The Trend of the Hospitality Industry and the Advantages Versus the Disadvantages of Investing in the Workforce

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Abstract

The hospitality industry, although attractive to many entrepreneurs, is among the riskiest areas of activity in Romania. Challenges and risks can occur at any step. The human resource working in the hospitality industry is inadequately prepared, this leads to the failure of hospitality business. That’s why the right people, in the right places, responsible people who value work, especially in a field with as many challenges as the hospitality industry, will always remain an essential factor of success.

In this research we proposed new measures for the training of the workforce in a system of continuous training carried out by Ministry of Labour and social Protection for vulnerable target groups made up of unemployed and students. The study was carried out by static analysis of the demographic evolution of Romania, the trend of the labour market.

**Key words:** hospitality industry, human resources, benefits/disadvantages workforce in tourisms  
**J.E.L. classification:** M31

1. Introduction

Even a brilliant business idea can be doomed to failure, if managers do not show prudent spirit, taking all necessary measures to carry out their professional plans in the direction of business development. Emigration today is synonymous with the search for professional satisfaction. One of the main criteria for selecting a job is the salary level. Therefore, the number of Romanians who choose to work abroad is not negligible. They want better paid jobs, both for personal satisfaction and especially to support their family. Thus, 200 Romanians leave the country every day, more than 50% of them being men aged between 30 and 40 years. In an interpretation of these data, we find that emigration is a common phenomenon among those who represent the "head of the family". In other words, men are forced to leave the country to earn an amount to cover the total expenses of the family, in the context in which the salaries in the host countries are higher than those in Romania, for the same positions. ([Manager.ro](https://www.manager.ro/articole/companii-si-firme-34/deficitul-de-personal-din-industria-horeca))

2. Literature review

Ecotourism trends indicate not only an increase in demand, but also a transformation of it, from a niche market, into a main segment. Tourism in protected areas also has a positive evolution, registering an increase in interest in this type of travel. It is estimated that worldwide protected
natural areas receive 8 billion visitors annually, of which 80% are registered in protected areas in Europe and North America. (Cristureanu C., 2006, p.72).

Ecotourism attracts those tourists who want to interact with the natural environment and want to widen their level of knowledge, understanding and appreciation. One of the tendencies that fuel the growth of this form of tourism is the travels' preference to choose educational holidays that would enrich their existence (Megan Epler Wood, 2002, p. 38).

Nowadays, due to the regression registered by the hospitality industry in 2020 due to the pandemic caused by Sars-Covid 19, all the factors involved in tourism are interested. For tourism in protected natural areas, diversifying the offer and improving ecotourism services, by the fact that currently protected natural areas offer many opportunities for holidays, active participation is one of the significant trends of tourism in protected areas, promoting ecotourism as the main tourist activity in protected areas.

In the world, this style of traveling is considered harmless, with many followers. In the perspective of daily life, the quality of the environment, the lack of pollution, the cleanliness and attitude of the local population will be much more important for potential tourists than the variety of possibilities for entertainment and shopping (Bucur-Sabo M., 2006, p.69).

Through the development of these new forms of tourism, the preferences of tourists have also changed quite a lot. Thus, various market studies have shown a sustained interest among tourists-consumers in terms of tourism products and services that protect the environment, respect local culture and traditions.

Among the foreign tourists respondents to the survey stated that they would have taken into account the ecological footprint during their vacation between 2014 and 2017.

2.1. Lack of human resources, cause of decline of restaurants

Emigration leads to one of the biggest challenges facing entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry: staff shortages. It is not uncommon for a restaurant to reach the brink of bankruptcy due to the insufficient number of employees. For example, in a restaurant where many people come every day, the activity of the employees is intense. These, being in too small a number, end up, at some point, no longer meeting the requests and needs of customers, which, happening repeatedly, creates a general state of dissatisfaction among those who frequent the restaurant.

Finally, the brand's reputation is seriously damaged or even destroyed. If there are not enough employees to cope with the restaurant's activities, the business will begin to decline.

Another human resource problem in the hospitality industry is the lack of professional skills of employees. Unsatisfactory communication, poor quality serving conditions, questionable way of preparing food are just some of the negative aspects often encountered in restaurants in Romania. On a deeper analysis, these are also closely related to the phenomenon of emigration: Romanians who have the necessary skills choose to work abroad, due to better earnings, and the current workforce is no longer sufficient.

In this context, entrepreneurs, looking for staff to help them carry out their activity end up hiring people whose professional skills do not live up to the requirements and expectations in the field. In reality, the lack of human resources and poorly prepared human resources are two equally serious problems, causes of the decline of a significant number of restaurants in our country.

2.2. Asian human resources, a solution for staff shortages

Romania remains one of the countries where emigration is a common phenomenon, but the number of foreigners who come to work here must also be taken into account. Their social and economic situation is similar to ours: the salaries in their native countries are not satisfactory and are lower compared to those offered in Romania.

The workforce abroad is a real opportunity for the hospitality industry, an opportunity that more and more entrepreneurs have started to capitalize on. Asian staff is often found in many restaurants in the country, due to the professional qualities they have. Vietnamese, Nepalese, Filipinos - all
appreciate the work they do responsibly because of the educational system in which they were raised.

Therefore, entrepreneurs who intend to open a business in the hospitality industry or who already have one and are facing staff shortages, opt for the option of hiring Asians. Romanians began to become more and more open to the diversity of culinary tastes, which is reflected in the specifics of restaurants. Both in Bucharest and in the cities of the province, there are Asian restaurants, loved by customers for the experience they are offered: from local food, to the way they are served and the atmosphere of the place. At the same time, Asians represent the right human resource for international restaurants, due to the ability to adapt easily and due to the desire to develop. Thus, entrepreneurs who own Romanian or European restaurants find in Asian employees the necessary support to offer customers high quality services. For any business to be successful, it is essential to bring the "right person to the right place", the motto that International Work Finder has turned into the key principle of its recruitment activities. IWF comes to the aid of those for whom the labour force has become a real problem, by recruiting professionals from the most varied fields: from construction, to the SPA industry; from IT to the automotive sector. The hospitality industry is also one of the strengths of the recruitment company IWF: a lot of successful companies have hired, for example, Vietnamese workers through the International Work Finder, hardworking and respectful people for work. This recruitment company provides all the necessary support regarding the preparation of immigration formalities, which leads to time savings for employers. Most importantly, in order to assure its clients that they will benefit from a long-term prepared team, International Work Finder also considers the cultural integration of Asians, through workshops after which they will learn Romanian and English and will adapt to the Romanian cultural model. Thus, the risk of immigrants not getting used to it is significantly reduced. Moreover, for those exceptional cases, the recruitment company ensures the free replacement of the human resource, based on a guarantee that the clients benefit from (Manager.ro, https://www.manager.ro/articole/companii-si-firme-34/deficitul-de-personal-din-industria-horeca-).

The occupancy rate of accommodation structures in our country is only 30%. Romania has enough rooms in the accommodation structures to receive, annually, 20 million foreign tourists. Currently, the occupancy rate of foreign tourists in the total number of places-days is only 6%. An analysis Invitation Romania, for the first time, of the accommodation capacity and the degree of occupancy in Romania can be a much more attractive destination. Domestic tourism can no longer develop much, because there is a market limit. However, the granting of holiday vouchers has essentially contributed to the development of domestic tourism. Of course, if we were to witness a boom of incoming tourism, the demand being higher than the supply, naturally the number of investors in accommodation structures will increase.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, Romania had a total accommodation capacity of 343,720 places, of which, only in hotels, 193,280 places. As number of places-days, so overnight stays, the total accommodation capacity of Romania is 87,655,772 places-days, of which only the hotels have 50,771,353 places-days.

3. Research methodology

The most important radiography of Romanian tourism is given by the annual occupancy rate. The total number of overnight stays in 2017 was 27,092,523. If we report to the total of 87,655,772 places-days, it means that the occupancy rate was only 30.92%. For the tourist pensions, the index of the tourist use capacity was of 20.3%, and for the rural tourist pensions of 16.4%, which shows the option of the tourists to spend only the weekends. If we relate to domestic tourism and incoming, Romanian tourists spent 21,801,487 nights, and foreign tourists, 5,291,036 nights. We can say that out of the total overnight stays, foreigners had a share of 24.2%. Going further, the occupancy rate of foreign tourists in total places-days was only 6%. A problem of Romanian tourism is that, at certain times of the year, the occupancy rate is quite low. Following the statistics of the National Institute of Statistics, it is observed that in Romania there is still a seasonal tourism, most of the tourists opting for July-September, the holiday period for both Romanians and foreigners. Most foreign tourists who choose the destination Romania opt for cultural and thematic tours, between May and October, but it is not enough. We have the obligation, compared to the
Romanian tourism industry, to develop the incoming, which addresses a practically unlimited potential of clients. In order for these tourists to come more and more, we need an external presence as an image, the presence of offers on the world market and quality services. They form the triangle of success in incoming (https://www.gonext.ro/analiza-completa-a-turismului-romanese-in-functie-de-numarul-de-locuri-de-cazare-si-de-gradul-de-ocupare/).

In the experimental study we aimed to analyse the potential of the Romanian workforce starting from the demographic evolution. Then, the experiment focused on the 10-39 age sample that represents the potential of the major workforce in our country. Through the analysis of this sample of the population, he directed us to the level of education by occupation categories, in order to find out if the hospitality industry in Romania has chances to adapt to the new trends. It also studied the distribution of the Romanian labour force.

In this study we aimed to correlate the investment in the Romanian tourism workforce with the future possibilities for the development of the hospitality industry and with the development of the Romanian economy in the medium term. Although the data recorded by the hospitality industry on a global level, but in Romania is declining, there is today a well-developed offer of tourist services, which is correlated with tourism jobs.

Even if in Romania the development of the hospitality industry did not work according to a performance Master Plan, it is still known that tourism is an economic branch that brings a lot of income to the gross domestic product.

That is why in this paper we analysed the results recorded in Romania in terms of the evolution of tourism in 2016-2020 as a request, then we highlighted the organization and dynamics of accommodation structures in Romania, correlated with the number of jobs in the hospitality industry.

Although, in the period 2016-2019, the increasing trend of the factors studied shows an increasing trend in 2020, there is a regression as a particular situation. However, there are a multitude of respondents in society who are interested in tourism jobs from the perspective of tourism business, but also decision makers who estimate that the decline in the share of tourism revenues can have a negative impact on the Romanian economy, on the one hand, partly due to the decrease in the turnover of the hospitality industry, on the other hand due to the unemployment generated by the tourism labour force. Therefore, the analysis of these factors was focused on solutions that lead to conclusions that can reduce as much as possible unemployment in the hospitality industry, implicitly to maintain the gross domestic product obtained by Romania so far, more gross domestic product to approach in the coming years of the one estimated for an optimal development of the Romanian economy.

3.1. The demographic evolution of Romania

From the statistical data registered in the statistical yearbooks of Romania, the situation of the demographic evolution is decreasing. Implicitly, the emigration of the population led to the lack of labour force, the shortage of personnel and the decline of the tourism and food units. Then, the lack or the low of professional competencies, superficial level of execution competencies in the field of tourist services.

3.2. Labour force trend in Romania vs European Union

The employment rate in the EU for people aged 20-64 was the highest in 2018, at 73.1%. Despite the continuing reduction in employment disparities, the employment rate was still higher among men than among women in 2018 in all EU Member States. 0.8% of employed women aged between 20 and 64 in the EU worked part-time in 2018, compared to 8.0% for men. The staffing crisis has led some hotel and restaurant owners to bring in employees from outside the European Union. Just as their colleagues who have gone to work in the hospitality industry in other countries have to integrate into a multicultural work environment, so those who have remained to work in tourism in the country will have to deal with the cultural shock of having colleagues from other cultures, from other denominations and who speak other languages. The sample of tourists
interviewed said they prefer products and services that have implemented the corporate social responsibility program and are willing to pay more for a vacation to a company that has an impressive track record in terms of environmental and social responsibility activities.

4. Findings

Promoting ecotourism for the sustainable development of a region or country makes various researchers for the evaluation of ecotourism to develop more and more strategies and methodologies due to the positive and negative effects on environmental, social and economic aspects of the country. Due to the high rate of beneficial impact, new ecotourism strategies help the overall development of the community, the country and the world. Consequently, cooperation between different stakeholders for a new approach in ecotourism, such as business environments - tourism entrepreneurs and an appropriate management policy for the sustainable implementation of ecotourism projects by communities is a Master Plan for regional development and medium and long term international.

The development of ecotourism means an economic impact, implicitly increasing the number of green jobs, by increasing the capitalization of resources, ecological by ensuring conservation and environmental protection, using rational resources as a whole, but especially natural ones, reduction, disposal and recycling, waste, reducing the theft of agricultural and forestry land from the agricultural and forestry, social circuit by increasing the number of jobs, maintaining traditional trades and setting up new green jobs to attract the population to practice various forms of tourism and ecotourism.

Research on international ecotourism mentioned that interest in "green" travel is at its highest level in 10 years; in the case of Romanian tourists, 20% are interested in green travel.

International ecotourism is a form of tourism with low impact on the environment in which it makes a conscious effort to reinvest some of the income to preserve and protect the environment, being considered a form of sustainable tourism and to ensure jobs and well-being of locals. Ecotourism is still a fairly narrow segment of the Romanian tourism market, so our country has a great potential for heritage ecotourism than recovery. Ecotourism in Romania faces many problems, it would be poor cooperation at local level, modest promotion at national and international level, it offers a limited and poorly diversified infrastructure in protected areas.

Currently, the characteristics of Romanian rural tourism defined by the World Tourism Organization in terms of location in rural areas remain ethnographic and geographical. Therefore, the construction of a new life cycle of the ecotourism product in a functional way for the conservation of rural infrastructure, the conservation of the rural way of life, the diversity of forms of presentation depending on rural and economic environments, can be achieved in good conditions as an innovation and revival. Romanian tourism because the Romanian village has preserved its history and geographical location, the specific Romanian cultural identity.

The statistical evidence at hand illustrates that the relative importance of the service sector in the national context has continued to grow in the last three decades, reflected in the growing share of this sector in both gross domestic product (figure 1) and active labour in most important national economies (figure 2).

Tourism in Romania focuses on the natural landscapes and its rich history, also having an important contribution to the country's economy. In 2006, domestic and international tourism provided 4.8% of GDP and about half a million jobs (5.8% of total jobs) (Country / Economy Profiles: Romania, Travel & Tourism. World Economic Forum. Accessed January 11, 2008).

After trade, tourism is the second most important branch of the services sector. Among Romania's economic sectors, tourism is dynamic and rapidly developing, being also characterized by a great potential for expansion. According to World Travel and Tourism Council estimates, Romania ranks 4th in the top of countries experiencing a rapid development of tourism, with an annual increase in tourism potential of 8% from 2007 to 2016.

There are many travel agencies in Romania and other countries that bring foreign tourists. Also, Romanian and foreign tourists can make reservations at hotels, motels, boarding houses and other accommodation in the country and in other countries directly on specialized sites.
In 2004, the number of foreign tourists was 3.6 million, and in 2019 it was 2.85 million. Regarding the number of foreign tourists worldwide, it is observed that the dynamics is increasing (figure no.3), except for year 2020. The increase in the number of foreign tourists will also occur in Romania, which will mean an increase in tourism's contribution to Romania's GDP, but also an increase in tourism jobs. The dynamics of jobs in tourism are observed to have a decreasing trend in Romania from 2014 to 2019, precisely due to the emigration of Romanians to other European countries.

**Statistical interpretation.** The trend line obtained in the statistical correlation of the data in figure 2 is high school, so we obtained an inferior correlation. By applying the statistical correlation in the case of the evolution of jobs in tourism, we obtained due to the tendency of grouping the estimated data, when all the points are grouped around a straight line (Figure 3).

The dynamics of tourism abroad in a long period of time show us an increasing trend that reaches a maximum in 2019, after which the hospitality industry decreases worryingly in 2020. The statistical interpretation of the data indicates the lower correlation (figure no.3). Thus, the most significant growth took place in 1980, then doubled in 1995 and again doubled compared to 1995 in 2014. Which means that the hospitality industry has seen a spectacular growth of almost 70 years. Unfortunately, the year 2020 brought a crisis in people's health, given a social crisis, implicitly economic that affected the hospitality industry. Decreasing the number of tourism almost to the level of 1980. This significant decline affected both hotel entrepreneurs and tourism workforce, and last but not least tourists. Therefore, the dynamics of foreign tourists has been growing dramatically since 1980, when it increased by 91% compared to the reference year 1950. So, the life cycle of tourism products is experiencing an unprecedented rise and development, which has attracted a lot by the services offered by the hotel industry, and which of course took into account the quality-price ratio in the case of tourist services offered to their customers. Then the increase was moderate at intervals of 10-15 years, from 47.25% to 25.78%. The flattening of
the growth trend was determined by the constantly innovated private life cycles that attracted more and more tourists. And in the period 2017-2019 the increase was only 9.87% which means that the life cycle of tourism products manifested itself in various innovative particulars, which already show the beginning of the decline of tourism products offered to consumers (Figure 4).

Figure no.4 Increasing vs decreasing of tourism

![Graph showing increasing vs decreasing of tourism](image)

Source: (Data processing according to the Yearbook of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

In Romania, the dynamics of tourism is similar to an inflection in the period 1989-1995, when due to the fall of communism and the centralization of the hospitality industry, our country had to change its categories of foreign tourists, orienting itself in a period of only 6 years to a new tourism strategy that would attract foreign tourists from countries other than those that were part of the communist bloc: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Bulgaria, Democratic Germany, because these countries also had a tourist potential interested in traveling to countries other than from the communist bloc until 1989.

Thus, Romanian tourism has adopted new tourist products for Romanian and foreign tourists, with new life cycles, so they are in the launch period. As a result of this situation, the hospitality industry in Romania registered justified decreases in revenues from tourism, implicitly the turnover of newly established tourism companies could not be spectacular.

In conclusion, Romanian tourism is relaunching with an increasing trend starting with 1995. Then, tourism entrepreneurs understood that tourism investments can be their chance for medium and long term development. That is why in their business development strategy they accessed non-reimbursable European funds from 1996 to 2015, when they built a significant number of accommodation structures, thus improving the tourism infrastructure for both Black Sea coastal tourism, but more chosen mountain tourism. Most investments from PHARE, POSDRU, PNDR, POR financing were completed with the construction of rural tourist pensions. They allowed the development of rural tourism in Romania, also offering new tourist services, with life cycles of local rural tourism products, ecological and local tourist products. The local tourist products with Romanian ethnographic specifics were extremely appreciated in the period before 1989 by foreign tourists. That is why the quality-price ratio of the tourist services was one that attracted a large number of international tourists in Romania.

Today, the variants of practicing tourism have changed significantly, and the tourist services have developed in the field of professional fields, conferences, events, workshops, along with which new opportunities have appeared for spending free time or holidays, such as be: tourism in protected natural areas, diversification of the offer and improvement of ecotourism services, tourist services that protect the environment, respect local culture and traditions, tourist activities that want to expand the level of knowledge, understanding and appreciation, educational holidays that enrich their existence tourists, as well as tourist services for the generation of Y12 Millenial, with outdoor activities, offering good potential for the future development of some forms of adventure tourism.

The Gaussian curve of the urban accommodation structures in Romania from 2020 reaches a higher level than the maximum level of the accommodation structures in the rural area. This indicates the limitation of accommodation possibilities for ecological tourism that is prefigured with new tourist products, especially after the pandemic (figure 5).
Analyzing the offer of tourist services in Romania, we will find that the highest density of services offered to tourists is concentrated in the North-West Region, the Center Region and in the North-East Region. Leisure, sports, entertainment, adventure parks, horse riding, hiking and medieval, cultural and speleological clubs offer recreational comfort through holiday destinations, representing a nonconformist trend very popular with tourists in Romania.

Today, the impact of ecotourism services in Romanian tourism is reflected with the highest density in the Central Region and the North-West Region, with an average density in the North-East and South-East Region. In the other Regions, ecotourism services are present in a minimal share compared to the Central Region and the North-East Region.

The number of jobs in the hotel industry increased considerably from 2016 to 2019. Therefore, the attractiveness of tourism jobs decreased during the same period and the unemployment rate in Romania, the hospitality industry sector holding a share of 8% in the category of Romanian jobs. (figure no.6).

The considerable regression of the Romanian tourism jobs registered in 2020, makes the new situation of the labour market to immediately require an adaptation of the tourism labour force, consequently the investment in the training of the tourism labour force foreshadows a justified one of the situation of social and economic crisis, implicitly financial, when Romania has to adapt to new trends.

That is why the foreshadowing of green jobs, new jobs for the ecotourism niche is a favourable solution for reviving the hospitality industry.

The increase in the number of jobs in tourism figure no.6 indicates in the histogram obtained that from a statistical point of view the distribution of grouped data were shown by displaying the relative proportion of each factor to the total, by highlighting the most significant factors. Thus, a negative regression was obtained when applying the statistical correlation of the data.

The dynamics of tourism structures in Romania in the period 2016-2020 does not change significantly, but has an increasing trend from 2016 to 2019, while in 2020 there is a stagnation of investments and entrepreneurship in tourism (figure 7).
The dynamics of jobs in tourism in the period 2016-2020 shows an increasing trend until 2019, after which a slight decrease of jobs in 2020. The statistical interpretation of the data indicates the superior linear correlation of the data (figure 8). Although the number of jobs decreased in 2020, the dramatic decrease in the number of tourists was not directly proportional to the decrease in the number of jobs, because the hospitality industry waited for the elimination of the day-to-day crisis situation.

From the study we find that the hospitality industry has a significant contribution to Romania's GDP, tourist services ranking second after trade services (Figure 9, 10).

**Figure no.7 The evolution of tourism structures in Romania 2016-2020**

![Figure no.7 The evolution of tourism structures in Romania 2016-2020](image)

**Source:** (Data processing according to the Yearbook of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

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**Figure no.8. Dynamics of job in tourism in the period 2016-2020**

![Figure no.8. Dynamics of job in tourism in the period 2016-2020](image)

**Source:** (Data processing according to the Yearbook of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

**Figure no.9 The contribution of tourism to Romania's GDP 2013-2025, %**

![Figure no.9 The contribution of tourism to Romania's GDP 2013-2025, %](image)

**Source:** (Data processing according to the Yearbook of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

**Figure no.10: Increasing vs decreasing of the contribution tourism to Romania's GDP 2013-2020, %**

![Figure no.10: Increasing vs decreasing of the contribution tourism to Romania's GDP 2013-2020, %](image)

**Source:** (Data processing according to the Yearbook of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics)
So that, we can say that the concern for tourism and jobs in tourism that justifies the labour costs of today.

5. Conclusions

1. The study was conducted by analysing the evolution of Romanian population training, the trend of the labour market, which from a statistical point of view is decreasing.
2. Realization of seasonal campuses representing places of residence for workers in the hospitality industry and ecotourism for green jobs.
3. The financial support of the human resource on contractual terms of training and seasonal work activities depending on the moment when the job market demands it.
4. There is an increasing trend of accommodation capacity, both nationally and in mountainous areas, but also in the Danube Delta area. Hence the need to develop agreement activities.
5. The professional training of tourism workers will have to remain a priority of each entrepreneur because it is a great interest for the attraction in the tourism sector, of the people who have activated external labour markets and have acquired knowledge and capital necessary for the development of tourism activities.
6. If we talk about The investment in labour: a good or bad phenomenon? - we can say that in the case of the hospitality industry the estimated economic results can be spectacular if Romania will be invest in training of labour for new green jobs and green business.
7. Updating the Master Plan for Public Investment in Tourism, taking into account consumption trends in the global travel industry, as well as sustainability practices and adaptation to climate change, and putting into public debate an updated draft, carried out in partnership with the private environment in industry, covering a budget interval of 5 years.
8. Are necessary the educational grants to entrepreneurs and educational scholarships for employees in the hospitality industry who have lost their jobs due to the crisis. Allocation of a percentage of the salary fund of tourism companies to support education in tourism starting with 2021. Adapting COR to new occupations specific to tourism and recovering a part of the repatriated workforce with qualifications in different fields of the hospitality industry.
9. Digitization for the promotion of Romanian tourism and the establishment of a mandatory reporting system in relation to the authorities. Establishing the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem for tourism. We notice that we have many advantages in the conditions of the positive trend of the hospitality industry, but there is also the disadvantage of multiple actions and measures to achieve the objectives.
10. Romanian tourism will need by new tourist services which will develop in the field of professional fields, conferences, events, workshops, along with which new opportunities have appeared for spending free time or holidays.

6. References

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