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Health tourism contribution to the structural dynamics of the territorial systems with tourism functionality

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Abstract

The study aims to identify the role of health tourism (SPA) in developing the territorial systems, characterized by the tourism functionality, in Romania, for the period 2000-2012, a period marked by spectacular transformations, especially for this economic sector. Tourism has now become a true economic engine, generating an increase in the functional complexity of the territorial system, which is based on exploiting tourism resources. To quantify how tourism has contributed to the economic development of these territorial systems in Romania a database of NACE codes was set up, specific for the tourism activity, for the period 2000-2012, for territorial mainframe systems with functionality resort. Based on this statistical support analyzes on the evolution of the number of companies, number of employees, turnover and profit were made. The results show the important role of health tourism in generating multiplier effects on other components of the economic subsystem. They were defined two categories of territorial systems: territorial systems where tourism plays a complementary role function and territorial systems in which health tourism has a preeminent role in the local economy.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is today an important sector in the world economy, as reflected in the year 2012 in the number of international arrivals, which for the first time exceeded the figure of 1 billion [1, 2]. Moreover, a series of studies confirm that this sector can bring important benefits, both economically and socially [3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

Worldwide, health tourism is recognized as one of the oldest forms of tourism, practiced since antiquity and one of subtypes of health tourism. Since this period, the society was concerned with finding some efficient methods for maintaining health. An example of this, it is a series of tourist resort in Europe, which owes its existence from the exploitation of local resources available to the spa [9, 10, 11]. Revenues increasingly higher but also knowledge and technology are becoming increasingly affordable have made that health tourism become increasingly popular [12]. This trend is confirmed by the manner in which mineral and thermal waters are used so that globally, this sector was estimated by Global Wellness Institute in 2014 to 50 billion \$, having a number of over 26.000 establishments [13].

Studying how local economies influence the development of health tourism becomes very important, especially in complex economic influences exerted on the economic system of settlements [14, 15, 16, 17]. In fact, worldwide, there are numerous studies that emphasizes the role that might have health tourism in developing local economies, especially if this type of tourism is promoted through specific programs such as the social tourism [18, 19, 20, 21].

In this regard the establishment of this type of tourism's contribution to the development of local economies is an important element in designing and implementing effective management strategies so that benefits local communities are obvious. Basically, spa tourism, through the efficient management of services coupled with a well thought out marketing strategy can have positive effects in local communities [22, 23].

In Romania, the development of this type of tourism is particularly significant, especially as a mineral water resources ranked 19 worldwide, with estimated revenue for 2013 of \$ 290 million¹³. Along with other natural healing factors is estimated that, nationwide, there are over 100 villages and areas that could develop this type of tourism, at least as a complementary economic activity, 23 of this areas are already confirmed as SPA resorts [24]. Moreover, the importance of health tourism is recognized by the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007 – 2026, which aims at the overall objective of positioning Romania as a destination valued, one of the secondary objectives are repositioning this type of tourism in Romania, but also in the European context, so as to bring significant economic benefits, both in general and especially local [25,26]. From the point of view of the contribution of this sector on the local economy, SPA tourism can represent a viable development trend in the areas with tourism resources [27].

2. Methodology

The analysis is based on four basic indicators (number of companies, turnover, profit and number of employees), for the period 2000-2012, at NACE code (National Classification of Economic Activities) for each SPA resort. For each indicator, a growth matrix ranking weightings of local spa sector in the total economy, has achieved [28]. This methodology allows the modeling competition between the spa sector and other sectors of the local economy.

For a better understanding of the dynamics of the phenomenon, correlations to the level indicators overall for 2012 were conducted. This have been done with a software for processing and interpretation of statistical data (R-Software), resulting in a series of handy chart correlative understanding of the processes. The study considered the resorts which, according to the National Statistics Institute, held the office resort. The statistical support was provided by databases within the project „Territorial management based on the growth poles theory” (1365/2014).

3. Results

The competition between the SPA sector and all other sectors of the local economy represents key elements in understanding the complex phenomena from that territorial systems with SPA function. Figure 1 shows the relationship between profit and other key economic indicators used in the analysis. So we can see a strong correlation between invariable component - profit and other variable components - number of companies, number of employees and turnover. So we can see a high concentration of small profits, most companies are located in areas with low profits economic, appearing only sporadically some companies with medium and large profits. The same situation is also recorded in the number of employees, but also in turnover, important indicators characterizing the economic situation in territorial systems of this type.

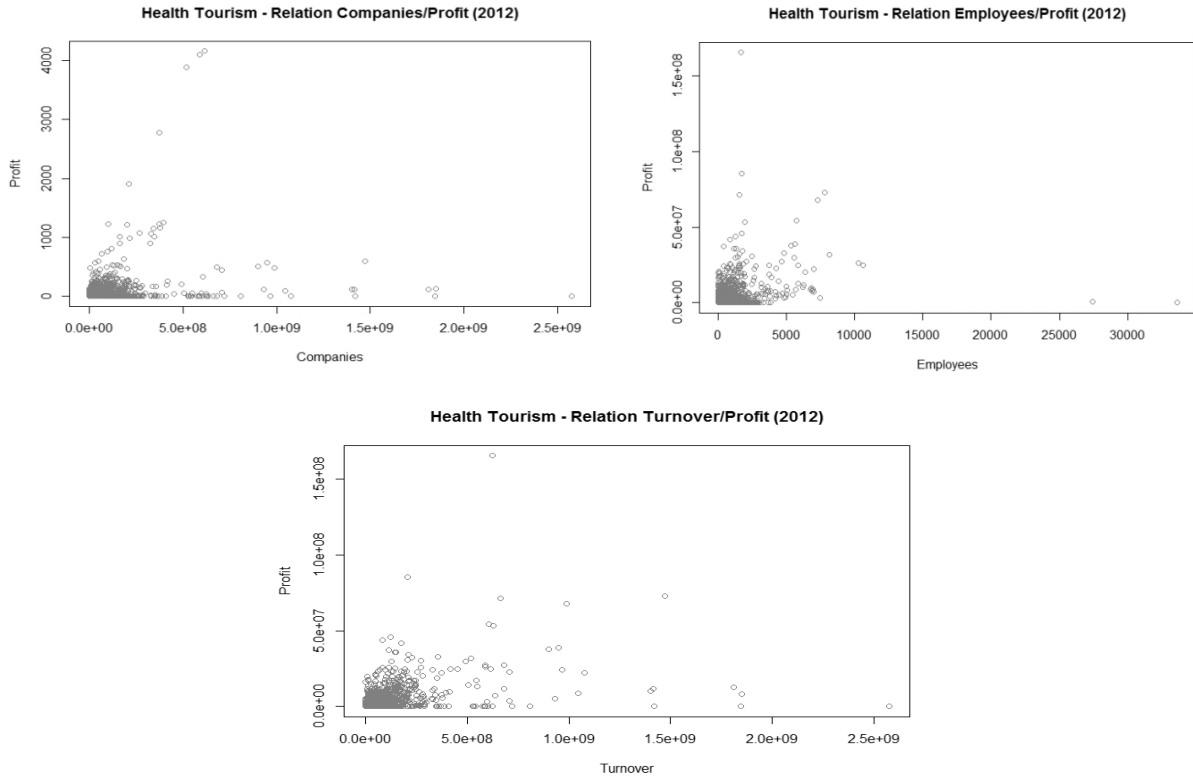


Fig 1. The relationship between profit and companies number , employees number and turnover for 2012 in the spa tourism sector (Data source: Project UB/1365 „Territorial management based on the growth poles theory”)

Table 1 ranks the weight variation in the number of companies in the SPA sector, even if the importance of the Spa tourism in the local economy is not shown, it highlights the role of tourism in increasing the operational complexity. The first three positions are occupied by the territorial systems where, after 2000, tourism became the pre-eminent economic activity, being the main generator of multiplier effects in the local economy.

Table 1. Changes on the percentage of companies number from spa tourism sector in the total number of companies

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Tușnad	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1
Predeal	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
Eforie	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3
Olănești	5	5	5	38	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	4
Moneasa	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	5	5	5	5
Borsec	11	12	8	6	8	12	8	9	11	7	6	6	6
Herculane	23	21	17	16	12	6	12	11	6	6	7	7	7
Geoagiu	8	9	10	7	14	15	16	14	12	12	12	10	8
Slănic Moldova	35	34	38	28	28	19	9	7	7	8	8	8	9
Călimănești-Căciulata	7	8	7	39	6	7	6	6	8	9	9	9	10
Sinaia	12	14	15	10	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11
Sovata	6	6	9	5	7	8	7	8	9	11	11	12	12
Voineasa	18	19	26	41	25	28	24	21	13	13	13	13	13
Bușteni	13	15	13	9	9	13	15	17	17	16	15	14	14
Bazna	22	24	30	29	22	11	11	15	15	28	26	26	15
Ocna Șugatag	28	30	23	21	13	14	20	24	24	18	17	15	16
Felix I Mai	14	16	16	12	18	17	13	13	14	14	14	16	17
Stâna de Vale	9	10	11	11	20	24	25	27	26	25	18	17	18

Băltățești	25	25	27	20	17	21	17	18	19	23	23	23	19
Buziaș	10	11	6	14	16	20	21	20	21	17	19	18	20
Borșa	19	22	19	13	15	16	18	19	20	20	21	20	21
Săcelu	17	7	12	8	10	9	14	12	18	19	20	19	22
Tâșnad	20	20	18	18	26	26	26	23	23	22	22	22	23
Monteoru	24	17	21	19	27	23	23	25	25	24	25	24	24
Vatra Dornei	21	23	20	17	21	22	22	22	22	21	24	25	25
Techirghiol	15	13	14	15	19	18	19	16	16	15	16	21	26
Soveja	30	29	22	40	24	25	27	30	31	27	27	27	27
Târgu Ocna	31	32	33	30	35	32	34	33	34	34	32	29	28
Ocna Sibiului	33	36	29	24	34	35	33	29	28	29	28	30	29
Amara	27	27	28	25	30	30	31	34	30	30	31	31	30
Lipova	16	18	24	22	29	29	30	31	32	32	30	28	31
Bizusa	36	37	36	27	23	27	29	28	29	31	34	32	32
Covasna	37	35	35	31	31	31	32	32	33	33	35	33	33
Slanic Prahova	26	26	25	23	32	33	28	26	27	26	29	34	34
Tinca	32	28	31	26	33	34	36	36	36	36	33	35	35
Turda	38	38	39	34	40	39	39	39	40	38	38	38	36
Nicolina	40	40	41	36	41	40	40	40	41	39	39	39	37
Bughea	39	39	40	35	38	38	38	38	37	40	40	40	38
Lacul Sărat	29	31	32	32	36	36	35	35	35	35	36	36	39
Călacea	42	42	37	42	39	41	41	41	38	37	37	37	40
Pucioasa	34	33	34	33	37	37	37	37	39	41	41	41	41
Vălenii de Munte	41	41	42	37	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42

Data source: Project UB/1365,,Territorial management based on the growth poles theory”

The last positions belong to the territorial systems that have been recording a continuous decline since 1990, the spa resources not being able to support sustainable development. Detailed analyzes showed that these resorts and other economic activities tend to become dominant in local economies.

The dynamics of the ranks by percentage of turnover (table 2), profit and employees of the spa sector in the total local economy, highlights the territorial systems holding spa resources important and, perhaps most importantly, the spa is the one who has the role of economic engine local.

Changes ranks as the share of turnover in the spa sector in the total turnover of show-effectiveness of investment in the SPA sector, achieved in resorts with valuable SPA resources, a favorable position towards the centers of polarization and development, and also the policies that have supported the development of this sector.

Table 2. Changes on the percentage of turnover from spa tourism sector in the total turnover

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Slanic Prahova	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1
Tușnad	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	3	2
Călimănești-Caciulata	3	3	4	31	4	5	4	4	3	4	6	5	3
Olănești	12	10	10	32	5	4	5	5	5	2	2	4	4
Slanic Moldova	21	26	12	18	12	10	6	2	4	9	3	1	5
Predeal	7	7	9	9	8	7	8	6	7	5	7	6	6
Sinaia	16	16	17	12	15	13	12	13	10	12	9	8	7
Moneasa	15	18	22	6	9	8	15	9	9	6	5	7	8
Sovata	14	15	15	13	16	15	14	14	13	13	13	11	9
Herculane	5	5	3	3	6	2	7	7	11	14	15	14	10
Geoagiu	8	6	7	7	11	11	11	10	6	8	10	10	11
Stâna de Vale	6	13	16	16	28	28	33	34	33	22	17	13	12
Covasna	17	17	18	14	17	16	16	17	14	15	16	16	13
Eforie	4	4	5	5	7	12	10	11	12	11	12	12	14
Ocna Șugatag	42	42	42	42	39	38	20	15	15	17	21	20	15
Săcelu	13	12	6	4	3	6	2	12	17	10	14	21	16
Felix 1 Mai	9	8	8	8	10	9	9	8	8	7	8	9	17
Bușteni	10	9	11	10	14	14	13	16	16	19	24	22	18
Târgu Ocna	19	21	28	25	29	27	27	24	23	27	20	17	19
Vatra Dornei	22	20	20	19	18	18	19	18	18	18	19	19	20
Borșa	20	22	24	21	21	17	17	19	19	20	22	23	21
Buziaș	11	14	14	17	23	24	26	26	29	31	27	24	22
Ocna Sibiului	35	36	33	29	30	35	37	36	37	16	11	18	23
Amara	27	27	27	23	25	23	18	22	21	25	23	25	24

Nicolina	34	35	37	37	36	34	35	35	34	37	36	32	25
Soveja	29	30	21	33	19	32	28	33	36	23	28	34	26
Pucioasa	28	29	34	30	34	30	30	30	26	21	18	15	27
Tinca	36	11	13	11	13	19	21	21	22	26	25	26	28
Tășnad	26	25	23	20	24	22	24	23	24	28	26	27	29
Băltățești	37	40	40	38	37	31	31	27	25	32	34	28	30
Lipova	33	34	32	24	26	25	25	28	30	33	30	29	31
Turda	30	31	30	27	27	26	29	29	31	36	31	30	32
Bazna	31	32	31	35	40	40	41	41	35	38	38	33	33
Bizusa	24	28	29	26	22	21	23	25	28	30	29	35	34
Monteoru	25	24	26	22	32	29	34	32	32	34	35	37	35
Voineasa	23	23	25	34	31	36	32	31	27	29	33	31	36
Techirghiol	18	19	19	15	20	20	22	20	20	24	32	36	37
Bughea	38	37	38	40	41	41	39	39	39	35	37	38	38
Lacul Sărat	39	38	36	28	33	33	36	37	38	39	39	39	39
Borsec	32	33	35	36	35	37	38	38	41	41	40	40	40
Calacea	41	41	41	39	38	39	40	40	40	40	41	41	41
Vălenii de Munte	40	39	39	41	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42

Data source: Project UB/1365,,Territorial management based on the growth poles theory”

The lowest values are recorded in the SPA resorts where the other economic sectors have benefited from investment, some tending toward changing the basic functionality (Vălenii de Munte, Lacul Sărat, Voineasa etc).

Differences between the hierarchy of the turnover and profit result from the reinvestments of the profit in the same sector and in tourism, in general (table 2 and 3).

Table 3. Changes on the percentage of profit registered in spa tourism sector in the total profit

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Slănic Prahova	16	17	17	13	5	2	4	2	2	1	2	4	1
Olănești	15	20	6	30	3	3	2	5	5	2	1	3	2
Tușnad	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	4	5	1	3
Sovata	8	8	14	21	16	18	9	16	6	8	7	7	4
Târgu Ocna	9	13	12	16	17	16	18	15	19	7	3	5	5
Predeal	6	4	4	5	8	6	6	10	11	11	11	13	6
Moneasa	37	10	32	3	9	5	13	14	24	20	16	22	7
Săcelu	40	7	9	1	1	10	12	24	39	5	8	14	8
Sinaia	11	15	10	7	10	7	7	9	9	17	10	10	9
Eforie	5	3	5	4	7	9	10	8	7	9	12	12	10
Stâna de Vale	4	11	2	10	36	37	39	34	31	3	13	2	11
Băltățești	27	34	37	40	35	36	27	36	28	34	26	33	12
Herculane	17	16	3	6	13	8	15	11	17	31	32	8	13
Călimănești-Căciulata	3	5	7	31	4	12	8	6	8	14	9	11	14
Vatra Dornei	21	21	24	28	20	21	21	19	20	29	21	15	15
Slănic Moldova	14	31	35	26	14	11	3	1	1	21	4	6	16
Techirghiol	31	24	22	12	21	17	23	28	14	19	19	18	17
Monteoru	19	9	19	15	23	23	28	20	26	32	17	16	18
Borsec	28	35	16	38	39	34	37	41	18	16	30	19	19
Ocna Șugatag	39	40	41	41	41	38	33	26	22	28	18	26	20
Bușteni	13	12	8	8	15	14	17	7	16	24	23	27	21
Felix 1 Mai	7	6	11	9	6	4	5	4	4	6	6	9	22
Amara	22	32	36	36	31	30	20	31	23	12	36	25	23
Geoagiu	2	2	13	14	22	13	14	18	13	13	15	21	24
Covasna	12	18	18	11	11	15	11	13	10	18	14	24	25
Soveja	24	33	27	32	38	40	34	38	37	10	35	31	26
Borșa	18	25	23	18	19	20	19	21	25	26	24	29	27
Voineasa	42	42	28	33	29	28	16	17	12	15	37	32	28
Turda	25	22	25	24	28	26	35	32	33	37	29	35	29
Pucioasa	30	29	34	29	37	32	30	25	30	27	25	17	30
Bazna	26	27	33	39	40	41	41	12	15	23	38	20	31
Buziaș	10	14	15	27	24	25	26	23	21	22	20	23	32
Lacul Sărat	36	30	26	25	26	33	32	30	35	33	22	28	33
Nicolina	29	28	30	34	32	31	29	29	32	35	28	34	34
Lipova	20	26	29	19	27	27	24	22	29	30	27	36	35
Tășnad	23	23	21	22	25	22	31	37	36	41	42	38	36

Ocna Sibiului	38	39	40	20	18	19	25	35	40	25	31	30	37
Bughea	34	37	31	35	33	35	38	33	34	36	33	37	38
Bizusa	33	36	38	23	30	29	36	40	41	42	34	39	39
Vălenii de Munte	41	41	42	42	42	42	42	39	38	38	39	40	40
Călacea	35	38	39	37	34	39	40	42	42	39	40	41	41
Tinca	32	19	20	17	12	24	22	27	27	40	41	42	42

Data source: Project UB/1365,,Territorial management based on the growth poles theory”

The dynamics of hierarchy as the percentage of total employees in the banking sector employees is closely related to investments in this sector. The highest values are recorded in the resorts with an increase in turnover (table 4).

Table 4. Changes on the percentage of employees number from spa tourism sector in the total employees number

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Slănic Prahova	3	4	7	7	8	7	3	2	2	3	1	1	1
Călimănești-Căciulata	7	3	3	35	3	3	4	7	11	12	12	12	2
Predeal	6	6	4	6	7	6	8	8	7	8	6	5	3
Olănești	21	10	10	36	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	2	4
Eforie	8	7	6	5	6	9	9	9	10	10	11	10	5
Slănic Moldova	18	21	17	21	10	10	6	6	6	9	10	8	6
Sinaia	11	12	16	11	13	11	11	11	12	13	8	9	7
Geoagiu	14	14	15	10	14	13	13	13	8	7	7	7	8
Stâna de Vale	2	9	13	16	21	22	22	24	23	27	27	11	9
Moneasa	15	18	11	8	9	14	10	10	9	6	5	4	10
Bușteni	9	11	12	9	12	12	12	12	13	1	14	15	11
Felix 1 Mai	5	5	5	4	5	5	7	5	3	5	2	3	12
Herculane	4	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	5	11	13	13	13
Tușnad	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	6	14
Sovata	12	17	20	12	15	16	16	19	15	16	15	14	15
Ocna Șugatag	41	41	42	41	35	35	30	23	22	18	19	17	16
Vatra Dornei	22	26	23	19	23	21	17	16	16	15	16	16	17
Covasna	10	13	18	15	18	19	18	20	14	19	17	19	18
Buziaș	17	19	8	13	20	18	15	18	17	20	20	18	19
Monteoru	30	28	29	20	19	17	21	17	20	22	23	21	20
Pucioasa	31	32	30	30	33	34	35	35	33	28	22	20	21
Tinca	32	15	14	14	17	20	19	21	21	17	18	24	22
Borșa	20	22	22	18	22	15	14	15	19	23	28	25	23
Săcelu	42	42	9	3	11	8	20	14	18	24	24	27	24
Târgu Ocna	25	24	26	23	26	24	28	27	28	26	25	22	25
Techirghiol	16	20	19	17	24	23	23	22	24	21	21	23	26
Bazna	28	31	35	32	37	36	32	29	31	37	34	26	27
Tășnad	36	33	31	28	32	31	31	31	30	31	32	28	28
Băltățești	37	37	40	42	40	32	27	26	26	30	29	29	29
Soveja	24	30	39	40	16	28	26	32	42	39	39	42	30
Lipova	26	25	27	24	28	27	25	28	29	29	31	30	31
Nicolina	35	8	33	31	34	29	33	33	34	34	35	32	32
Lacul Sărat	39	34	32	25	29	30	36	36	36	36	36	34	33
Turda	27	27	28	27	31	33	34	34	35	35	37	35	34
Amara	19	23	24	22	27	26	24	25	25	25	26	36	35
Bughea	34	36	37	33	38	38	38	38	37	38	38	38	36
Voineasa	13	16	21	37	30	37	37	37	27	33	30	31	37
Ocna Sibiului	40	40	41	34	39	40	40	40	38	14	9	33	38
Bizusa	23	29	34	29	25	25	29	30	32	32	33	37	39
Călacea	38	38	38	39	42	42	42	39	39	41	40	39	40
Borsec	29	39	25	26	36	39	39	42	41	40	41	40	41
Vălenii de Munte	33	35	36	38	41	41	41	41	40	42	42	41	42

Data source: Project UB/1365,,Territorial management based on the growth poles theory”

4. Conclusion

Dynamic of the hierarchies, according to the four parameters revealed three categories of resorts in the function of specific parameters of SPA sector specific to the parameters of local economies: the state where the SPA function is pre-eminent, resorts with unclear basic functionality and resorts with functionality in decline.

The Spa resorts with an evident function benefited from major investment in the sector throughout the period under review, the growth being superior to investment into other sectors of local economies.

The resorts with an unclear basic functionality recorded, in recent years, a decrease of the SPA function, this function contributing to the development of the local economy in equal proportions. These evolutions have led to a complex economic profile, which punctually tend to depart from their basic functionality.

The resorts with a functionality in decline, today recorded a major decrease of SPA function, a function that is gradually replaced by other economic sectors.

The results and methodology are key elements in developing efficient strategies for territorial management, specific to the territorial systems functionally restructured. Their practice can lead to evident economic benefits at the level of the local economies [29, 30].

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