

Trends in the Evolution of the Average Length of Stay in Tourist Destinations on the Romanian Black Sea Coast

Ion Dănuț Jugănaru

"Ovidius" University of Constanta, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Romania

juganaru.dan@gmail.com

Narcisa Georgiana Moșoiu

"Splendid" Hotel, Mamaia, Romania

narcisa_mosoiu@yahoo.com

Abstract

In recent decades, although most tourists have made several trips during a year, the average length of their vacations has decreased.

The tendency to reduce the average length of stay of tourists has been evident in many destinations around the world in recent years.

The purpose of this paper is to conduct an analysis of how the average length of stay of tourists in the main categories of destinations in Romania has evolved over the last decade, providing details about the evolution regarding tourist destinations located in the Romanian Black Sea coastal area. Starting from the possible causes identified in this paper, of the almost continuous decrease in the average length of stay in these destinations, we consider it necessary to undertake more in-depth studies, to find out the causes of these developments, which will be the basis of future development and marketing strategies regarding the respective tourist resorts.

Key words: average length of stay, evolution, coastal tourism, Romania, Black Sea

J.E.L. classification: M21, Z31, Z32, Z33, Z38

1. Introduction

The Length of Stay (LOS) is a key parameter in the management of the tourist destination and is the ratio between the number of overnight stays of tourists and the number of their arrivals, having simultaneous repercussions on the income generated by the tourist activity and on other indicators of performance.

Although it is a quantitative indicator, the average length of stay also has important qualitative values, given the fact that it indicates a destination's capacity to be attractive, to keep the tourist longer, in that destination, through its tourist offer.

Vacation length is of vital importance in tourism management. For example, hoteliers are concerned with maximizing their Yield and the Gross Operational Profit, and to do this they make efforts to attract more tourists with longer lengths of stay, including tourists who return to the destination (repeaters), given the fact that LOS is influenced by the previous visits (Barros and Machado, 2010, p. 692).

It is important to investigate the manner in which tourists decide the length of their stay. For example, when they decide to have a short length of stay, they choose to stay in a more central area of the destination, to visit only the most important attractions, while tourists who want longer lengths of stay visit more attractions, including from more peripheral areas, thus generating more diverse economic, social and environmental impacts (Barros and Machado, 2010, p. 693). Moreover, families with children tend to choose longer lengths of stay.

There is an almost consensus in the specialized literature over the fact that LOS is correlated with the expenditure generated by tourists in the destination. For example, when tourists stay for multiple days in the same hotel room, there will be positive implications in terms of reducing the hotel's operational costs.

Tourists' length of stay has been on a downward trend globally in recent decades for a number of reasons, related both to the constraints regarding the duration of paid leave and vacations of tourists and to their desire to take several tourist trips, during a year but with shorter lengths of stay, so as to be able to get to various destinations, for different reasons. For example, in the Balearic Islands there was a 3-day decrease in the average length of stay in the 1989-2003 period, i.e., from 13.1 to 9.9 days (Alegre and Pou, 2006).

We believe that the evolution of the values recorded by the indicator average length of stay in Romania, in the last 3 decades and especially in the last 10 years, should worry, equally, the entrepreneurs and managers of tourist units, the newly established Destination Management Organizations in this area, where they already exist, and also the governmental and regional/local authorities, given the fact that this indicator has recorded almost continuous decreases, both at the national level and in the main categories of tourist destinations in Romania.

In this paper, we have analyzed the evolution of the average length of stay indicator at the national level and by main categories of tourist destinations in the country, with an in-depth analysis regarding the destination Romania's Black Sea coastal area. Based on statistical data processing, as well as on the discussions held with a significant number of entrepreneurs and managers of tourist units from the tourist resorts in Romania's coastal area, the purpose of our research has been to identify a series of explanations for the causes of the almost continuous decrease in the LOS indicator. These results can provide the basis for more in-depth research, which should be carried out in view of the elaboration of strategies for the development and tourism promotion of these destinations.

2. Literature review

The length of stay is one of the most important decisions made by tourists, as it directly influences the level of their vacation expenses. However, the length of stay is also an important factor in terms of the overall impact of tourism on the economy.

A noticeable trend of the last decades is that tourists take more trips, but with a shorter length of stay, during the same year, which has made the tourism industry show greater interest in attracting those segments of tourists who opt for longer lengths of stay, which are more profitable for tourist accommodation units.

LOS represents a major aspect of tourism demand, respectively of tourism demand management. The 3 key variables identified by Gössling *et al* in tourist destination management are: the expenses incurred by tourists, *the average length of stay* and seasonality (Gössling *et al*, 2015, p. 1).

Most of the studies referred to 4 types of variables which determine the length of the tourists' stay at the destination, respectively: socio-demographic variables, those regarding people's life stages (age), travel motivations and those related to the trip itself. (Alen *et al*, 2014, p. 21).

Barros and Correira analyzed the key factors for the length of stay for Portuguese tourists who vacationed in Latin America, based on a questionnaire administered in the aircrafts which were transporting the tourists back to the places from which they came to those destinations. The main conclusion of the study was that the wealthiest tourists, motivated by culture, climate, and security, had the longest length of stay.

According to Barros and Correira's analysis, the length of the tourist stay can be explained by several factors, including: the vacation budget; the destination's features and information regarding the destination; the socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed individuals (tourists); whether they are revisiting the destination; free time constraints; frequency of travel; previous holiday expectations of tourists. As for the main features of the destination, the following were considered: income, culture, nightlife, climate, gastronomy, ethnic values, and distance. Among the socio-demographic features, characteristics such as: age, level of education, marital status, social category were analyzed.

From this research, it was observed that in terms of information regarding destination, tourist's behavior will be influenced less by the characteristics of the destination and more by other aspects, such as the tourist's perception of the destination, the image he/she has formed, i.e., a combination of cognitive and affective components (Barros and Correira, 2007).

Alen *et al.* carried out a study with the objective of identifying the variables which determine the length of stays of seniors in destinations within Spain. The key factors identified in the respective paper were age, reason for the trip, climate, type of accommodation, group size, type of trip, and activities carried out at the destination (Alen *et al.*, 2014, p. 19).

Thrane published, in the year 2016, a critical article regarding the "statistical mastery" of previous LOS research, which in many studies uses sophisticated statistical/econometric methods to examine how sets of independent variables (such as destination features and characteristics of the trips, socio-demographic variables, etc.) try to explain the variation in LOS in certain destinations. He pleads, in the respective paper, for a return to a 'back-to-basic' approach in LOS modeling studies, in the defense of the old approaches of LOS modeling studies, compared to the newer, more sophisticated analyses ones, given the fact that many studies on tourism use a rather less accessible technical and statistical language, recommending for published articles to be written in a much more "transparent" way (Thrane, 2016).

When deciding the length of his/her stay, the tourist can be influenced by a variety of factors, by both his or her personal characteristics and the characteristics of the destinations. Machado conducted a study in which he examined the relationship between the image of the destination and the length of stay in a destination, with reference to a sample of tourists who were guests of the island of Madeira. The results of the study highlighted, among others, that the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education) had a positive effect on the length of stay, in the sense that older people, men and more educated tourists tend to have a longer length of stay. On the other hand, tourist spending had a negative impact, meaning that those tourists who spend more tend to have shorter vacations. In addition to this, some destination features, such as the old and good reputation of the region's wines, led to the increase of LOS in Madeira (Machado, 2010, p. 453).

The decrease in LOS trends in recent decades has had adverse consequences for destination marketing, not only in terms of increasing the variable costs of tourist accommodation units, but also in terms of the implications for sustainability. More trips, but shorter, will lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, produced as a result of tourists' transportation. Moreover, in order for a destination to maintain the same number of overnight stays of tourists, respectively to maintain its income, it is necessary to increase the number of tourist arrivals (Gössling *et al.*, 2015, p. 4).

The average length of stay (LOS) varies widely from country to country, ranging from less than two days to more than two weeks. For example, a study carried out regarding 32 tourist destinations around the world which analyzed the evolution of LOS over a period of two decades (1995-2015), by processing UNWTO data, showed considerable differences from one country to another, and also an average decrease in LOS in these countries, by 14.8%, during the analyzed period, from 5.4 days in 1995 to 4.6 days in 2015; however, there were also certain countries where increases in this indicator were recorded. Many of Europe's mature destinations have seen significant decreases in LOS over the analyzed period, for example from 16.7% in The Netherlands to 27.5% in Austria.

According to the results of the respective study, among the analyzed countries, the shortest length of stay was recorded, in the year 2015, in Sweden (1.6 days), followed by Bulgaria (1.9 days), the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2.1 days), and the longest average stay in Argentina (11.3 days), French Polynesia (13.2 nights) and Martinique (14.2 nights) (Gössling *et al.*, 2019, pp. 7-9).

3. Research methodology

This paper is based on quantitative, longitudinal desk research, using data sources in classic and online format (Jugănar, 1998).

We have processed a statistical database consisting of information published by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania, as well as by the Constanța County Statistical Directorate.

The discussions held (using the focus group method) with a significant number of entrepreneurs and managers of tourist reception units with tourist accommodation functions in the Romanian Black Sea coastal area were used in order to analyze and interpret the results of the quantitative research and contributed to a better understanding of the factors which determined the decrease in LOS.

4. Findings

In our opinion, the decrease in the average length of stay, in Romania, in the last 3 decades and especially in the last 10 years, should worry entrepreneurs and managers of tourist units, as well as governmental and regional/local authorities, given the fact that this indicator has recorded almost continuous decreases and we believe that the causes of these developments should be analyzed, as well as the measures that should be taken to reverse this trend, respectively to increase the LOS.

Both at the level of the entire country, in Romania, and at the level of the main tourist destinations in the country, there has been an almost continuous decrease in the average length of stay of tourists, in the last decade, but also for longer periods, since the beginning of the 1990s.

4.1. The evolution of the average length of stay in Romania, by category of tourist destinations

In the last 10 years (2013-2022), in Romania, the average length of stay of tourists, in total (Romanian and foreign tourists alike), decreased from 4.09 days, in the years 2014 and 2015, to a minimum value of 3.27 days, in 2022. Regarding the average length of stay of foreign tourists, the highest value of this indicator was recorded in the year 2015, i.e., 4.74 days, and the lowest value in the year 2022, i.e., 3.25 days. (Table no. 1, Graph no. 1). If we expand the comparison with the values recorded by this indicator in the years 1995, 2000 and 2005, we can notice even more significant decreases in the average length of stay, in the year 2022, compared to those recorded in those years. Thus, for example, in the year 2000 the average duration was 3.59 days, while in the year 2005 it decreased to 3.16 days and in 2010 to 2.64 days, reaching only 2.15 days in 2022 (INSSE Tempo online, 2023).

According to EUROSTAT data, Romania recorded a lower LOS, of only 2.17 days compared to the average LOS recorded in the EU 27 countries, in the year 2022, i.e., 2.97 days, as well as to the two neighboring EU member countries, Bulgaria (3.17 days) and Hungary (2.34 days) (EUROSTAT, tourism database, 2023).

By analyzing the situation of this indicator by category of destinations in Romania, we can see that the results are different from the average ones, recorded at the national level. As expected, the highest average lengths of stay were recorded, throughout this period, in the balneary resorts, given the fact that doctors recommend balneary treatment durations of 12 days or even more, at least for people with rheumatic diseases, so that the treatments can have the expected effect. Nevertheless, even within the balneary resorts, the largest decreases in the average length of stay were recorded, from 8.37 days in the year 1995 to 7.98 days in 2000 and to 8.16 days in 2005, falling to only 3.68 days in 2022. This means that the number of tourists who benefited from complete balneary treatments has significantly decreased in these destinations compared to the rest of the tourists.

Table no.1. The evolution of the average length of stay in the main tourist destinations in Romania (days)

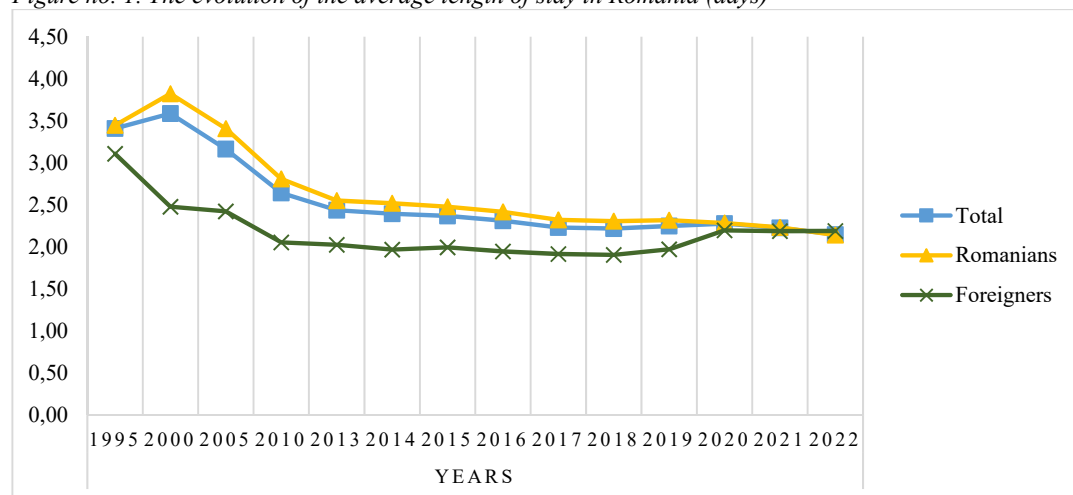
Tourist destinations	Years													
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	3,41	3,59	3,16	2,64	2,44	2,40	2,37	2,31	2,23	2,22	2,25	2,28	2,23	2,15
<i>Romanians</i>	3,45	3,82	3,41	2,81	2,55	2,52	2,48	2,42	2,32	2,31	2,32	2,28	2,23	2,14
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,11	2,48	2,42	2,05	2,03	1,97	2,00	1,95	1,92	1,91	1,97	2,20	2,19	2,19
Balneary resorts	8,37	7,98	8,16	6,88	6,10	5,46	5,03	4,93	4,45	4,32	4,24	3,67	3,60	3,68
<i>Romanians</i>	8,43	8,08	8,40	7,00	6,20	5,54	5,09	5,00	4,50	4,36	4,27	3,67	3,60	3,68
<i>Foreigners</i>	7,37	5,56	4,08	4,04	3,99	3,96	3,91	3,72	3,54	3,53	3,38	3,81	3,57	3,68

Seaside resorts, excluding Constanta city	6,97	6,64	5,64	4,18	4,23	4,35	4,46	4,20	4,11	4,10	4,04	3,61	3,69	3,38
	<i>Romanians</i>	6,84	6,56	5,43	4,17	4,22	4,31	4,39	4,19	4,12	4,12	4,05	3,61	3,70
<i>Foreigners</i>	8,56	8,12	7,19	4,27	4,42	5,20	6,45	4,70	3,95	3,41	3,60	3,35	3,15	3,19
Tourist destinations	Years													
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mountain resorts														
<i>Romanians</i>	3,19	2,84	2,45	2,17	2,15	2,14	2,15	2,07	2,07	2,06	2,10	2,01	1,99	1,96
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,86	2,73	2,34	2,24	2,23	2,25	2,01	2,19	2,07	1,99	1,98	2,35	1,87	1,87
Danube Delta area, including Tulcea city														
<i>Romanians</i>	2,05	2,46	1,96	1,59	2,37	1,91	2,00	2,05	2,09	2,25	2,29	2,53	2,06	2,06
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,02	2,44	1,95	1,56	2,00	1,87	1,95	1,98	2,06	2,22	2,29	2,53	2,07	2,03
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,20	2,59	2,01	1,68	3,29	2,08	2,15	2,26	2,19	2,42	2,28	3,06	1,87	2,34
Bucharest and the county seats, excluding Tulcea city														
<i>Romanians</i>	1,74	1,87	1,88	1,85	1,78	1,82	1,81	1,78	1,73	1,73	1,76	1,75	1,73	1,78
<i>Romanians</i>	1,68	1,80	1,80	1,81	1,72	1,81	1,78	1,74	1,66	1,67	1,67	1,67	1,64	1,64
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,07	2,05	2,02	1,94	1,91	1,85	1,87	1,84	1,84	1,85	1,95	2,15	2,20	2,23
Other localities and tourist routes														
<i>Romanians</i>	2,39	2,52	2,18	1,92	1,78	1,93	2,04	1,93	1,89	1,83	1,87	1,85	1,81	1,77
<i>Romanians</i>	2,38	2,53	2,20	1,91	1,77	1,96	2,04	1,95	1,90	1,84	1,89	1,84	1,80	1,76
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,46	2,42	2,08	1,99	1,83	1,82	2,02	1,86	1,81	1,80	1,77	2,11	1,88	1,79

Source: processing according to the statistical database TEMPO-Online (National Institute of Statistics)

In the year 2022, in Romania, only in the case of balneary resorts and those in the coastal area, the values of the average length of stay indicator were higher than the average for the country, whereas in the other categories of destinations, lower than average values were recorded. Thus, the lowest average lengths of stay were recorded in Bucharest and the other county seats, excluding the city of Tulcea (1.78 days) and in the other localities in the country (1.77 days). Furthermore, in the Danube Delta destination, including the city of Tulcea, the average duration of tourists' stay was below the average for the whole country, in the year 2022, namely 2.06 days.

Figure no. 1. The evolution of the average length of stay in Romania (days)



Source: processed data from the statistical database TEMPO-Online (National Institute of Statistics)

4.2. The evolution of the average length of stay in the Romanian Black Sea coastal area

The tourist resorts and localities in the coastal area of Romania are concentrated in Constanța County, with the exception of the city of Sulina, located in Tulcea County, where the Danube River flows into the Black Sea, through the Sulina Channel.

Constanța County has the largest tourist accommodation capacity in Romania (over 25% of the total number of bed-places in tourist reception structures with tourist accommodation functions), and over 99% of Constanța County's tourist accommodation capacity is located in the seaside resorts and tourist towns. For this reason, we analyzed the evolution of the tourist indicators regarding the Romanian Black Sea coast using the existing data at the level of Constanța County.

Constanța County had the largest share (25.7%) in the total number of rooms existing in tourist reception structures (excluding the rooms in small houses), followed by Brașov County (7.9%) and the Municipality of Bucharest (6.5%). (INS, 2023)

According to the data of the National Institute of Statistics in Romania, the Constanța County Statistical Directorate, in the year 2022, the number of tourist arrivals in Constanța County decreased by 1.2% compared to the year 2021, reaching 1,253.5 thousand. Out of the total number of arrivals, the overwhelming majority (96.5%) were arrivals of Romanian tourists and only 3.5% were arrivals of foreign tourists. Moreover, the share of foreign tourist arrivals even recorded a decrease, by 0.5%, compared to that of the previous year. (INS-DJSC, 2023)

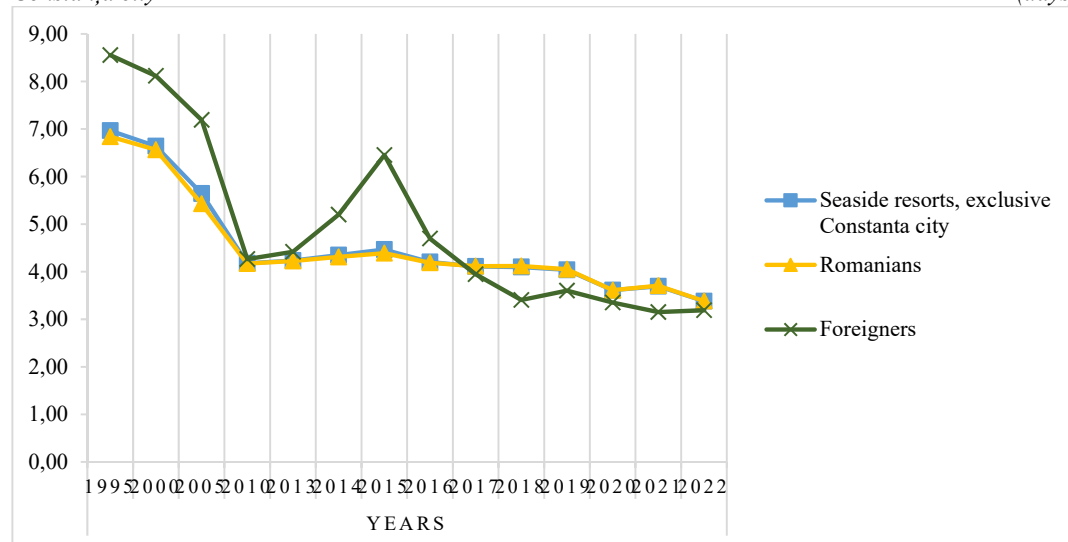
A more severe decrease than that of the number of arrivals was recorded regarding the number of overnight stays, namely a decrease of this indicator by 9.5%, in the year 2022, compared to 2021, reaching 4,106.1 thousand in the year 2022. In terms of structure, the situation of the number of overnight stays was similar to that of the number of tourist arrivals, namely 96.5% of the number of overnight stays belonged to Romanian tourists, whereas the share of the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists recorded a decrease of 0.9 percentage points in the year 2022, compared to the previous year.

The average length of stay in the year 2022, in Constanța County, was 3.8 days for Romanian tourists and 3.25 days for foreign tourists, resulting in a total average value of 3.28 days, lower than the value of 3.58 days, recorded in the year 2021.

Moreover, the index of net use of accommodation places decreased, in Constanța County, in the year 2022, compared to the previous year, by 3.7%, reaching 42.4% in the year 2022.

However, we also note a positive evolution, namely the increase, in the year 2022, by 15.1%, compared to the year 2021, of the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Constanța County, as well as the 19.5% increase in the number of their overnight stays, in the respective period. (INS-DJSC, 2023)

Figure no.2. The evolution of the average length of stay in the seaside resorts of Romania, excluding Constanța city (days)



Source: processed data from the statistical database TEMPO-Online (National Institute of Statistics)

In the last 10 years (2013-2022), the indicator average length of stay for tourists lodged in the Romanian coast has recorded almost continuous decreases, from a maximum value of 4.09 days, in the years 2014 and 2015, to only 3.27 days, in the year 2022. Regarding the average length of stay of foreign tourists, the highest average value was recorded in the year 2015 (4.74 days), and the lowest in the year 2022 (3.25 days).

By analyzing the evolution of this indicator, calculated as a ratio between the number of overnight stays and the number of tourist arrivals, by coastal resorts and localities, we can see that, in the year 2022, the lowest values were recorded in the city of Constanța (2.36), followed by Năvodari (2.59), Vama Veche (2.98), Jupiter (3.08), Cap Aurora (3.11), Mamaia sat (3.13), Olimp (3.19), whereas the highest values were recorded in Techirghiol (5.69), Mangalia (5.39) and Neptun (3.85).

The longest average length of stay for foreign tourists was recorded in Techirghiol (7.71 days), followed by Mangalia (5.39) and Eforie Nord (4.94), while the shortest was recorded in Năvodari (2.15) and Vama Veche (2.22).

Table no. 2. The evolution of the average length of stay in Romanian coastal resorts in the 2013 – 2022 period (average number of days)

City/town/resort	Year									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Constanta County, from wich	3,98	4,09	4,09	3,91	3,83	3,82	3,76	3,48	3,58	3,27
<i>Romanians</i>	3,98	4,06	4,05	3,91	3,85	3,86	3,79	3,48	3,59	3,27
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,99	4,63	4,74	3,85	3,36	3,06	3,19	3,44	3,13	3,25
Constanta	2,43	2,65	2,59	2,38	2,26	2,31	2,35	2,30	2,51	2,36
<i>Romanians</i>	2,30	2,46	2,52	2,31	2,18	2,26	2,29	2,20	2,45	2,22
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,18	3,72	3,00	2,77	2,68	2,62	2,70	3,55	3,10	3,31
Mamaia	3,51	3,68	3,87	3,48	3,38	3,43	3,41	3,45	3,39	3,18
<i>Romanians</i>	3,51	3,58	3,68	3,44	3,38	3,43	3,42	3,45	3,41	3,19
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,60	5,30	7,44	4,23	3,37	3,37	3,24	3,32	2,70	2,97
Eforie Sud	4,41	4,59	4,65	4,67	4,56	4,21	4,72	3,33	3,84	3,58
<i>Romanians</i>	4,28	4,54	4,66	4,66	4,53	4,21	4,72	3,33	3,84	3,58
<i>Foreigners</i>	7,24	6,58	4,29	6,58	7,03	3,84	5,51	3,11	1,98	3,81
Eforie Nord	3,72	3,99	4,27	4,52	4,39	4,32	4,63	3,85	4,01	3,47
<i>Romanians</i>	3,70	3,96	4,22	4,51	4,38	4,38	4,66	3,85	4,01	3,45
<i>Foreigners</i>	4,12	4,50	5,55	4,83	4,84	2,99	3,91	3,61	3,72	4,94
Mangalia	7,99	6,87	6,67	6,78	6,84	6,50	4,81	4,95	5,30	5,39
<i>Romanians</i>	8,03	6,95	6,74	6,85	6,97	6,60	4,85	4,99	5,34	5,44
<i>Foreigners</i>	7,54	5,45	5,89	5,95	4,73	4,63	4,04	3,24	3,75	2,87
Navodari	3,50	2,98	3,77	3,05	3,46	2,62	2,66	2,64	2,89	2,59
<i>Romanians</i>	3,50	2,98	3,77	2,83	3,45	2,62	2,61	2,64	2,87	2,60
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,82	2,79	4,13	5,52	3,94	2,54	3,39	2,62	4,03	2,15
Mamaia Sat	2,93	3,70	3,96	3,42	4,41	3,49	3,73	3,63	3,28	3,13
<i>Romanians</i>	2,95	3,87	3,99	3,50	4,43	3,49	3,72	3,63	3,27	3,13
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,43	2,26	3,42	2,56	4,14	3,26	3,91	3,26	3,36	3,05
Techirghiol	9,80	10,40	9,62	10,48	8,38	8,49	6,90	5,64	6,49	5,69
<i>Romanians</i>	9,83	10,42	9,62	10,52	8,37	8,48	6,88	5,64	6,48	5,68
<i>Foreigners</i>	7,90	8,63	9,21	7,54	8,92	9,18	8,27	6,68	8,37	7,71

City/town/resort	Year									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Vama Veche	2,51	2,58	3,06	2,47	2,85	3,22	2,90	2,50	3,94	2,98
<i>Romanians</i>	2,48	2,63	3,16	2,48	2,90	3,22	2,90	2,50	3,94	2,98
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,69	2,09	1,89	2,21	2,20	3,33	2,60	2,65	0,00	2,22
2 Mai	3,91	3,30	3,71	3,12	3,70	3,27	3,19	2,38	2,86	3,16
<i>Romanians</i>	3,91	3,30	3,71	3,12	3,70	3,27	3,19	2,38	2,86	3,16
<i>Foreigners</i>	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	1,67	0,00	0,00	3,00
Costinesti	3,96	4,24	4,05	4,25	4,15	3,80	3,92	3,10	3,42	3,28
<i>Romanians</i>	3,96	4,24	4,06	4,24	4,18	3,82	3,94	3,10	3,42	3,28
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,64	4,63	3,12	5,20	3,10	2,46	2,79	3,03	3,46	3,48
Olimp	4,63	3,69	5,08	4,28	3,80	3,44	3,82	3,30	3,01	3,19
<i>Romanians</i>	4,63	3,68	5,09	4,27	3,80	3,45	3,82	3,30	3,01	3,18
<i>Foreigners</i>	4,25	4,20	4,36	4,78	9,29	1,58	3,53	0,00	3,89	4,41
Neptun	4,73	4,87	4,93	4,52	4,26	4,55	4,40	3,49	3,91	3,85
<i>Romanians</i>	4,61	4,78	4,85	4,47	4,20	4,51	4,35	3,49	3,91	3,85
<i>Foreigners</i>	11,72	11,35	9,91	9,27	11,84	7,72	9,67	5,41	5,55	3,38
Jupiter	4,56	4,55	4,46	4,60	4,26	4,93	4,66	3,96	3,81	3,08
<i>Romanians</i>	4,57	4,58	4,48	4,60	4,26	4,93	4,66	3,96	3,81	3,08
<i>Foreigners</i>	3,71	3,00	3,58	3,93	3,66	3,64	4,72	3,44	3,68	2,71
Cap Aurora	5,01	5,65	5,03	5,10	5,05	3,67	3,51	4,44	4,08	3,11
<i>Romanians</i>	5,00	5,64	5,04	5,10	5,05	3,68	3,51	4,44	4,08	3,12
<i>Foreigners</i>	5,65	6,68	4,50	6,06	5,71	1,89	2,65	3,20	3,86	2,32
Venus	4,31	4,43	4,42	3,66	3,84	4,23	4,00	3,52	3,54	3,39
<i>Romanians</i>	4,35	4,43	4,43	3,66	3,85	4,24	4,01	3,52	3,54	3,39
<i>Foreigners</i>	2,51	4,53	3,87	3,57	2,84	3,25	3,16	3,48	2,99	2,55
Saturn	7,57	7,55	6,98	6,79	6,61	6,16	6,19	4,65	4,58	3,72
<i>Romanians</i>	7,55	7,58	7,01	6,81	6,61	6,17	6,19	4,65	4,58	3,72
<i>Foreigners</i>	8,22	6,92	6,19	5,77	6,54	5,97	8,19	4,73	3,37	3,4

Source: processed data from the statistical database National Institute of Statistics - DJSC, 2023

The difference between the situation regarding the size of the LOS in the year 2013, respectively in the year 2022 is interesting. Thus, whereas in the year 2013 the specificity of each resort in the coastal area of Romania was still quite evident (shorter-stay holidays in the North of the Romanian coast, longer-stay holidays in the South, for long-term treatment in the resorts equipped with balneary treatment bases), and it was reflected in large differences in terms of the durations of the stay, after 10 years, in the year 2022, it was noticed that the average length of the stay tended to even out, to be closer in size in almost all the resorts, with the exception of the Techirghiol and Mangalia resorts, which kept their specific balneary treatment, even though they also had considerably shorter lengths of stay compared to 10 years ago.

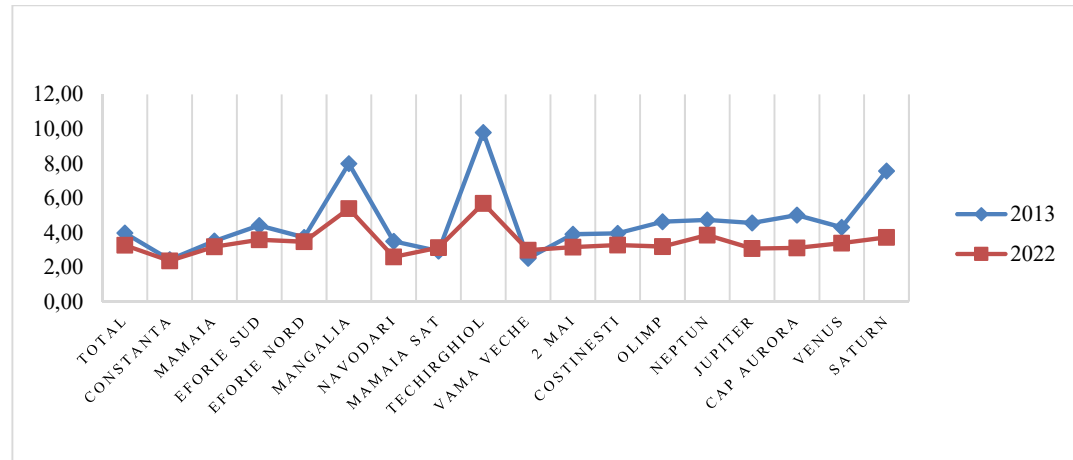
5. Conclusions

The almost generalized worldwide trend of reduction in LOS also manifested in Romania, but with significant differences between the different types of tourist destinations, the decrease occurring at different rates.

Since about a quarter of Romania's tourist accommodation capacity, expressed in the number of bed-places, is located in the Black Sea coastal area of the country, we paid special attention to the analysis of the evolution of the LOS indicator in this tourist area.

As a result of the processing and analysis of statistical data and of the discussions held with entrepreneurs and tourism managers from the majority of tourist resorts located in Romania's coastal area certain causes for these developments emerged, which can form the basis for finding solutions materialized in measures that would lead to the increase, in the following period, of the LOS, both by improving the tourism offer and by better promoting these tourist destinations.

Figure no. 3. The evolution of the average length of stay in the seaside resorts, including Constanța city 2013-2022



Source: processed data from the statistical database National Institute of Statistics - DJSC, 2023

The legislation recently adopted in Romania regarding the establishment of Destination Management Organizations, although considered by many tourism entrepreneurs as not exactly what they had expected (Jugănar, 2022, p. 303), allowed the establishment of several such organizations, at the local, county, and regional level, having the obligation to draw up and adopt, in the following period, development and marketing strategies for the respective destinations. We believe that, within these strategies, it is necessary to include measures which would lead to an increase in LOS.

The analyzed statistical data present some methodological limitations, considering the fact that the National Institute of Statistics in Romania does not collect data from all the operating tourist reception structures, but only those with 5 places or more, as classified by the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, and a significant number of accommodation places are occupied by tourists in unclassified structures (especially in apartments and private rooms for rent), so that there is no information regarding the tourist movement of the people staying in them.

In this paper, we have used the term day/days to express the average duration of the stay, since the overnight stays indicator, which is the basis of the LOS calculation, is more frequently used with the name tourist-days than that of accommodation nights stays.

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