



ONLINE INFORMATION PREMISE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIHOR TOURIST DESTINATION, ROMANIA

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Abstract

Tourism represents one of the sustainable alternatives with well-defined roles and functions in the shaping and development of local economies and tourist destination identity respectively. In this context, the transmitted information plays a major part. In the present case, the study focused on the analysis of the information delivered by the local actors from Bihor tourist destination in the online environment. The website pages belonging to the main local actors were analysed to quantify qualitatively and quantitatively the information from the online environment as a premise for the development of Bihor tourist destination. 686 possible local actors were identified, 140 public actors and 546 private activities whose sites were analyzed by the perspective regarding the information

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about tourist destinations in the studied area. The results have highlighted some crucial aspects regarding the local actors' attributions concerning the information typology in the process of construction and strengthening of the tourist destination image.

Key words

Tourist information, tourist destination, local actors, online environment.

INTRODUCTION

Bihor Tourist Destination overlaps the administrative territory of the homonymous county located in the west of Romania. Due to the relatively equal distribution on all three relief units and the millennial past of this region, the tourist offer includes a wide variety of attractions and ways to spend the free time. Through its historical and cultural values, the city of Oradea is without a doubt the pearl of this tourist destination, attracting the most tourists every year at the destination level. Among the multitude of buildings and palaces built in the most diverse architectural styles, the fortress from Oradea is individualized as a true emblem of the city; this is also indicated by the fact that it is positioned in a place of honor on the city's flag.

The fortress represents at the same time one of the defining elements for the society, both at the Bihor County level and at the national-european one. This is due to the geopolitical context in which they appeared and evolved and also from the roles and functions they performed over time (Botezat and Tomescu, 2016). Among these, we can notice the political and military ones, of spiritual convergence and identity assertion. The historiographic analysis of Oradea Fortress has emphasized close links with the evolution of Oradea town, basically the fortress has influenced the political, religious, social and economic state of Oradea and the whole Bihor County respectively. Dating back to the 12th century, when the monastery on the Crișul Repede bank, erected by the Hungarian king Ladislau I, was fortified with stone walls (Borcea et al., 2007; Badiali et al., 2018) Oradea Fortress has endured through centuries to this day by its major contributions to the local community progress and well-being. It must be noticed that the local traditions and military functions associated to Oradea Fortress were established on the basis of another fortress situated in its immediate proximity, Biharea Fortress from the 2nd century.

Currently, Oradea Fortress has gone through a long renovation and preservation process, getting back partly its glamour and grandeur from another time. Although it does not perform its previous functions and attributions, it received new gnoseological, cultural and touristic functions. These last ones represent the objective of this present study.

Amid globalisation and the transition of the human society from an industrial one to an informational one (Herman, 2012) based on knowledge, there is the matter of information and its accuracy. Tourism, which claims to be more and more



an economic branch in full expansion with real possibilities of local and sustainable development of tourist destination, cannot make a compromise (Ianoş et al., 2012; Drăghici et al., 2015; Herman et al., 2017, Herman et al., 2018b; Ilie et al., 2017; Grecu et al., 2019, Dehoorne et al., 2019). As an economic branch, tourism is a cohesive human activity which capitalises on the specific assets of a given area in a continuous exchange of substance, energy and information. Taking into consideration the vast amount of tourist information available online (Xiang et al., 2015; Nelson, 2014) and the fact that this represents an essential tool of everyday life, the internet represents a qualitative and quantitative premise with a major impact on the shaping, evolution and dynamic of the tourist destinations (Doolin et al., 2002; Choi et al., 2007; Seabra et al., 2007; Dwivedi, 2009; Law et al., 2010; Matlovičová and Husárová, 2017; Lv and McCabe, 2020; Sun et al., 2020, Matlovičová and Sovičová 2010). In this situation, the existence of the Oradea Fortress, an important element that makes up the cultural heritage (Ilies et al., 2016; Ilies et al., 2018a, b; Ilies et al., 2019; Indrie et al., 2019) of Oradea and Bihor County, considerably increases the attractiveness of this destination, making it viable for both cultural tourism and leisure. The existent information concerns the destination by influencing the tourists' decision-making process regarding the choice of the tourist destination (Jacobsen and Munar, 2012; Standing et al., 2014; Matlovicova et al., 2019, Matlovičová and Kormaníková 2014) and each structural element separately, in our case Oradea Fortress, as a representative element, generating tourist motivation for Bihor destination.

In the light of informational society doubled by the perspective of information dissemination online, there is the matter of information quantity and quality (Križman and Belullo, 2007; Vičič and Šukljan, 2016; Kopmaz et al., 2019; Varelas, 2019). It is well-known the fact that the online, virtual space has gained significant magnitude, and new perspectives to enlarge this space are foreseen in the future, in which there is the risk to get lost, unless we have the required education, without making the difference between reality and virtual space (Van den Bos and Nell, 2006). Moreover, amid transmitting a residual type of information (outdated and sometimes incorrect) the potential tourists are faced with difficulties regarding the perception of destinations they are going to travel to. Overcoming these difficulties requires a good coordination of all the actors involved in the tourist promotion process and the understanding of the necessity to respect the 'copyright' when delivering information regarding an object, process or tourist act. The necessary information to determine the tourist consumption must be qualitative, in optimal quantity and from primary sources as much as possible. Primary sources are those which deliver the information in close relation with the reality in the field, coming from local, responsible actors involved in tourism (public and private) without suffering any interpretations or alterations. To avoid the accumulation of residual type



of information it is advisable to be only one responsible (transmitter, in this case The Museum of Oradea), the rest of the actors focusing more on the relay function of dissemination of primary information and not on that of issuing.

The basic researches are constituted in support of the decision-making assistance, the results obtained have a special role in understanding the role of information in developing a tourist destination. This type of analysis represents a dynamic X-ray of a tourist attraction, realized by the actors directly involved in the promotion and capitalization of the tourist destination. The importance of this analysis is given by the increasingly important role of information in the online environment in decision making.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

Bihor tourist destination comprising eight areas of maximum concentration of resources and tourist infrastructure (Oradea, Băile Felix, Pădurea Craiului, Stâna de Vale, Padiș, Vârtop, Crișurilor Plain, Ierului Valley and Barcăului Valley), overlaps the

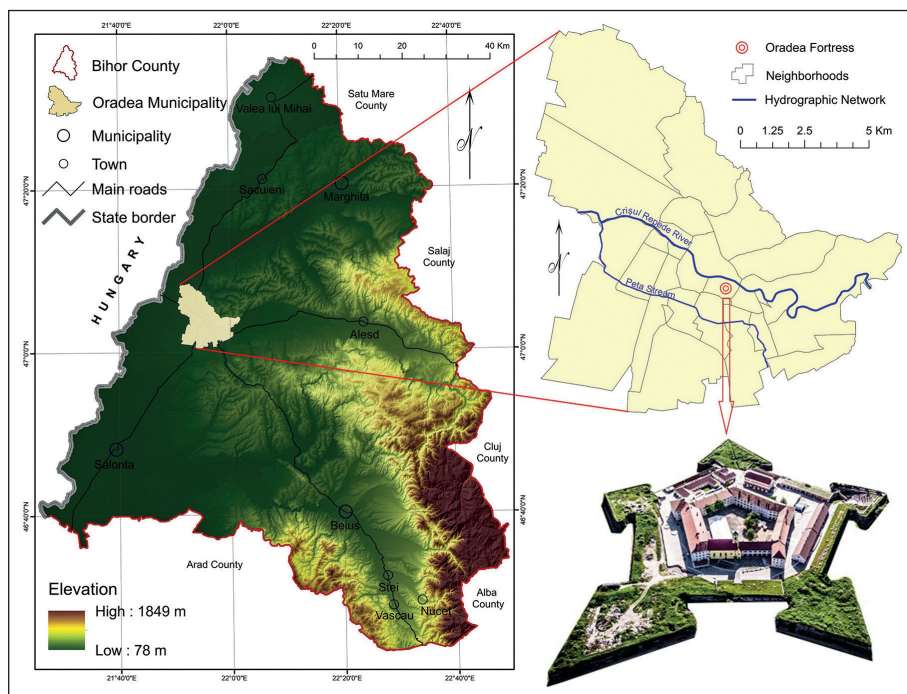


Figure 1
Physico-geographical location of Oradea fortress



homonymous territorial administrative unit being located in the north-west of Romania (Herman et al., 2019, Herman et al., 2017). Morphologically, it is represented by three major units of relief (Western Plain, Western Hills and Apuseni Mountains), whereas hydrographically, it overlaps the hydrographic basin of Crișul Repede River, left tributary of Tisa River (Figure 1).

The favourable physico-geographical features contributed to the humanisation of this area from time immemorial. Located at the contact of great empires, the history of this land is closely linked to that of Biharea and Oradea fortresses, and the central European space in which they functioned (Herman et al., 2016, Herman et al., 2018b).

Data analysis

Methodologically, the present study aims to identify the manner and extent to which this gem, Oradea Fortress, is promoted touristically online as an informational part corresponding to the websites of the main actors from Bihor tourist destination. As a result of the analysis of the above mentioned area, regarding the existence of local actors with roles, functions and attributions in the tourist promotion, were identified 686 possible local actors, 140 public actors (Bihor County Council, 101 town halls representing the territorial administrative units, 13 tourist information and promotion centers and 25 museums and collections) and 546 private actors (56 tourism agencies, 459 tourist units with accommodation functions and 31 NGOs) (Table 1). Therefore, the present study targeted the analysis of each actor's websites (366 web pages) separately (excepting the actors that do not have a web page) from november to december 2019, to identify the quantity (existence of information) and quality of information (presenting the objective, timetable, charged fee and the link to the primary source of this information, to the issuer) regarding Oradea Fortress as a tourist attraction with cultural identity.

For each type of information (regarding the existence, presentation, timetable, fee and link) was given a score equal to 1 so that each actor could cumulate a total of 5 points. Considering the fact that the primary information starts from a unique source (issuer The Museum of Oradea) in the process of quantification of the information delivered by the other local actors with relay functions, it was given the maximum score (5 points, major role) by the mere recording of the analysed attraction and the redistribution of the potential virtual visitors towards the main source of information, The Museum of Oradea respectively. Based on the maximum acquired score (5 points for each actor) it was established a value scale regarding their role in the promotion of Oradea Fortress, as follows: 1 – very small role; 2 – small role; 3 – average role; 4 – big role; 5 – very big role.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Museum of Oradea located in Oradea Fortress, nr. 39 – 41, Emanuil Gojdu Square, is the source institution, the main issuer regarding the primary information concerning the analysed tourist attraction. The information of tourist interest delivered by websites is complete and well-structured targeting the location, the presentation of the attraction and the possibilities of carrying out the tourist act (timetable and charged fees).

As a result of the analysis of Bihor tourist destination, there were identified 686 local actors that could be involved in the tourist promotion process (546 actors from the private sector and 140 actors from the public sector) out of which only 366 benefit from web pages (127 public actors and 239 private actors) (table 1).

Table 1 Consulted local actors involved in the process of promotion and capitalisation

Type	Local actors	Number of local actors	Number of local actors with web page	Units that promote
Public actors 140 127 5	Museums and collections	25 (3,7%)	12 (3,2%)	1 (2,3%)
	Bihor County Council	1 (0,1%)	1 (0,2%)	1 (2,3%)
	Local Town Halls	101 (14,7%)	101 (27,6%)	1 (2,3%)
	Tourist Information and Promotion Centers	13 (1,9%)	13 (3,6%)	2 (4,6%)
Private actors 546 239 38	Tourism agencies	56 (8,2%)	56 (15,3%)	2 (4,6%)
	Tourist units with accommodation functions	459 (66,9%)	163 (44,6%)	30 (69,9%)
	NGOs	31 (4,5%)	20 (5,5%)	6 (14%)
Total 686 366 43	Total	686 (100%)	366 (100%)	43 (100%)

The analysis of each actor's web pages separately has highlighted the fact that only 43 (12%) of the consulted actors (by the websites analysis method) contributes to the collective effort to promote Oradea Fortress regarded as a tourist attraction with cultural identity with roles and functions in the generation of tourist motivation on the one hand and in the increase of the duration and diversity of tourist act on the other hand. Of the total of actors that are concerned with the promotion of the establishment, 38 (88%) belong to the private sector while only 5 (12%) units come from the public sector (Table 1, 2, Figure 2). Moreover, the analysis of the ratio between the proportion of the consulted actors (have web pages) and those

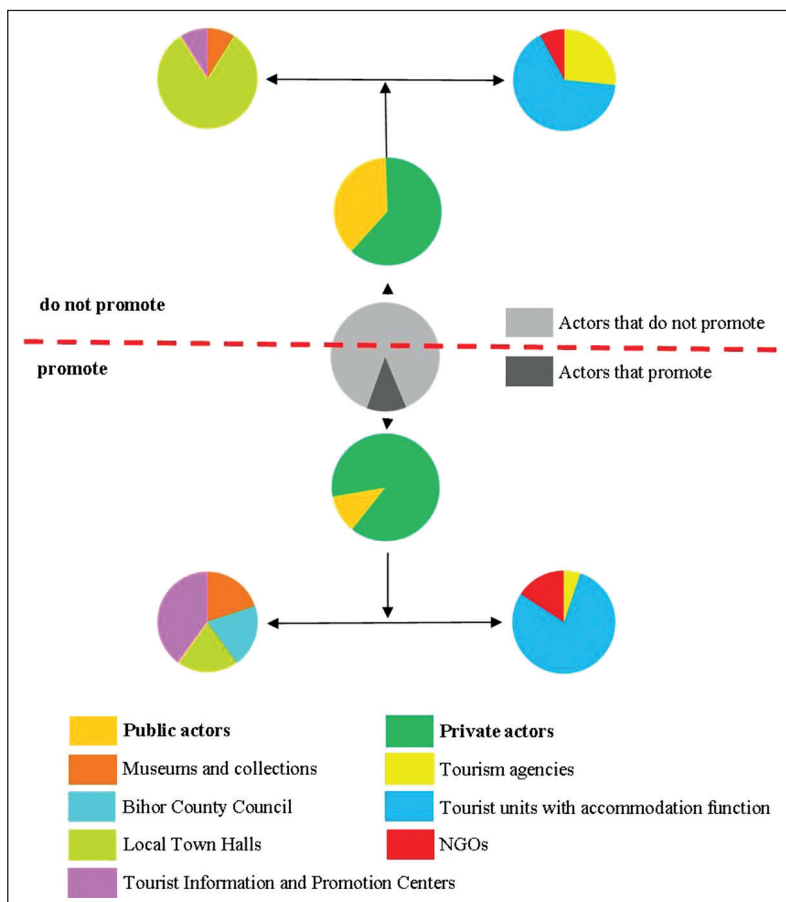


Figure 2

Conceptual model of the proportion of local actors in the tourist promotion

involved in the tourist promotion of the fortress, emphasises the superiority of the private actors (15,8%), in relation to the public sector (3,9%) (Table 1, Figure 2).

The quantification of the information obtained following the consultation of the local actors' websites targeted the following typical categories related to quality regarding tourism and tourist activity: location, presentation, timetable, charged fees and the link to the primary source of this information.

The location is an essential aspect that the prospective tourists have in mind both before and during the tourist act; recent studies in the field (Xiang et al., 2015; Jacobsen and Munar, 2012) indicate the tourists' propensity to draw up an itinerary of the trip based on existent information. They seek the location of the tourist attractions at a general level and also in relation to an element of reference



(accommodation unit, the route they are going to take, the tourist attractions they intend to visit etc.).

The online presentation of the information about the tourist attraction involves a great responsibility, the decision of coming to Bihor destination and the tourist's satisfaction with the tourist product depending on the way in which this is done. The responsibility of the dissemination of the general details regarding the main characteristics of the fortress is taken by only 15 actors (35%) of the total of 43 that take into account the promotion of the establishment (Table 1, 2).

The information regarding the timetable for visiting the analysed attraction and the charged fee is the responsibility of the Museum of Oradea. It is essential for the growth of the tourist satisfaction. Being characterized by an increase dynamic susceptible at the same time to changes occurring over time, it is recommended that this information should be delivered only by the issuer (The Museum of Oradea), the rest of the actors having the mission to address it, becoming informational relays.

The analysis of the relay function (link) was identified at 8 local actors (19% of the actors that have web pages), 4 private actors and 4 public actors (Table 2).

Table 2 Interpretation of the data in a comparative summary of the rooms

	Type of facility	Name of facility	The existence of information	Presentation of the attraction	Time table	Fees	Link	Score	Role
Public actors	Museums and collections	The Museum of Oradea	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
	Bihor County Council	Bihor County Council	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
	Local Town Halls	Oradea Town Hall	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
	Tourism Information and Promotion Centers	The Fortress Center	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
		Alesd Centre	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
Private actors	Accommodation units	Atrium Hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Avalon Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Bulevard Hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Caro Hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Continental Forum Hotel	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		Eclipse Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Hanul Cappsha Villa	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
		Imperial Rooms Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Junior Hostel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Lyra Hotel	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big



Private actors	Accommodation units	Panoramis Residence Villa	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Phoenix Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Qiu Hotel Rooms Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Recidency Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Casa Stoica Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Magic Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Empire Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Ami Hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Vital Hotel	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Carmena Camping	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Carmena Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Carmena Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Casa Alma Renting Rooms	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Casa Veronica Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Lotus Therm Hotel	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		Miorita Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Nikolas Guesthouse	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		Veronica 1 Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Casa Porojan Guesthouse	1	1	1	0	0	3	average
		Beverly Hills Guesthouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
	Tourism agencies	Eximtur	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		ChristianTours	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
	NGOs	The Foundation for the Protection of Historic Monuments from Bihor County	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
		The Association for the Promotion of Tourism in Oradea and the Region - APTOR	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		Astroclub Meridian 0 Association	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		Varadinum Foundation	1	1	0	0	0	2	small
		The Cultural Foundation the International Theatre Festival Oradea	1	0	0	0	0	1	very small
		Aiesec Association Oradea	1	1	1	1	1	5	very big
Total			43	16	9	8	8	84	very small

Based on the information obtained following the consultation of the local actors' websites from Bihor tourist destination that promote Oradea Fortress (43 actors) an assessment of their role was performed particularly (for each actor separately) and generally (overall and on types of actors) according to the methodology developed in the current study.



The analysis of the local actors (with web pages) in the tourist promotion of Oradea Fortress highlights their weak implication. This comes from the proportion of local actors and their role taken in the promotion of Oradea Fortress: very small (63%); very big (19%); small (16%); average (2%) and big (0%) (Figure 3).

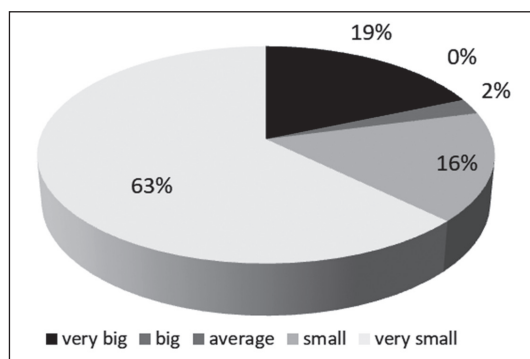


Figure 3

The proportion of local actors according to their role
in the promotion of Oradea Fortress

If most of the actors concerned with the promotion of the facility come from the private sector, the analysis of the local actors based on typical categories highlights the ones belonging to the public sector. Thus, the public actors play an important part in the promotion of Oradea Fortress while the private ones play a very small to small part (Table 3).

Table 3 The role of the local actors involved in the promotion of Oradea Fortress

Local actors	Type	Score	Number of units	Average score	Role
Public actors 4,2 big	Museums and collections	5	1	5	very big
	Bihor County Council	5	1	5	very big
	Local Town Halls	5	1	5	very big
	Tourist Information and Promotion Centers	6	2	3	average
Private actors 1,6 (very small to small)	Tourism agencies	3	2	1,5	very small to small
	Tourist units with accommodation functions	43	30	1,4	very small
	NGOs	17	6	2,8	small to average
Total 1,9 (very small to small)	Total	84	43	1,9	very small to small



In order to complete the global picture regarding the local actors' role in the promotion of Oradea Fortress (very small to small role), as a defining element for Bihor tourist destination, the information obtained was corroborated with the total number of local actors (with and without web pages). The obtained results diminished considerably the local actors' role at general level by the growth in the number of actors that do not promote Oradea Fortress tourist attraction in any way.

CONCLUSIONS

The information is an essential component in the tourist promotion process, on the way it is conceived, transmitted and received depending the decision of tourist purchase and consumption. Therefore, it is a major collective responsibility that should be assumed by all local actors. Nevertheless, from the analysis of the tourist information regarding Oradea Fortress from Bihor destination by the local actors (686 actors) in the online environment using their own web page (366 pages), it emerges the very small role played by them in the promotion of the mentioned attraction as part of Bihor tourist destination.

From the analysis of the 43 local actors on typical categories, a better situation could be considered regarding the public actors in relation to the private ones (Table 3). Nevertheless, from the analysis of each actor it is noticeable the existence of eight actors with very big role, four from the private sector and four from the public one.

Through the proposed methodology and the results obtained, the study contributes to the development of the methodologies established in the integrated development of the local economies with a dominant tourist function (Botezat and Tomescu, 2016)

Therefore, it is evident that the effort to promote Oradea Fortress as part of Bihor tourist destination by the local actors is insignificant and requires the quantitative (number of actors) and qualitative (type of information) involvement regarding the information conception and distribution through web pages and more. Other actors have contributed to the tourist promotion of Oradea Fortress through social and media networks with major impact in the decision-making process of travelling to Bihor tourist destination.

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