

The cultural vitality of cities - a premise of tourism development?

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ABSTRACT: Urban tourism is, most often, a form of cultural tourism and its development is linked to both the material and intangible heritage of cities. The classic vision of cultural and urban tourism is complemented by a more recent one, according to which the tourist seeks experiences, seeks the spirit of the place perhaps more than the place itself. And the atmosphere of a place, the experiences it offers visitors are related to its cultural vitality, the level of development of creative industries. This article aims to analyze, for county seat cities in Romania, the link between their cultural vitality (assessed on the basis of cultural vitality index) and the level of development of tourism activities (assessed on the basis of a composite indicator, which takes into account several variables). The result of the analysis shows the existence of a close connection between the two aspects, especially at the level of the cities with a regional polarization role, as in the case of cities without a tourist vocation. Types of cities were also identified according to the relationship between their cultural vitality and the level of tourism development.

KEY WORDS: cultural vitality, cultural tourism, urban tourism, creative industries.

1. Introduction

Urban tourism, as part of cultural tourism, is on the rise today, amid rising levels of education of the population and in the context of its association, still, with a form of niche tourism, elitist, which opposes mass tourism. Support for the development of urban tourism also came from tourism operators, who offer a wide range of "city-break" tourism products. Romanian cities are also looking for their place on this tourist market, especially in the context created by increasing the accessibility of large cities by air and the special visibility enjoyed by the city of Sibiu after 2007, when it held the title of European Capital of Culture. In fact, in the last 20 years, cities such as Cluj Napoca, Braşov, Sibiu, Oradea, Iaşi, Tg. Mureş has seen increases of over 200% in the number of tourists, which clearly expresses a growing attractiveness of these cities on the tourist market.

Beyond the capitalization of the material cultural heritage, cultural tourism is linked today to experiences; the involvement of tourists in various activities, stimulating their participation in events such as festivals, exhibitions, events organized during local holidays are tourism practices that have enriched the meaning of the notion of cultural tourism.

In this context, cultural tourism has become increasingly closely linked to the creative industries and urban tourism is developing, with predilection, in cities that have invested in these activities. The concept of the creative industry appeared at the end of the twentieth century (Boccellaa and Salerno, 2016), being launched in Australia and later developed in the UK and refers to those activities that simultaneously meet three characteristics: they are a result of human creativity, the resulting products send a symbolic message to their economic utility, include potential property rights (Volintiru and Miron, 2014) and have the potential to generate sustainable economic growth by promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development (Bobircă et al., 2009). In Romania, the following activities fall into the category of creative industries (according to CANE): architecture, art and culture, workmanship and crafts, design, media, advertising, software, web, IT solutions, sports and entertainment, printing, editing, translation and interpretation. The role of these activities in the economic development as well as their quality as a vector of urban regeneration has been demonstrated by numerous studies, being today unanimously accepted. The impact of cultural activities and other creative industries on the tourism sector was also analyzed (Brent Ritchie and Zins, 1978; Sibertin-Blanc, 2008; Bontje, 2009; Gravari-Barbas, 2009; Richards, 2011; Pintilii et al., 2015), resulting the beneficial role that these activities can play in the development of cultural tourism.

The link between the existence of the cultural infrastructure and the development of cultural activities on the one hand and the development of cultural tourism on the other is obvious and well known. It is enough to mention the impact that various festivals have on tourism or the role that museums play as an element of tourist attractiveness, especially when they become the setting for various activities. (Gonzalez, 2004; Gravari-Barbas, 2009).

The contribution of creative industries, along with other factors to increase the cultural vitality of Romanian cities was analyzed in a study, conducted annually since 2010 (Oană et. al, 2018), through which 46 Romanian cities with over 50000 inhabitants are ranked according to the index of cultural vitality. The concept of cultural vitality refers to three dimensions, as presented by the study's authors, which take the definition given by Jackson (2006): the presence of opportunities for cultural participation (cultural infrastructure), the presence of support for cultural activities (financial support, expressed through budgetary expenditures for culture, support of public actors - through public policies for initiating and supporting cultural activities - and private - through volunteering, donations, ideas - and effective participation of the population (Oană et al., 2018 apud Jackson et al., 2006). Starting from the hierarchy of Romanian cities of over 50000 inhabitants by cultural vitality, we aimed to analyze the link between the cultural vitality of the county seat cities in Romania and the level of development of tourist activities in these cities.

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

H1 In general, there is a direct link between the value of the cultural development index and the level of tourism development of cities

H2 The development of creative industries is the main factor that differentiates between levels of tourism development.

H3 The presence of sufficient cultural infrastructure and specialized human resources is a very important factor for the development of cultural tourism in cities

H4 Budgetary expenditures intended to support cultural activities are not always reflected in a higher level of development of cultural tourism

The study aims to analyze the correlation between the ranking of cities by cultural vitality and the ranking imposed by an indicator that shows the level of tourism development in these cities, with the individualization of three categories of cities: cities for which high cultural vitality corresponds

to a high level of development tourism, cities for which high cultural vitality is only partially found in a corresponding tourist development and cities for which high cultural vitality has no significance from a tourist point of view. The analysis of the correlation between cultural vitality and tourism was performed at the level of partial indicators that define tourist vitality, namely cultural infrastructure, specialized human resources, creative industries and cultural participation with the individualization of the same three categories of cities. In this way, for each city in the ranking, the strengths and weaknesses that facilitate / slow down their tourist development can be identified.

2. Methods

The study is based on the analysis of the correlation between the cultural vitality index of Romanian cities and a composite index, resulting from the sum of several variables related to the development of tourism activities. The values of the Cultural Vitality Index were taken from the study on the cultural vitality of Romanian cities, the latest edition (2018), published under the auspices of the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training in Romania. For the calculation of the cultural vitality index, the study authors took into account several variables, also calculating partial indices, on various components: cultural infrastructure, cultural participation, budget expenditures for culture, specialized human resources, creative industries and cultural establishments.

The source of the data used for each of these components is the National Institute of Statistics (for Cultural Infrastructure, specialized human resources, cultural participation) to which is added the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (for budget expenditures), the Borg Design website (for creative industries) and internal collection (for cultural establishments and specialized human resources). 46 cities were analyzed (county residences and several other cities with over 50000 inhabitants), excluding the state capital and the residence of Ilfov county.

For the components whose analysis was based on internal collection, the study authors stated that the data are incomplete, as they were the result of a questionnaire not answered by all those requested. In these conditions, the present study took into analysis only 39 cities, respectively all county residences and analyzed, along with the correlation tourism development - urban vitality index, the correlations between tourism development and cultural infrastructure components, budget expenditures for culture, creative industries, specialized human resources and cultural participation, components based on unitary and official statistical data. The municipality of Constanța was excluded from the analysis, because we considered that the main type of tourism practiced in this city is the coastal one, to which the tourist development is due and, for this reason, the correlation of cultural vitality - tourism would not have been equally relevant.

To assess the level of tourism development, a composite index was calculated as the arithmetic mean of partial indices that took into account the number of tourist arrivals, length of stay, occupancy of tourist structures, effective functionality rate and tourism specialization index. The calculation of these indicators was made based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 2018; the values obtained were standardized by the same method used in the calculation of the urban vitality index, respectively by the scoring method z whose calculation formula is: $Z_i = (X_i - \mu) / \sigma$, where X_i = the observed score for the unit of analysis i , μ = arithmetic mean of all scores observed on the variable of interest, and σ = standard deviation from the arithmetic mean.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Cultural Vitality and tourism

The hierarchy of the cities analysed according to the index of cultural vitality ranks on the first ten places both regional metropolises such as Cluj Napoca, Braşov, Sibiu, Timişoara, Craiova, and much smaller cities such as Sf. Gheorghe, Miercurea Ciuc and Slobozia. If the presence of the first six cities mentioned at the top of the ranking is not at all surprising, the presence of the others requires further clarifications. In the case of the cities of Sf. Gheorghe and Miercurea Ciuc, the position on the leading places in the ranking is mainly due to the consistent budgetary expenditures allocated to cultural activities; the situation is explicable, given the ethnic structure of the population of these cities, a structure that requires additional efforts, including budgetary ones, for the preservation of the cultural identity. The presence of Slobozia municipality on the 10th place in this ranking is due, according to the author of the study, to a sub-indicator, that of cultural establishments, for which data were obtained by internal collection and which took into account a much smaller number of items than for others sub-indicators. The absence of the municipality of Iaşi from the first ten positions draws attention (it being ranked only on position 16). On the last places of the ranking are mainly cities from the south and east of the country (Vaslui, Călăraşi, Alexandria, Giurgiu, Tulcea, Brăila, Reşiţa, Drobeta - Turnu Severin, Bacău, Buzău), to which are added two county residences in Transylvania - Bistriţa and Deva.

Table 1 Index of tourism development, index and rank for cultural infrastructure, cultural participation and specialized human resources – for the first ten cities according to tourism development index

Rank	City	Tourism development	Cultural infrastructure		Cultural Participation		Specialized human resources	
			index	rank	index	rank	index	rank
1.	Cluj - Napoca	2.6	0.75	1	0.57	4	1.37	1
2.	Braşov	2.3	0.37	6	0.2	13	0.05	16
3.	Sibiu	1.8	0.2	13	1	1	-0.73	39
4.	Timişoara	1.15	0.31	8	0.46	6	0.02	18
5.	Oradea	0.96	-0.15	31	-0.12	23	0.59	7
6.	Iaşi	0.71	0.31	9	0.06	17	0.65	6
7.	Tg. Mureş	0.54	0.42	4	0.77	3	1.14	2
8.	Miercurea Ciuc	0.5	0.57	3	0.31	9	0.87	4
9.	Ploieşti	0.36	-0.1	29	-0.19	26	0.14	14
10.	Tulcea	0.29	0.11	19	-0.24	28	-0.16	27

The analysis of the 39 cities according to the tourism development index indicates a good development of this sector in the cities of Transylvania (Cluj Napoca, Braşov, Tg. Mureş, Sibiu), in Banat (Timişoara), Crişana (Oradea), but also in the regional metropolis of Moldova (Iaşi - on the 6th position). Surprising, this time, is the absence of Craiova (ranked 19th), and also the presence of Miercurea Ciuc among the top 10 "tourist" cities of Romania (Table 1), because it is much smaller, as number of inhabitants, than the cities in its vicinity in this ranking. At the bottom of the ranking of cities by level of tourism development are also mainly cities in the south and east of the country - Alexandria, Giurgiu, Slobozia, Buzau, Botosani, Focsani, Galati - to which are added three cities in the rest of the country - Zalău, Deva and Satu Mare.

The correlative analysis of the two mentioned indicators allowed the individualization of three categories of cities: cities in which the two indicators have, simultaneously, low or high values, which indicates the existence of a link between their tourist development and cultural vitality;

cities with a higher index of tourism development than the index of cultural vitality; cities characterized by a lower index of tourism development than that of cultural vitality. From the first category, that of cities with similar indicators for the two aspects analysed, we mention the cities of Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Baia Mare, Piatra Neamț, Galați, Buzău, Deva, Vaslui and Giurgiu. It is obvious that these cities are better represented at the bottom of the ranking, which may suggest that, for these cities, the development of cultural tourism is not a priority, given a modest, non-stimulating cultural climate. The cities of Cluj-Napoca and Sibiu, located among the top 5 cities from both points of view indicate that the cultural vitality can ensure the climate conducive to the development of cultural tourism, which can be a support for tourism activities.

The category of cities with a more efficient tourism development index than that of cultural vitality comprises the cities of Brașov, Timișoara, Oradea, Iași, Tg. Mureș, Ploiești, Tulcea, Arad, Bacău, Târgoviște, Suceava, Reșița, Slatina, Călărași, Bistrița, Brăila, Drobeta Turnu Severin - cities that either owe their tourist development to other forms of tourism (Ploiești, Bacău) or to a favorable geographical position in relation with established tourist areas (Suceava, Reșița, Tulcea, Brașov), or they managed to capitalize very well through tourism the assets of an important cultural vitality (Brașov, Timișoara, Oradea, Iași, Tg. Mureș).

The third category, that of cities with a higher cultural vitality than the average, includes the cities of Miercurea Ciuc, Sf. Gheorghe, Alba Iulia, Craiova, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Tg. Jiu, Pitești, Botoșani, Slobozia, Zalău, Satu Mare, Focșani, Alexandria. In these cities, the cultural activities carried out, the creative industries present and / or the human resources involved in these activities are either not sufficiently anchored in the development of cultural tourism, being mobilized in other directions (the cases of Miercurea Ciuc and Sf. Gheorghe) or are not effectively capitalized at the local level for the development of cultural tourism. The strongest discrepancies between the two indicators are registered in the cities of Botoșani, Slobozia and Zalău, cities disadvantaged also by their geographical position in relation to the main communication routes and located somewhat outside the classic tourist circuits in Romania. All the more so, in the case of these cities a good cultural vitality could be capitalized as an engine of alternative tourist development.

3.2. Cultural Infrastructure and Tourism Development

The cultural infrastructure includes, in the broader sense of the term (Marcotte, 2011), both the premises where cultural activities take place (performance halls, theaters etc.) and the cultural products (shows, exhibitions, creative workshops etc.), as well as the public institutions and the private organizations that organize these activities. The authors of the study on the cultural vitality of the Romanian cities took into account only the hard infrastructure (Oană, 2018 apud Jeannotte, 2011), respectively only the premises for the development of cultural events, referring them to number of city dwellers, for reasons of data availability. The connection between cultural infrastructure and cultural tourism is well known, direct, knowing the fact that the city attracts through its heritage buildings (which are often the headquarters of cultural institutions - theaters, operas), but also through the multitude of events that these institutions organizes and / or hosts them and which can be included in cultural products related to the city. In addition, the cultural atmosphere of a city is also defined by the quality and quantity of the cultural infrastructure it has.

Thus, the more a city benefits from a richer and more diverse cultural infrastructure, the more consistent its development for tourism development is. From the perspective of the relationship between the tourism development index of cities and the cultural infrastructure subindex, we mention the cities for which the two indices have values that place them in close positions in the rankings, which indicates a positive, direct relationship between cultural infrastructure and tourism: Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Tg. Mureș, Craiova, Baia Mare, Piatra Neamț, Deva, Slobozia and Vaslui.

In the case of the first 4 cities, a rich and diverse cultural infrastructure is associated with a high level of cultural vitality, and for the last three cities, the two indicators have very low values. Among the cities for which the cultural infrastructure they have offers them a position in the ranking superior to that given by the tourist development, we mention: Miercurea Ciuc, Sf. Gheorghe, Suceava, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Tg. Jiu, Pitești, Galați, Botoșani, Zalău, Focșani, Giurgiu and Satu Mare.

The biggest discrepancy is registered in the cities of Botoșani, Focșani, Giurgiu and Tg. Jiu. In the case of these cities, we can certainly speak of a poor or insufficient capitalization of the cultural infrastructure through cultural tourism, which turns them into cities with development potential from this perspective in the future. The last category, of the cities for which the tourism development index places them more advantageously in the ranking than the cultural infrastructure subindex, includes the cities of Brașov, Sibiu, Timișoara, Oradea, Ploiești, Tulcea, Arad, Bacău, Alba Iulia, Târgoviște and Reșița from the first half of ranking on tourism development, and the cities of Slatina, Calarasi, Braila and Drobeta Turnu Severin in the second half of the ranking. In all cases, it is either about a very good capitalization of the cultural infrastructure through tourism, or about an insufficient development of the cultural infrastructure in relation to the potential of tourist development of the city. The biggest discrepancy from this point of view is found in Oradea, a city for which the cultural infrastructure is still modest in relation to the tourist development of the city.

3.3. Budget Expenditures and Tourism Development

The investments in culture, from public or private funds, determine or should determine positive externalities, including in the form of stimulating tourism development. There are many examples of cities in which investments in the cultural field aimed to improve their image and / or diversify cultural life, which subsequently had positive consequences on the tourism sector (Oană, 2018). The analysis of the relationship between the sub-indices of budget expenditures for culture and tourism development allows the identification of those cities for which the index of budget expenditures for cultural purposes places them lower than the index of tourism development, as well as cities that have spent much on culture but have a lower tourism development index.

In the most balanced situation, in which the two indices give the cities close positions in the two rankings are the cities Sibiu, Timișoara, Târgoviște, Tg. Jiu, Buzău and Giurgiu, for which the relationship is a direct one: high budget expenditures for culture - higher tourism development, low budget expenditures - modest tourism development. Cluj Napoca, Brașov, Oradea, Iași, Tg. Mureș, Alba Iulia, Suceava, Baia Mare, Tulcea, Piatra Neamț, Deva and others are part of the category of cities for which the tourist development did not mean significant budget expenditures for culture. In these cities, either the money allocated to culture was used very efficiently, or extra-budgetary funds also intervene in the development of cultural activities. The biggest discrepancy characterizes the cities of Brașov, Tulcea, Piatra Neamț (where tourist activities are more diverse and less associated with cultural tourism), Iași and Alba Iulia. Among the cities that, from the perspective of budget expenditures are much higher in the ranking than according to the level of tourist development, we mention Călărași, Slobozia, Alexandria, Craiova, Arad, Satu Mare, Sf. Gheorghe and others. In the case of these cities, it is clear that tourism is not among the areas that benefit from substantial budget spending.

3.4. Cultural Participation and Tourism Development

There is talk today, more and more, about the intangible component of the cultural potential, about what cities offer to tourists beyond the classic values, of heritage; the atmosphere of a city,

the experiences it facilitates have a particularly important role in increasing their attractiveness including from a tourist point of view (Oană et al., 2018 apud Murray, 2011). Cultural participation is that dimension of the cultural vitality of a city through which all other components are valued and "a diversified cultural activity can lead to a high consumption of culture, which supports the cultural, artistic and economic development of a city " (Oană et al, 2018).

In this context, we consider it is important to identify cities that stand out with a higher degree of cultural participation than indicated by their level of tourism development, as well as "tourist" cities, but where the level of cultural participation is low. Knowledge of these aspects can guide the cultural and tourism policies of cities in the sense of greater efficiency. The cities for which the link between cultural participation and tourism is the most obvious are Cluj Napoca, Sibiu, Timișoara, Craiova, Miercurea Ciuc, Tg. Mureș, Alba Iulia, Târgoviște, Baia Mare - against the background of high values of the two indices and Vaslui and Giurgiu - against the background of low values. Among the cities for which the cultural participation does not seem to contribute too much to the tourist development we mention: Brașov, Oradea, Iași, Tulcea, Ploiești, Arad, Bacău, Slatina, Călărași, Piatra Neamț, Brăila, Buzău, Slobozia, Reșița, the biggest discrepancies being specific to the cities of Oradea, Arad, Tulcea and Călărași. The cities for which the level of tourist development is lower than the level of cultural participation are: Suceava, Bistrița, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Tg. Jiu, Deva, Galați, Botoșani, Zalău, Satu Mare, Focșani. We believe that these cities have the potential to create their own cultural atmosphere that could contribute to the development of cultural tourism.

3.5. Specialized Human Resources and Tourism Development

Starting from the premise that, in contemporary society, the most important resource of a city are its inhabitants and considering that the existence of professionals in the field of culture (trained or in training) can be an advantage for the development of cultural tourism products, we also analyzed the relationship between the tourism development index and the specialized human resource sub-index. However, there are few cities for which we noticed the existence of a direct relationship between the two indicators in the sense that a high / low share of staff working (or in training) in the field of culture corresponds to a high / low level of tourism development. These cities are: Cluj Napoca, Oradea, Tg. Mureș, Iași, Craiova, Slatina and Vaslui - only the last two are from the second half of the ranking of cities after tourism development. Most cities are characterized by a level of tourism development higher than the level of development of specialized human resources, and these cities are in fact the cities with the highest level of tourism development; the biggest discrepancy is specific to the cities of Sibiu, Brașov, Timișoara, Călărași and Tulcea. In the case of these cities, one can speak either of an insufficiency of the number of those who work in the field of culture, or of a very efficient activity of them. The category of cities with specialized human resources in the field of culture that places them in a better position than tourism development is represented by Miercurea Ciuc, Sf. Gheorghe, Suceava, Alba Iulia, Bistrița, Tg. Jiu, Piatra Neamț, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Pitești, Deva, Botoșani, Focșani, Slobozia, Satu Mare, Zalău. The biggest differences are registered at Tg. Jiu, Botoșani, Pitești and Deva. In the case of these cities, we consider that the presence of specialized human resources should be better capitalized from the tourist point of view and at least part of their activity should be channelized towards the development of cultural tourism products.

3.6. Creative Industries and Tourism Development

The relationship between the sub-indices of creative industries and the level of tourism development seems to be the strongest of those analyzed, given that, in this case, the number of

cities with values that place them in similar positions in the two hierarchies is the highest of all indices analyzed (Fig. 1). For almost half of the cities, the relationship is a direct one: the high / low share of creative industries in the local economy is associated with high / low level of tourism development. In this category we include Cluj Napoca, Braşov, Timişoara, Oradea, Iaşi, Tg. Mureş, Craiova, Galaţi, Miercurea Ciuc, Suceava, Bistriţa, Botoşani, Piatra Neamţ, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Călăraşi, Buzău, Slobozia, Vaslui and Alexandria, the last 9 being located in the second half of the rankings. Among the cities that stand out through a better ranking from the perspective of creative industries than according to the level of tourism development, we mention: Alba Iulia, Sf. Gheorghe, Baia Mare, Piteşti, Piatra Neamţ, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Tg. Jiu, Deva, Satu Mare. Satu Mare, Deva, Baia Mare and Piatra Neamţ are notable for the greater discrepancy. We consider that in these cities there is a high potential for the development of innovative urban tourism products, able to increase the attractiveness of those cities. In the cities of Sibiu, Ploieşti, Tulcea, Arad, Bacău, Târgovişte, Slatina, Drobeta Turnu Severin and Brăila the presence of creative industries does not seem to be very related to the development of tourism, and the most important discrepancies are registered in Ploieşti, Tulcea and Bacău, cities where other types of tourism than cultural tourism are developed as a priority.

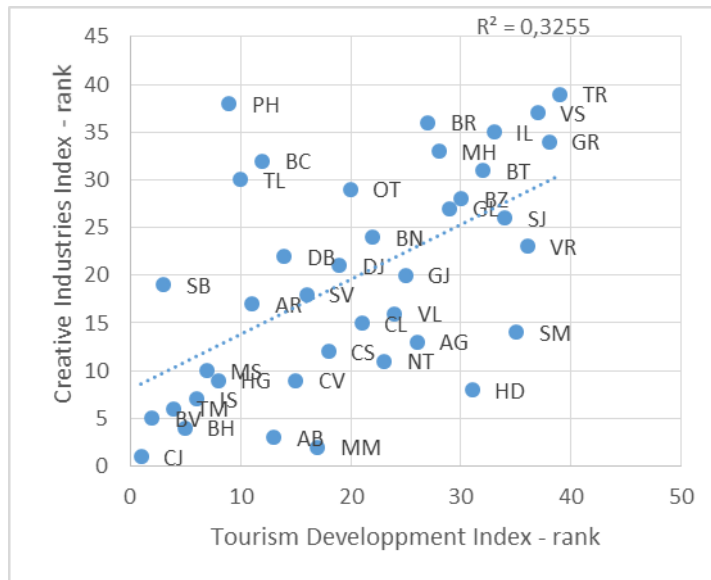


Figure 1 The relationship between creatives industries and tourism (The county acronym was used for the cities).

4. Conclusion

The analysis based on the cultural vitality index and its components, on the one hand, and the level of tourism development, on the other hand, highlighted the fact that only in three cities among those analyzed (Cluj Napoca, Tg. Mureş and Vaslui) there is a direct link between the cultural vitality and the tourist development; in the case of the first two it is a matter of positive potentiation of the tourism through cultural vitality, in the case of the last one, of the low levels of both indicators. Most cities are characterized by a higher level of tourism development than the contribution of cultural vitality components (Braşov, Timişoara, Oradea, Iaşi, Târgovişte, Suceava, GEOREVIEW 30/2020 (1-9)

Reșița). The presence of creative industries in cities has proven to be an essential factor in the development of tourism, no less than 17 cities have a direct relationship between the level of tourism development and the component of creative industries in the index of cultural vitality. Cultural infrastructure and cultural participation have proven to be two other components that relate quite well to the level of tourism development. The most fragile relationships seem to exist between budget expenditures and specialized human resources, on the one hand, and tourism development, on the other. It should be noted that, for nine cities, the level of tourism development is far below that of cultural vitality, which places these cities in the category of those who should realize this potential, including in terms of cultural tourism.

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