

STUDY CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT IN THE ROMANIAN TOURISM AND TRAVEL INDUSTRY

STUDIU PRIVIND OCUPAREA ÎN INDUSTRIA TURISMULUI DIN ROMÂNIA

TĂTĂRUȘANU Maria¹

e-mail: tmari@uaic.ro

Abstract. *The increased development of tourism in recent years has been a major concern among researchers, institutions and others interested in this field: what is the real contribution of tourism to the overall development of the countries, regions and the contribution to the increase of employability of the working population. This paper aims to analyse the types of vacancies created in the tourism industry in Romania. The raised objectives relate to: a critical analysis of literature regarding employment and tourism; studying the number and type of vacancies created by this sector in Romania, based on statistical analysis and interpretation of recruitment notices posted on specialized web sites, from February to December 2011. The results indicate a wide variety of the created job types, the importance of experience when filling certain vacancies and of some evidence of a qualification (tourism certificate). Such information is useful in formulating policies on tourism in a certain region / country, according to the aimed objectives.*

Key words: tourism industry, employment, jobs, characteristics.

Rezumat. *Dezvoltarea accentuată a turismului din ultimii ani a adus o preocupare majoră în rândul cercetătorilor, instituțiilor și altor persoane interesate de acest domeniu: care este contribuția reală a turismului la dezvoltarea de ansamblu a țărilor, regiunilor și contribuția la creșterea gradului de ocupare a populației active. Scopul lucrării este de a analiza tipurile de locuri de muncă create în industria turismului din România. Obiectivele care derivă se referă la: analiza critică a literaturii de specialitate în ceea ce privește ocuparea și turismul; studierea numărului și tipului de locuri de muncă create de acest sector în România, pe baza analizei și interpretării statistice a anunșurilor de recrutare postate pe site-urile web specializate, în perioada februarie – decembrie 2011. Rezultatele indică existența unei mari varietăți a tipurilor de locuri de muncă create, importanța experienței la ocuparea anumitor posturi și a unor documente care atestă o calificare (brevet de turism). Astfel de informații sunt utile la elaborarea politicilor privind turismul într-o anumită regiune/țară, în funcție de obiectivele vizate.*

Cuvinte cheie: industria turismului, ocupare, locuri de muncă, caracteristici.

INTRODUCTION

According to statistics from the World Travel and Tourism Council, based on data provided by 181 countries around the world, the contribution of the travel and tourism sector to total employment of the labour force is 235,758 million jobs, which

¹ "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi, Romania

represented 8,1 per cent of the total occupied workforce in 2010 (WTTC, 2010). Forecasts made by the same body indicate an increase of the labour absorption to 9,2 per cent in 2020. Given these data, one cannot deny the travel and tourism industry's role as an extremely important employer in many countries.

For a long period, the tourism sector represented the last option for people seeking employment, not only because of the seasonality influences and the difficulties of building a career, but also because of the low level of wages compared to other industries and sectors of the economy (Tătărușanu, 2011). Jobs created in the travel and tourism industry are either direct or indirect jobs as a result of the multiplier effect that takes place throughout the economy (tourism development involves the development of other economic sectors or industries that are complementary). They are measured separately by the World Travel and Tourism Council, based on a methodology developed by this body, named The Tourism Satellite Account.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the types of jobs created in the tourism industry in Romania, in the context of increase the role of this industry as a potential item in reducing the unemployment and improving the employability of the working population. The targeted objectives concern the following: critical analysis of the literature with regard to employment and tourism; examining the characteristics of the jobs created by this sector in Romania.

The used research methods are: analysis and synthesis to achieve a review of studies and articles available for this issue and statistical processing and interpretation of data that derived from the posted ads on the Romanian specialized recruitment websites, from February to December 2011. 95 recruitment ads were examined, data being summarized upon: job title, qualification / studies requirements, experience, age and gender specifications, the offered salary, other benefits, information on future career within the company.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Jobs created in tourism are influenced by the conditions of growth and tourist planning in the receiving areas, the utilized forms of tourism, and the governmental policies in this field. These all have certain characteristics: seasonality, territorial and professional mobility, social mobility, the skill level and low income, temporary nature and high risk of unemployment, and psychological constraints (Pascariu, 2006).

Studies show that employees of companies with activities in the tourism sector are mainly women. Thus, according to Eurostat, in 2007 over 60 per cent of employees within the tourism sector were women, compared to 45 per cent in other sectors of the economy (Eurostat, 2007). In Romania, according to the same bulletin, in 2007 72 per cent of the employees from hotels and other accommodation establishments were women, while the proportion was 69 per cent in Germany and, at the opposite end, Malta with 38 per cent.

The age of the employees at the travel companies is another important

aspect. Hotels, restaurants and the accommodation sector provide jobs especially for young people. Thus, 48 per cent of employees from hotels and restaurants and 43 per cent of employees from the accommodation sector were under the age of 35 in Europe in 2007 (Eurostat, 2008). Cyprus is the only country where the age profile of employees from the tourism sector differs markedly, with only 28 per cent under the age 35 according to the same study.

The statistics show that the skill level of employment in tourism is low, indicating a significant proportion of unskilled labour in the travel and tourism industry, wages (being lower than those from the industry and other services. According to the Eurostat study, in 2007, 36 per cent of the employees from the accommodation sector had not completed high school compared with the overall average ratio of 25 per cent for European employees (Eurostat, 2008). It is also noted that employees from this sector have low IT skills, with only 36 per cent of them using a computer at work (Eurostat, 2008).

Another study, made by the International Labour Office described the general characteristics of the jobs from the hotel industry (Vellas, 2005): low level of qualification for certain basic positions from hotels and restaurants: porters, chambermaids, aid cooks, valets etc.; high mobility of the personnel and high turnover (which is even 100 per cent at the restaurants from some hotel chains as Holyday Inn in the U.S.) in counter-time work (weekends, days of rest, holidays) causing difficulties in recruiting human resources, working hours, teamwork, work in night shifts, etc., physical fatigue (especially for the kitchen vacancies), psychological constraints (some positions require knowledge of several languages, diplomacy, strong character) (Tătăruşanu, 2011).

An important and widely discussed item in the literature is the effects of the development of communication technologies, especially the Internet, upon the jobs created in the tourism industry. It appears that the number of employees for a room in hotels remains high only in developing countries because labour is cheap (1.5 person and even more) and even higher, with a decreasing trend in all countries. In developed countries, the percentage is much lower, located between 0.5 and 1 (SFRPC, 2008).

If one takes into account the example of Romania, the study shows that the average wage is far below the one of other industries. Thus, according to the National Institute of Statistics, in October 2011 the average gross earnings in hotels and restaurants were 270 Euro per month, the lowest from the entire economy (INSS, 2012).

In addition, there is a major difference between employees' incomes in tourism from underdeveloped countries and countries with a developed economy (Pascariu, 2006). For example, the wage cost of the Hilton hotel chain is only 20 per cent of its turnover in less developed countries compared with 30 to 40 per cent in North America.

The turnover ratio is higher in companies that develop their activities in the travel and tourism industry. It has been ascertained that job stability is lower than in other sectors; on average the length of employment at tourism companies is six years,

compared to ten years in the overall economy in Europe in 2007 (Eurostat, 2008).

The specifics of tourism activities, in particular periods of intense activity, bring psychological constraints. Thus, employees from the tourism sector must often work outside of scheduled hours, compared with the normal working time programme of other companies. Furthermore, during periods in which the number of tourists is very high, the workload is correspondingly high; as a result many employees must make considerable effort in withstanding the high physical and mental demands placed upon them (Pascariu, 2006).

Direct contact with tourists requires that employees possess special skills to cope with the psychological constraints imposed by working in tourism. Finally team work ability is required because is standardization of services is very difficult to achieve in the service sector (Niță and Butnaru, 2005).

In order to identify the types of job created in the travel and tourism industry of Romania, and the requirements specified for their employment, the author carried out a study based on 95 vacancies posted on several specialised websites: ejobs.ro, bizoo.ro, infotravelromania.ro; from February to December 2011.

Analysis of the recruitment advertisements allowed the identification of several characteristics of the jobs:

1. There is a wide variety of jobs in the travel and tourism industry, both for management and executive positions;

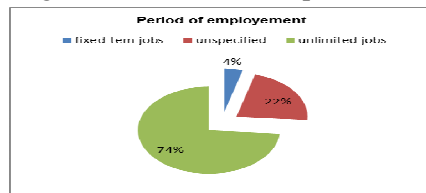


Fig. 1 – Period of employment

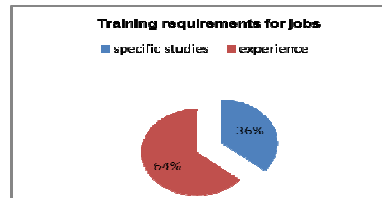


Fig. 2 – Training requirements for jobs in tourism industry

2. Four announcements were related to fixed-term jobs (travel agency director, tour leader, waiter, tourist guide) (fig. 1). If, however, the 21 jobs on cruise ships are included, where the exact employment period is not specified but one assumes a contract for a determined time, then the percentage of fixed-term jobs increases significantly (22%);

3. Experience is more important than the candidates' studies (fig. 2) in most cases (doesn't matter if a candidate graduated a faculty in tourism area or not, it is more important him/her experience in a similar job). Thus, the specific studies (a specific school, faculty, specialization) are required for 34 positions (36% of posts), whereas experience is a prerequisite for candidates in 61 positions (64%);

4. Being a compulsory condition to opening a hotel or travel agency, in Romania is required, often, as the occupant of a post of tourism agency director to have the tourism certificate (7% of cases). The Tourism Certificate is a certificate which attests the ability to perform the specific activities to the position of director of a travel agency or hotel. Conforming to the Romanian regulations, every person who wants to work as a director in a hotel or a travel agency must

obtain this certificate issued by the Ministry of Tourism (G.O. no. 238, 2001).

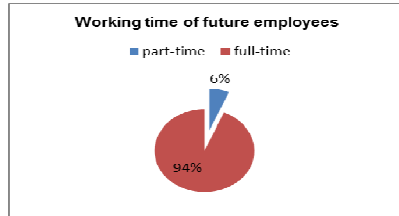


Fig. 3 - Working time for future employees

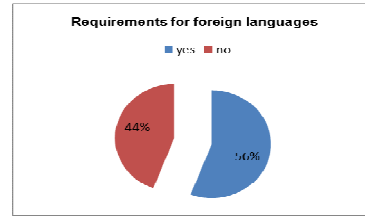


Fig. 3 – Requirements for knowledge of foreign languages

5. Six of the advertisements (6%) refer to part-time jobs: salesperson, tour operator etc. (fig. 3);

6. 56% of the vacancies require knowledge of foreign languages, most often fluent English (fig. 3), and for 40% of the vacancies a second language is required or considered an advantage;

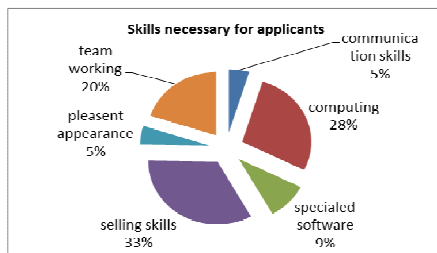


Fig. 5 – Requirements concerning the skills of the applicants

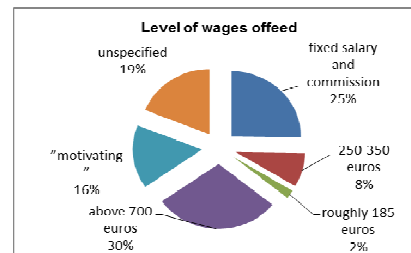


Fig. 6 – Level of wages offered

7. The skills mentioned by employers as requirements for applicants include (fig. 5): communication skills (5% of advertisements specify this), computing (28%), knowledge of specialised software (9%), team working (20%), selling skills (33%) and pleasant appearance (5%);

8. 26.9 % of the advertisements specify certain conditions on age (up to 35 years, 22-35, 20-40);

9. In terms of wages, 25% of the advertisements refer to a fixed salary and commission; 8% offer between 250-350 Euros, 2% provide roughly 185 Euros, 30% are waged above 700 Euros, 16% make a vague reference to a salary level offered for the promoted jobs ("motivating" etc.), and 19% contain no reference to wages or benefits; rarely is the opportunity for career progression for candidates;

10. An inadequate promotion of job vacancies was also evident. Most advertisements refer only to the requirements for candidates, with little or no indication of the working environment, tasks and responsibilities of the job.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Studies regarding the types of jobs from the travel and tourism industry show a certain "precariousness" of these vacancies, given the relatively low level

of qualification for various jobs, lower wages than in other sectors of the economy, the predominance of youth in this area. It should be noted, however, that these studies do not include, in general, employment in transport and other tourism - directly or indirectly - related activities.

2. The study of recruitment notices posted on the Romanian specialized sites in tourism shows that employers prefer young people, they are more interested in experience in a similar position rather than a certain specialization (mostly employers want the employees have a tourism certificate), they offer lower wages than the average salary and rarely they refer to a future career of the employee within the company. Also, important for candidates are abilities as communication skills, team working, pleasant appearance and "*the ability to sell*".

3. There are limits of such a research, given the chosen research method, the period in which data were analysed (the economic crisis has made that 2011 provide a lower number of vacancies, less attractive ones), the non-inclusion in the study of vacancies from the transport and indirect sectors. Such a study is useful in understanding some features of the employment in tourism, but should be complemented with data from other future studies that include indirect jobs created by tourism.

REFERENCES

1. **Demunter Ch., Dimitrakopoulou C., 2007** - Employment of women in the tourist accommodation sector, in Eurostat Data in focus nr. 18/2007, European Communities.
2. **Niță V., Butnaru G., 2005** – *Gestiunea hotelieră – curs, aplicații, grile*, Editura Tehnopress, Iași.
3. **Pascariu G., 2006** - *Evoluții și tendințe în turismul internațional. Fluxuri, piețe, politici*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași.
4. **Tătărușanu M., 2011** - *Recruitment in Romanian Tourism Companies*, in vol. International Case Studies for Hospitality and Tourism Management Students and Trainees, Editura Tehnopress, Iași, p. 82-88.
5. **Vellas F., 2007** - *Economie et politique du tourisme international, Second Edition*, Economica Publishing House, Paris.
6. **Eurostat, 2008** - *The tourist accommodation sector employs 2.3 million in the European Union* – n. 90/2008, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-08-090/EN/KS-SF-08-090-EN.PDF, accessed on December 2011.
7. **INSSE, 2012** – *Cercetarea statistică asupra salariilor în luna octombrie 2011 (S2)*, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/index.ro.do>, accessed on February 2012.
8. **South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC), 2008** - *Fiscal Impact Analysis Model*, <http://www.sfrpc.com/fiam.htm>, accessed on February 2012.
9. *** - *H.G. nr. 238/2001 privind condițiile de acordare a licenței și brevetului de turism*, [http://www.legestart.ro/Hotararea-238-2001-conditiile-acordare-licentei-brevetului-turism-\(MjE0ODY-\).htm](http://www.legestart.ro/Hotararea-238-2001-conditiile-acordare-licentei-brevetului-turism-(MjE0ODY-).htm), accessed on January 2012.