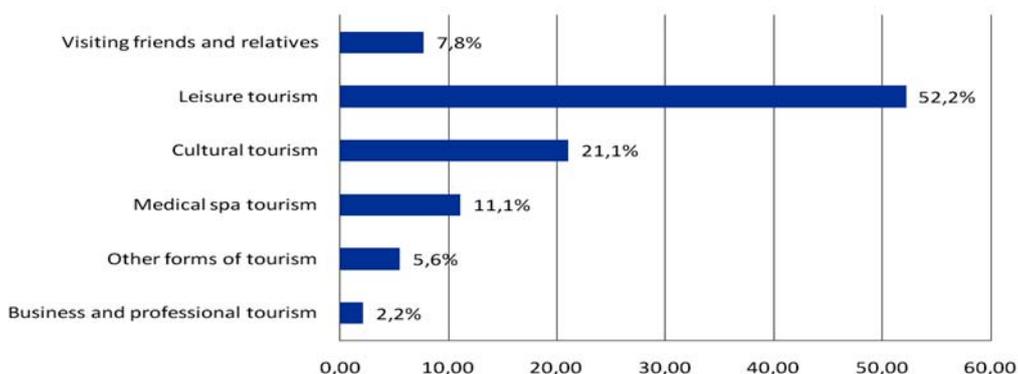


Figure 8. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania.
Region of origin of the respondents: Dobrogea

Table 1

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

Region of origin of the respondents	Forms of tourism					
	Business and professional tourism	Other forms of tourism	Medical spa tourism	Cultural tourism	Leisure tourism	Visiting friends and relatives
Muntenia	2.5	8.5	5.4	27.7	53.6	2.3
Oltenia	2.5	11.5	5.7	14.7	52.2	13.4
Banat – Crișana	3.0	8.9	11.9	18.8	51.5	5.9
Transylvania	2.8	10.1	12.8	15.6	51.4	7.3
Bucovina	2.1	5.2	18.5	15.4	48.5	10.3
Moldavia and Maramureș	2.1	7.3	9.4	29.2	48.9	3.1
Dobrogea	2.2	5.6	11.1	21.1	52.2	7.8

(%)

The choice of the respondents for the *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the micro-destination of Transylvania can be explained in particular by the existence of a beautiful natural landscape (view) offered by the Carpathian Mountains and by intensive promotion of the myth of Count Dracula.

References made by respondents to the natural and anthropic tourism resources of the tourism micro-destination of Transylvania are illustrated by order of relevance in Figure 9.

A. NATURAL POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>topography</i> : Carpathian Mountains, Călimani Mountains, Apuseni Mountains, Transylvanian Depression, Tâmpa Mountain, Transylvanian Plateau, Feleac Hill, etc.	3.9
<i>climate/climatic elements</i> : cold environment, mountain air.	0.1
<i>hidrography</i> : Mureş River, Someşul Cald River, Someşul Rece River, Târnava Mare River, Târnava Mică River, Sfânta Ana/Saint Ana Lake, Roşu (Red) Lake, Bâlea Lake, Ursu (Bear) Lake, etc.	1.7
<i>flora and fauna</i> : Retezat National Park.	2.3

B. ANTHROPIC POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>historical traces and art monuments</i> : Bran Castle, Sarmisegetuza Regia Fortress, Hunyad Castle, Deva Fortress, Sighişoara Fortress, Râşnov Fortress, Alba Carolina Fortress, Carolina obelisk, etc.	23.1
<i>elements of ethnography and folklore</i> : folk music, folk dances, gastronomy, customs and traditions, etc.	2.7
<i>museums and memorial houses</i> : National Brukenthal Museum, Astra Museum, Gold Museum (Brad), National Museum of Transylvanian History, etc.	1.8
<i>cultural-artistic institutions</i> : the Black Church, the Cathedral of the Nation's Reunification, the Roman Catholic Cathedral (Alba Iulia), fortified churches (in Biertan, Saschiz, Valea Viilor), Sâmbăta de Sus Monastery, etc.	3.2
<i>events</i> : Sighişoara Medieval Festival.	0.2
<i>contemporary constructions</i> : Transfăgărăşan, botanical gardens, industrial exploitations (salt, natural gas), recreation centers, ski slopes, business centers, Babeş-Bolyai University, Dracula Hotel, etc.	4.3
<i>human settlements</i> : Sibiu, Sighişoara, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Alba Iulia, Poiana Braşov, Predeal, Târgu Mureş, Covasna, Sovata, Mediaş, Tuşnad, Sângeorz Băi, Făgăraş, Miercurea Ciuc, Deva, Ocna Sibiului, Sibiel etc.	31.5

C. MISCELLANEOUS	% of respondents
<i>historical personalities</i> : Vlad Țepeș, Matei Corvin, Avram Iancu.	4.0
<i>myths</i> : myth of Count Dracula.	10.5
<i>other elements/aspects</i> : regions (Ardeal, Hațeg Country, Moților Country/Stone Country, Bârsa Country), population (Transylvanian Saxons, Szekler, Magyars), people (friendly, kind, temperate, hardworking, proud, hospitable), affiliation (home, family), recreation, etc.	10.7

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

Figure 9. Structure of the tourism potential of the region of Transylvania

Conclusions

From the conducted research it can be concluded that the *leisure tourism* is the predominant form of tourism for the region of Transylvania, followed by the cultural tourism, fact which can be in particular justified by a beautiful natural landscape offered by the Carpathian Mountains, by the intensive promotion of the myth of Count Dracula and by the existence of many beautiful historical traces.

In the same time, the medical spa tourism, which enjoys a growing attention worldwide, was mentioned by 6.7% of the respondents, while the business and professional tourism was associated by only 2.0% of the respondents. Thus, it results the need for an intensified promotion of the medical spa resources with their special benefits for the maintaining and restoring the health of the population.

For an accurate evaluation (assessment) of the tourism micro-destination of Transylvania, similar researches should be conducted for other categories of population, of different ages and with different levels of education.

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