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# Call for Papers Winter Issues 2017 Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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## Valorizing Heritage and Cultural Identity from Land of Barsa through Cultural Tourism

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### Abstract:

The purpose of the article is to initiate a research theme in the field of protecting and valorizing the national heritage and cultural identity, based on a series of arguments concerning the wide variety of resources belonging to the cultural heritage from Land of Barsa, variety which can become a stimulus for researchers, local public institutions or experts from abroad. The main aim of the research is to generate increased performances in this operational framework of valorization of the cultural heritage of Land of Barsa, increasing the quality of heritage sector through investments in conservation, training and an efficient and effective recovery of cultural tourism in this area. The research is divided in three stages, each of them with a clearly defined purpose and objective. The first stage is an evaluation of local heritage potential, the second stage is an evaluation of the satisfaction in term of valorizing material and intangible cultural heritage from Land of Barsa using a sample of 400 visitors and the third part formulates a plan for improving visitor satisfaction concerning the visitation experience, based on the results from the previous stages.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage; valorization; historical identity; cultural tourism; Land of Barsa

**JEL Classification:** M20; M30; Z32; G41.

### Introduction

The novelty of this research proposal lies in the interdisciplinary approach of the research area: architecture, sociology, economy, tourism, marketing, grouping researchers from these areas and also a research team of the History County Museum, an important function of the Museum is to researching national and international cultural heritage.

Also, the research aims are to provide through the applied methods and the obtained results, a maximum efficiency and coherence of actions in the field of valorization of the national cultural heritage, finally facilitating people direct access to the cultural life from this geographic area.

The research is divided into three phases. The first phase – *Evaluation of the potential of local cultural and historic heritage*- is mainly focused on evaluation of local heritage potential, the second phase – *Marketing research in terms of visitors satisfaction* - by interviewing a sample of 400 visitors, and the third phase – *Dissemination of the research results*- as a final conclusion.

Implementation and dissemination of the research results may have economic and social effects in the short-time, but in the long-term lead to shaping the respect for the real cultural, historical and artistic values of the national cultural heritage.

### 1. Literature Review

In the area of Prahova Valley-Brasov-Land of Barsa, the greatest concentration of historical monuments in Group A is found in Brasov, Sinaia and Rasnov. The area is an attractive tourist destination especially due to the presence

of historical monuments converted into incoming tourist brands already in the international tourist circuit, such as Peleş Castle, Bran Castle, Rasnov Fortress, and the Black Church. For cultural tourism, all these destinations can turn into main poles of attraction, and completing of the offer with cultural or recreational services, will increase the flow of tourists in the area.

The partnership with the History County Museum in the research area is not new.

The museum was established in the building of the former Town Hall, historic monument dating from the 15th century, on the basis of the collections of the Saxon Museum of Barsa County and those of ASTRA Association Museum (Mihăilescu 2008, 20). The museum owns goods belonging to the National Cultural Heritage Treasure, having a large and interesting numismatic collection too. The research of the numismatic fund and the research of documents and manuscripts which certify the banking activity in Transylvania and implicit in Brasov area, are subjects of books and articles (Botiş 2005, 22), (Botiş 2007, 90).

Long-term research activity of the Museum is focused on the *The Scientific Research program and recording of cultural heritage*, divided in two subprograms: *Systematic Archaeological Research* and *Researching local history and recording of the cultural heritage*.

The History County Museum owns the largest mobile heritage (159, 255 pieces) covering all historical areas, from prehistory to the contemporary period.

Currently, the most important research projects are *The historical identity of Brasov city, the systematic research of the roman castrum called Cumidava-Râşnov* (partnership National Museum of Romanian History), valorizing research Archaeological Sit (partnership Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan" of the Romanian Academy), valorizing historical crafts from Land of Barsa (partnership ASTRA National Museum Complex Sibiu, MODAROM Brasov), the improvement of teaching, training of students and scientific researchers and development research activity-innovation.

## 2. Methodology

The purpose of the research is, for the first time, a large interdisciplinary approach, focused on a complex investigation having as final result the valorizing heritage and cultural identity from Land of Barsa through cultural tourism.

The research is divided into three phases. The first phase – *Evaluation of the potential of local cultural and historic heritage*- is mainly focused on evaluation of local heritage potential, the second phase – *Marketing research in terms of visitors satisfaction* - by interviewing a sample of 400 visitors, and the third phase – *Dissemination of the research results*- as a final conclusion.

The first step of the research is the presentation of the historical objectives which are subject to evaluation and the presentation of the historical identity of the Land of Barsa.

The evaluation stage is followed by the marketing research. The research method is the establishment of a quantitative cross-examine research on a sample of CA. 400 people who visited the delimited touristic area, aiming to evaluate their satisfaction in terms of valorizing material and intangible cultural heritage from the Land of Barsa.

The research concludes with dissemination of the results and with publication and presentation of the Plan for improving visitor satisfaction in terms of visiting experience, in journals and at international conferences.

### 2.1. Evaluation of the potential of local cultural and historic heritage

As we mentioned earlier, the first step of the research is the presentation of the historical objectives which are subject to evaluation and the presentation of the historical identity of the Land of Barsa. In this regard the research focuses on the following cultural heritage objectives from the Land of Barsa, called as "another Transylvania" or "the little Transylvania":

*The old City Hall* – The old town hall is the most important secular monument of the City. The historic building is documented in 1420. Currently, here is the most important section of the History County Museum, cultural institution with the largest mobile heritage from Brasov county (158,517 Museum goods/10 collections) and the highest number of visitors among local museums.

*The Black Church* - does not have the status of a museum. It is a religious history monument with the largest number of visitors from Romania. The largest Church-Hall from Romania holds nationally largest mechanical organ and the largest collection of oriental carpets (XV-XVI) in Europe, with the exception of Turkey.

*The Fortified Evangelic Church Assembly* from Prejmer – subscribed on the list of the UNESCO since 1999 ; does not have the status of a museum. It is one of the oldest churches in Transylvania (13th century). The Church of Prejmer seemed to be the most powerful ecclesiastic fortification of Transylvania. Painted altar is considered to be the oldest in Romania (15th century).



*Bran Castle* - it is one of the most spectacular medieval fortifications on the present territory of Romania. In the period 1920-1938, Bran Castle became the residence of Queen Marie of Romania, the last romantic of Europe. Since the 1970s, the Castle has been harnessed by the Romanian State in the international tourist market as, "Dracula's Castle". Currently, the historic monument is transformed into a touristic objective with the largest number of visitors from Romania. Does not have the status of a museum.

*Râșnov Citadel* - It is among historical monuments in Romania with the greatest surface area. Since 2009 is the historical monument of Romania with the richest cultural agenda and entered in the list of information centres for heritage, under the aegis of UNESCO, within the framework of the European programme "Cultural Heritage-Bridge towards the Shared Future".

Through Historical Film Festival, the single festival in Brașov County on the EFFE list -Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe, Râșnov fortress is included in the most important platform of European festivals.

The historical monument is managed by the local public authorities with the largest number of visitors from Romania. Does not have the status of a Museum

However, cultural tourism in Land of Barsa is poorly developed and clouded by the commercial myth of Dracula. We must emphasize that at national level there is not exist a strategy for the development of cultural tourism. Local and county culture institutions from the implementation regions of our project (jud. Brasov, Prahova) have a poor cultural agenda and, more generally, through lack of information and promotion professional programmes or cultural tourism routes, they do not represent a serious alternative for leisure.

The evaluation process of all of these historical objectives, includes a series of activities, such as:

- geometric mapping - identification of the property, standards for measurement of the dimensions required, calculation of geometric surfaces will be made;
- photographic mapping - general information about the architectural objective;
- visual inspection;
- cultural assessment which includes appreciation of the aesthetic value, symbolic value, the value of authenticity;
- historical assessment - highlighting the historical evolution of the architectural object;
- sociological assessment – studying how the heritage object influences the way of life of the community;
- aesthetic quality evaluation which includes determination of the intrinsic characteristics of the heritage object or of those perceived subjectively by tourists;
- economic assessment – applying of the standard methodology of the cost – benefit analysis.

Can be identified critical points or risks that may threaten the research results associated with activities, such as:

- difficulties in obtaining field data;
- the absence of the documentary material;
- the absence of the written and iconographic documentation;
- poor participation of the community in providing of the necessary data for the study;
- the sample of consumers is not representative;
- a wrong financial estimates.

The methods and the ways in which solutions are found associated with activities include:

- research the whole database of targeted cultural heritage objectives from Land of Barsa;
- the research of intangible cultural heritage from Land of Barsa;
- study of the cultural heritage from Land of Barsa in the historic and cultural context of Transylvania;
- local community involvement in valuing and appreciating cultural heritage from Land of Barsa;
- exhibitions of photographs and presentation of films with the topic of heritage and tourist objectives mentioned above;
- volunteering to test the visitors' satisfaction in terms of the cost-benefit.

The results from the present stage of the research activity on preservation and valorization of the cultural heritage from the Land of Barsa (list of heritage and tourist objectives, geometric and photographic mapping, the study of manuscripts and documents, questioning members of the local community, photographic documentation, applying of the standard methodology of the cost-benefit analysis) (Andronic 2015, 48), can be found in relevant articles (Ispas *et al.* 2015, 107), which present the development, application and testing new strategies and concepts shaping the marketing communication strategies of museums (Nechita 2014, 269). Also, books as "Advertising and Heritage Interpretation," (Nechita *et al.* 2014, 213) and "Interpretation and Promotion of Museums Cultural Heritage" are clear results of the research activity in this specific field (Nechita *et al.* 2015, 52).

### 3. Marketing research in terms of visitors satisfaction

The evaluation stage is followed by the marketing research. The research method is the establishment of a quantitative cross-examine research on a sample of CA. 400 people who visited the delimited touristic area, aiming to evaluate their satisfaction in terms of valorizing material and intangible cultural heritage from the Land of Barsa.

The main stages of the research will be:

Setting objectives and assumptions along with research partner:

- the objectives will be determined on the basis of the results of the previous phase concerning the assessment of Land of Barsa heritage;

Drafting the research questionnaire on the basis of the objectives set:

- for drafting the questionnaire will be used different scales for measuring visitor attitudes that allowing also hypothesis testing research;
- the questionnaire will be pretested in order to improve it;

Establishment of the research sample which will include approx. 400 visitors, in order to ensure a maximum error less than 5%:

- the selection of sample members will be made by a random method - systematic sampling;
- depending on the flow of visitors, will establish a specific method regarding the selection of sample members and data collection period;

Administering the questionnaire among the members of sample:

- the questionnaire will be administered in compliance with the sampling scheme;

Analysis and processing of data using SPSS system- Statistical Package for Social Sciences:

- analysis and processing of data;

Developing research report:

- elaboration of the research;

Dissemination of results:

- publication of specialized articles in journals indexed in databases (including ISI Thomson) or international conferences. Among them are : *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *Journal of Consumer Culture*.

Also, in this stage can be identified critical points or risks that may threaten the research results associated with activities, such as:

- fixing irrelevant objectives for research purposes;
- designing questions that are not properly understood;
- failure to identify a minimum number of 400 visitors;
- incorrect estimation of the flow of visitors;
- visitors' refusal to answer to the questionnaire;
- the lack of interest in the research topic;
- insufficient data processed;
- rejection of articles by journals;

The methods and the ways in which solutions are found associated with activities include:

- discuss objectives with more factors involved in order to identify the need for information;
- rules for the formulation of questions and pre-testing the questionnaire on a total of 20 tourists and visitors;
- informing visitors about the importance of research;
- selecting a larger number of members in the sample;
- creation of a secondary database with potential participants;
- multidisciplinary team collaboration in analysis and processing of data;
- multidisciplinary team collaboration in developing the research report;
- strict compliance with drafting criteria required by the journals and conferences - for example, ICCHT 2017: 19th International Conference on Cultural Heritage and Tourism.

Among other activities associated with this stage we can enumerate: the list of the research objectives and assumptions; the questionnaire research; the sampling scheme; the questionnaires filled in by visitors; SPSS data base; the research report; publishing two papers in journals indexed in international recognized databasa; two papers presented and published at international conferences with ISI Proceedings.



#### 4. Dissemination of the research results

The main objective of this stage is to formulate a plan for improving visitor satisfaction concerning the visitation experience.

The research concludes with dissemination of the results and with publication and presentation of the *Plan for improving visitor satisfaction in terms of visiting experience*, in journals and at international conferences.

The degree of satisfaction of visitor contribute to the appreciation of their participation to the cultural life of the community, the access to the cultural heritage of Land of Barsa.

The critical points or risks that may threaten the research results associated with activities could be:

- rejection of articles by journals;
- the fact that the period for which the evaluation was made is too short;
- their elimination implies a strict compliance with the drafting criteria required by the ISI Journals or publication of the articles to other ISI Journals, with or without SRI.

Among other activities associated with this stage we can enumerate: publication of two articles or being accepted for publication in ISI Journals with SRI; publication and presentation of the *Plan for improving visitor satisfaction in terms of visiting experience*, in journals and at international conferences.

#### Conclusion

Cultural heritage considered vital to be preserved for the future generations, can provide a sense of unity and a better understanding of the significance and importance of history. The link between culture and tourism, the growing relationship between them, gave birth to the concept of cultural tourism, a concept that gains an increasing significance in the world tourism area, also being the fastest-growing global tourism market, in the conditions in which the cultural tourism is one of the major sources of income for many countries and has a positive impact on the economy of the host countries.

The article presents a possible research theme and for the first time, a large interdisciplinary approach of it, focused on a complex investigation having as a final result the valorizing heritage and cultural identity from Land of Barsa through cultural tourism, with the intention of deepening this research in the future by adopting an open and creative approach.

The novelty of this approach is the interdisciplinary character of the research, another particular aspect being the attraction of a large number of specialists in various fields, such as architects, sociologists, historians, specialists in the preservation and valorisation of cultural heritage, economists, marketing experts, cultural tourism specialists.

This research proposal was conceived to focus on the particularities of cultural tourism in an area with a pronounced historical and cultural identity, as well as in respect to national cultural heritage values, basically, it highlights the importance of the identities of key historical sites in the area through cultural tourism.

The choice of this tourist area is based on a series of arguments. Some of them concerning the wide variety of resources belonging to its cultural heritage, variety which can become a stimulus for researchers, local public institutions or experts from abroad. Others referring to the lack of constant studies and research on the visiting public; the reduced number of partnerships; limited and unstructured material investment in research; the small number of specialists in the field.

Being just a proposal for a possible research theme, it is obvious that it needs to be improved, developed and deepened and the arguments below support this approach:

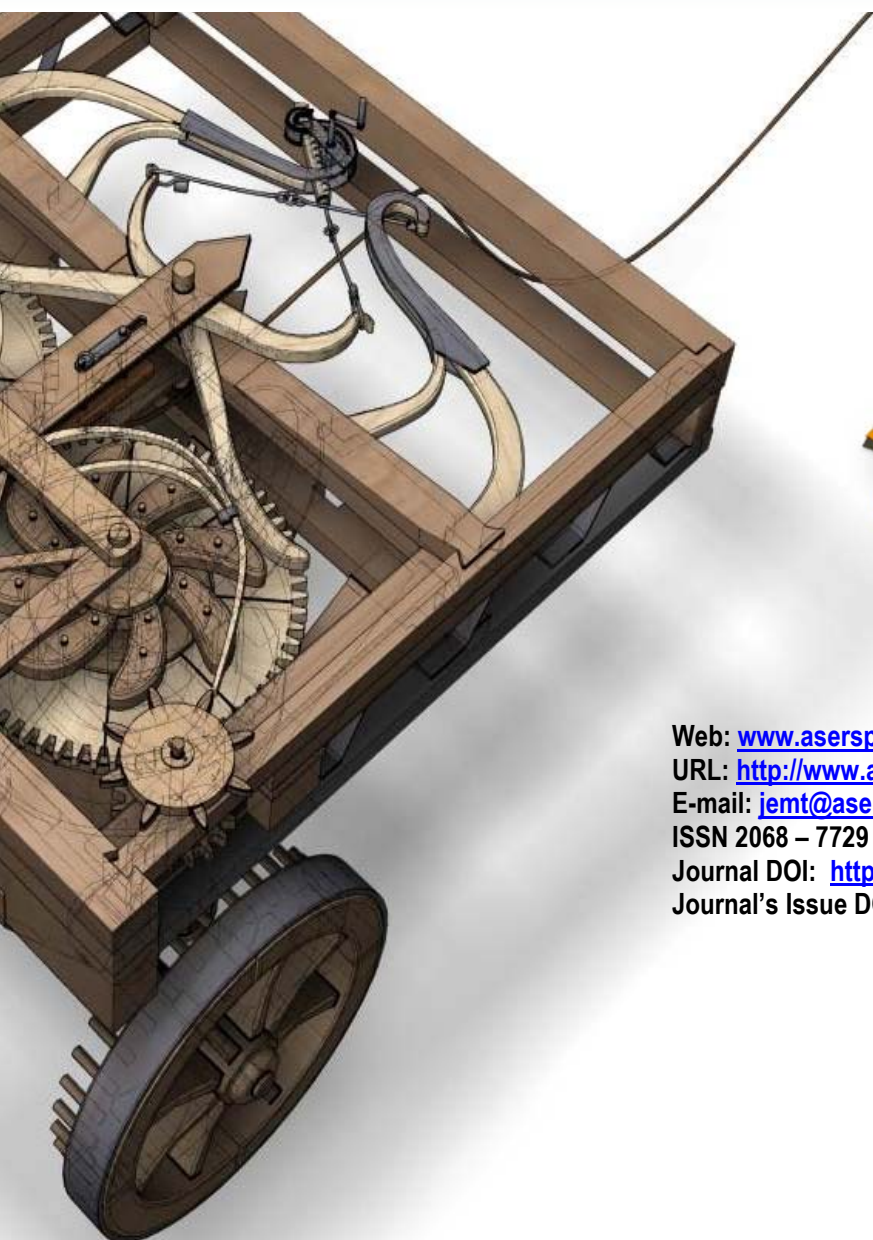
- we consider that the research scope is adequately presented with sufficient description of the demonstration product to be developed;
- the research may also benefit from some diagrams;
- the preliminary results could be less informative other than there is currently a similar research focused on this area;
- data collection methods could be diversified for risks to be minimized;
- the research implementation and its stages require additional work to become adequate;
- the research results can be presented at international conferences even they have more local and national relevance.

Although it is just a proposal of the research theme, the boundaries of an article do not allow a proper research, we tried to built a perspective upon the valorisation of the heritage and cultural identity from Land of Barsa, mainly focused on evaluation of local cultural and historic heritage potential in terms of visitors satisfaction.

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