

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURIST CONSUMPTION MANIFESTED IN THE PERIOD 2016-2017

Mureșan Manuela Liliana<sup>1</sup>, Nistoreanu Puiu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1) 2)</sup> *The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania*  
[manuela.muresan@stud.ase.ro](mailto:manuela.muresan@stud.ase.ro); [puiu.nistoreanu@com.ase.ro](mailto:puiu.nistoreanu@com.ase.ro)

---

### Abstract

Organizing large-scale events are becoming more and more important for business tourism. MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) are one of the most profitable industries globally. In Romania, it is activating through all its four components: meetings, incentives, congresses and exhibitions/fairs. Business meetings and fairs are better known and used.

We have examined the features of visitors' tourism behavior at the tourism fairs from 2016 to 2017. In order to achieve the research objectives, we had to apply questionnaires to the tourists in Romania from 2016-2017 and to the tourist fair in Hungary in 2017. The issues of qualitative research we followed were: the change of the consumer behavior concerning the participation in the tourism fair and the way the tourism industry can handle this by creating appropriate tourist services and offers.

The paper ends with examples of measures suggested by the respondents, to help both tour fair organizers and exhibitors in creating high-quality services at competitive prices on the Romanian tourism market.

### Keywords

Tourist behavior, business tourism, Mice industry, tourism fair

### JEL Classification

L83, M2, M3, Z33,

---

### Introduction

In the last years, the organization of events in a professional way has become a component of the Romanian hospitality industry, generating a positive image and substantial incomes for our country. It can be considered to be the most efficient and profitable component of tourism. In the literature, we meet the MICE industry in all forms of meetings, from small groups (seminars, symposiums, training, team building, etc.) to large conferences, congresses or fairs. (Getz, 2008 & Whitford, 2009) Participants in these events are related to tourism by the fact that they often travel from their residence to another location for more than a day. It is worth mentioning that besides the fact that the participant enjoys the event that he attends, he also benefits from an entire package of services. These services are assimilated to tourism because their organization and realization imply the use of tourist accommodation, food, leisure, as well as the consumption of specific services provided by travel agencies.

For more than 50 years, fairs and exhibitions have been successfully launched on the event market, either as marketing and promotion tools or as MICE-related events. The fair is usually organized by larger dimensions and on a longer time interval, with the purpose of

---

purchasing products or products by consumers or users. Many large-scale fairs have become tourist destinations. Exhibitors and participants visit such events on a regular basis since repeated participation could lead to lower costs for obtaining information, as well as a sustained connection with other participants (Godar & O'Connor, 2001).

Researchers are increasingly interested in identifying the factors that motivate the continued participation of participants in fairs and exhibitions (Lee, Reisinger, Kim & Yoon, 2014; Lin & Lin, 2013), as well as perceptions and behaviors related to the purchase of products offered by exhibitors. The objectives of the research are built around the behavior of the tourist, from the position of a visitor to the tourism fairs in Romania and Hungary, between 2016 and 2017. Identifying the factors that lead to the purchase of a touristic package and what amounts were spent on it. Listing the criteria for choosing tourism fair and what entertainment activities the participants took during the fair. The interest in applying the questionnaires is of a qualitative nature and we want to know what motivates the tourist to return to the tourism fair and what is the impact of this event on the tourism sector? In this way, the industry will know how to prepare their touristic offer for the next edition of the fair.

### **Lecture review**

The literature has not yet been able to agree on a generally accepted definition of this concept, the MICE industry. Thus, the industry has been named in the most common way as "Industry of Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE). This concept has the disadvantage of presenting the industry as a collection of separated parts, rather than in a holistic way. UNWTO has used the term "Meeting Industry" and "International Meeting Industry", these terms include organizing, promoting, selling and delivering events for corporate meetings, associations, and government, corporate incentives, seminars, congresses, conferences, conventions, technical visits, exhibitions, and fairs. (UNWTO, 2006)

Fairs are a basic component of MICE industry and business tourism. That's why visitor's feedback and opinions are valuable information in research and prospecting the market. Maintaining contacts with traditional partners, consulting them on the innovative elements introduced in the promotion activity are advantages of participating in tourism fair. For the exhibitor, the fair involves lower costs and gaining time compared to other existing promotional ways.

The most important features of the tourism fair industry are the following: the tourism fairs are presentations of products and services aimed at informing the visitors in order to promote sales. They last between 3 days to a week and they bring together 2 types of participants: exhibiting companies and visitors who come with the intention to buy; both categories form the demand for travel related services: hotel, food, transportation, telecommunication, excursions, cultural events, city tours, distribution services for the destination. The size of the fairs varies: small, medium, large, regional, national and international. The volume of the tourist market is difficult to assess, the most accessible is the number of visitors and their tourist consumption behavior.

In an initial research on fairs and exhibitions, Pop and Dabija (2009) conclude that visitors are the key to the success of any event, especially in the case of fairs. For our study, in which we want to identify the traits of visitors' consumption, we note their importance in maintaining the interest of exhibitors to participate in the next edition. They have a determining role in placing new orders, concluding contracts, and initiating new tourist offerings. Last but not least, the value of information and opinions expressed by visitors about the products and services exhibited by exhibitors has an effect on the way the event is organized.

Studying the consumption behavior of visitors of the tourism fairs contributes to the tourism literature by empirically investigating how they respond emotionally to the organization of fairs, advertisements, tourist destinations and what intentions they have when choosing the touristic package. We also see from other studies that the relationship between emotional responses and other advertising effectiveness measurements it is not clear in tourism advertising. Because tourism advertising research is dominated by exploring the effects of various elements of publicity, such as the presence of a presenter / bidder (Scott, Green and Fairley 2016, Li and others 2016), with a low focus on the role of emotion in mental processing of the advertising by the customer. (Kim, Kim, and Bolls, 2014)

### **Research methodology**

This research took place between years 2016 and 2017 and was made at the tourism fairs in Romania and Hungary. The tourism fairs in Romania took place in November 2016 and February 2017, each year it has two editions, one in autumn and one in spring and takes place in Bucharest. The second, Utazas - The international tourism fair, which takes place in Budapest, Hungary, every year, is one of the most important fairs of its kind. For both tourism fairs, we applied the same questionnaires to visitors. The questionnaires were composed of thirteen questions, some with open answers, and others with multiple answers. They were applied to a total number of 200 visitors of the two international tourism fairs.

The respondents for this research were randomly selected, they were visitors aged between 18 and 75 years, income below 350 euro or between 500 and 1500 euro, or even exceeding that amount. The data gathered from the questionnaires were processed through the IBM SPSS Statistics 19 software and their analysis was based on correlations between several variables. Identifying the traits of visitor's tourism consumption behavior was largely based on the correlations between variables such as income and the activities carried out by the fair, the choice of tourist packages according to age or sex, as well as the area where they come from and where they are, based on income. Our study has as objective the evaluation of the motivation in the fair selection and the identification of visitors' opinions about the influence of fairs on tourism itself. We are interested in exploring the relationship between the packages the tourists are interested in and the ones they have purchased, what age and what income have those who buy tourist packages.

### **Results and conclusions**

From the analysis of the collected data we noticed that we have a sample of visitors, predominantly residing living in the capital cities of the two countries, Bucharest and Budapest, with minimum incomes below 350 euros for the ones living in Romania and with incomes between 700 and over 1000 euro for the ones living in Hungary. We have a distribution of the visitors based on residence and income (fig. no. 1). A big percent of the visitors (21%) have their residence in the cities in which each of the exhibitions took place.

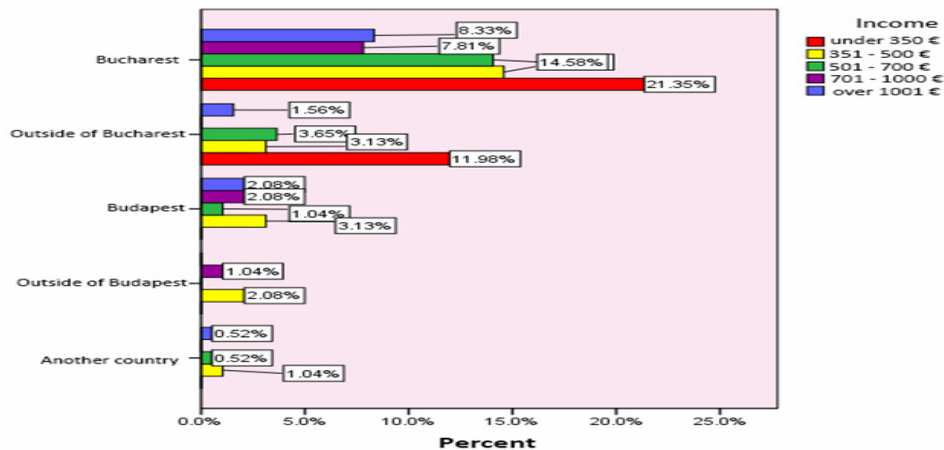


Fig. no. 1 Distribution of visitors by residence and their income

In the same time the distribution of the visitors based on residence and age shows an increased presence of the young people below 25 years – 40% of which are living in the capital city (this result was linked with the analysis based on income and occupation). This number is represented most by the students, which explains the large number of visitors with income below 350 euros from Bucharest. If we look at the ones that are living outside Bucharest, we also notice a high percent of young people aged between 18 and 25, almost 18% (fig. no. 2).

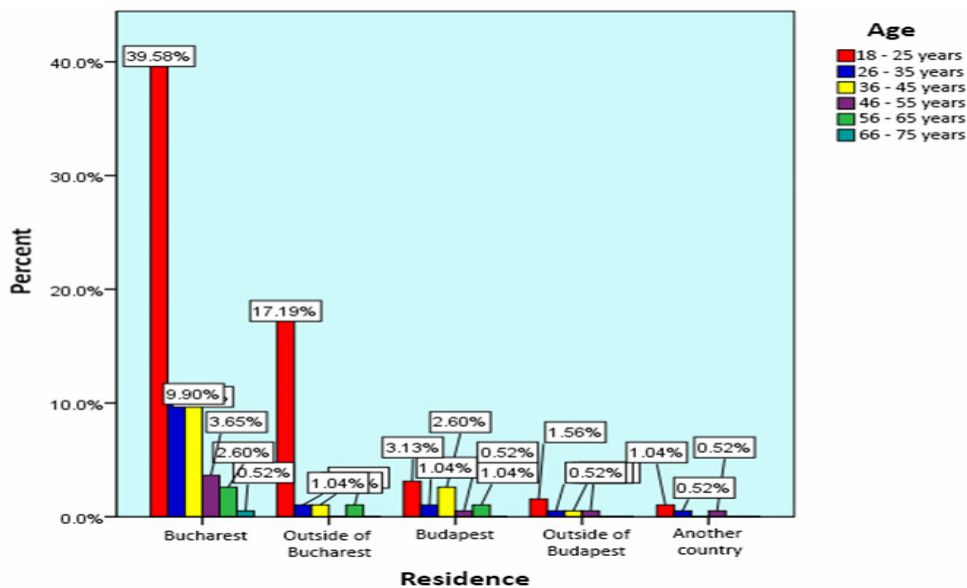
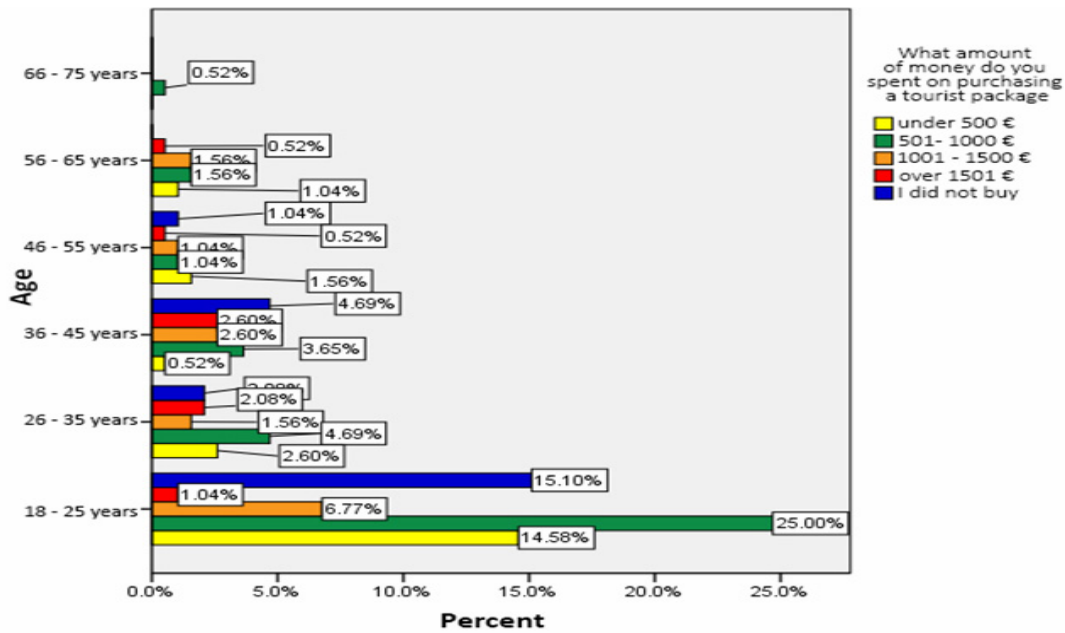


Fig. no. 2 Distribution of visitors by residence and age

By analyzing the tourism consumption behavior of visitors based on age and income, we can see the purchasing power, but also what are their preferences. Thus, with regard to the distribution of the amounts of money allocated for the purchase of tourism packages at the fair by age, it is remarkably noteworthy that persons under 25 have purchased packages with values up to EUR 500 (15%), between 501 and 1000 euro (25%) and 1001-1500 euro (6.77%). On the other hand, the age of those who have purchased holiday packages of more

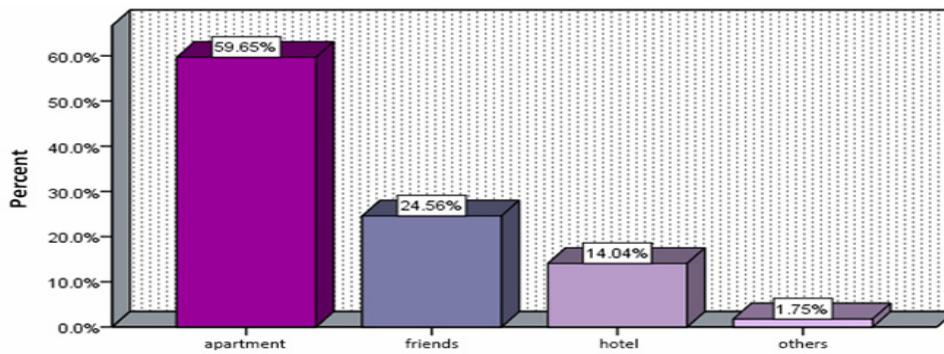
than 1500 euros can be found in the category 26-35 years (2%), and also in the category 36-45 years.

At the same time, it is noticed that 15% of young people fewer than 25 years have not bought any packages. This result, corroborated with the distribution of visitors occupations (which are mostly students), points out their poor capacity for tourism consumption. But let's not forget that they are participating in international tourism fairs, becoming educated consumers in a competitive market (fig. no. 3).



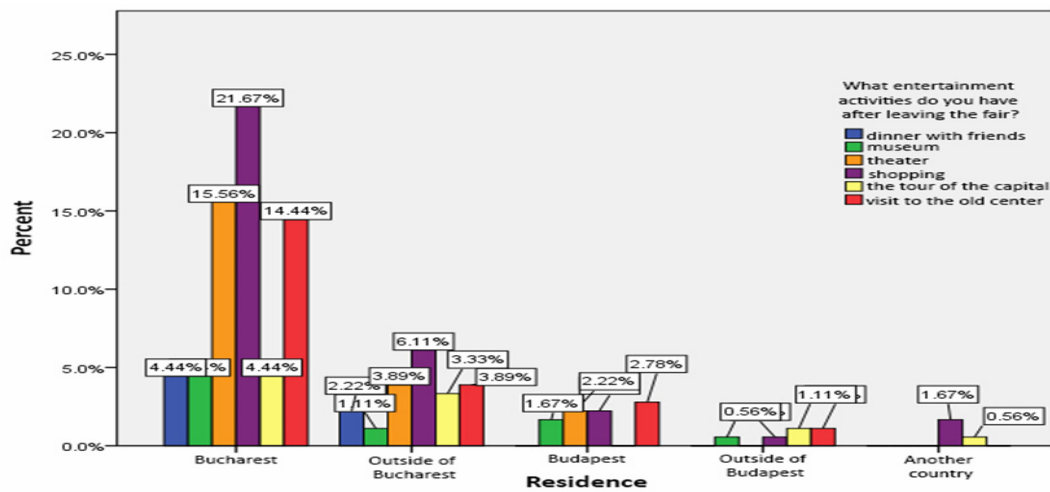
**Fig. no. 3 Correlation between the respondents' age and the amount of money spent on a tourist package**

From the analysis of the collected data, we notice that most of the visitors are living the capital city of the two countries, but we also have a percentage of participants from other cities of the analyzed countries. They are consumers of accommodation services during their participation in the fair. In figure no. 4 we identify the preferred accommodation facilities among these respondents. Thus, we have a significant percentage of about 60% of those outside the capital who have rented an apartment, either through the Airbnb reservation system or hotel apartments, but we cannot mention the exact type. The second category chose to stay at friends, about 25% of them, and those who prefer accommodation in hotel structures are about 14%. There is a significant difference between the rental of apartments and hotel accommodation; it seems that the consumer of tourism fairs is inclined to a comfort close to the personal dwelling than the tourist comfort offered by a hotel through its services (figure no. 4).



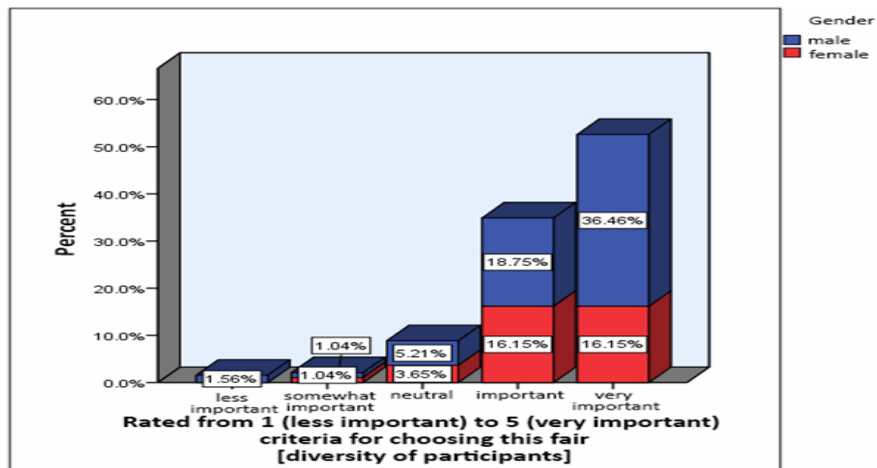
**Fig. no. 4 Analysis of the accommodation of those from outside the capital**

In order to understand the type of tourist consumer participating in the tourism fairs, we analyzed the correlation between the residence of the respondents and the way of spending the free time every day after the end of the fair. This shows the tendency for socialization through group and cultural activities (shopping, theater, visiting the city) for respondents living in the capital city. The same hierarchy is visible for those living in Budapest, but also for those living outside the capital. Interestingly, for both countries analyzed, the major interest is towards shopping activity, a total of about 30% of Romanians, who certainly go to the shopping malls in Bucharest. The second place as a leisure activity is spending time in the so-called old centers of the city, over 20% (fig. no. 5).



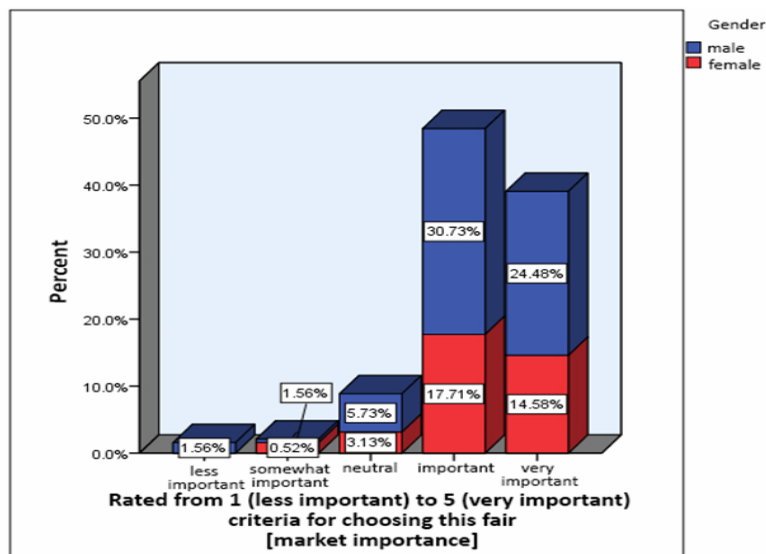
**Fig. no. 5 Distribution of visitors by residence and mode of leisure after leaving the fair**

Visitors' consumption behavior in this study has emerged from the following: the acquisition of tourist packages, the opinions expressed in the choice of the tourism fair in which they participate or the influence that they believe the fairs can have on the tourism sector. In selecting the tourism fair in which to participate, based on gender visitors have chosen the number of participant exhibitor's criteria, as being very important, about 37% of men and 17% of women (fig. no. 6).



**Fig. no. 6 Evaluation of the diversity of visitors to the tourism fair according to the sex of the visitors**

The market importance of the fair on the market was rated as important by a percentage of approximately 31% men and 18% women (fig. no. 7).



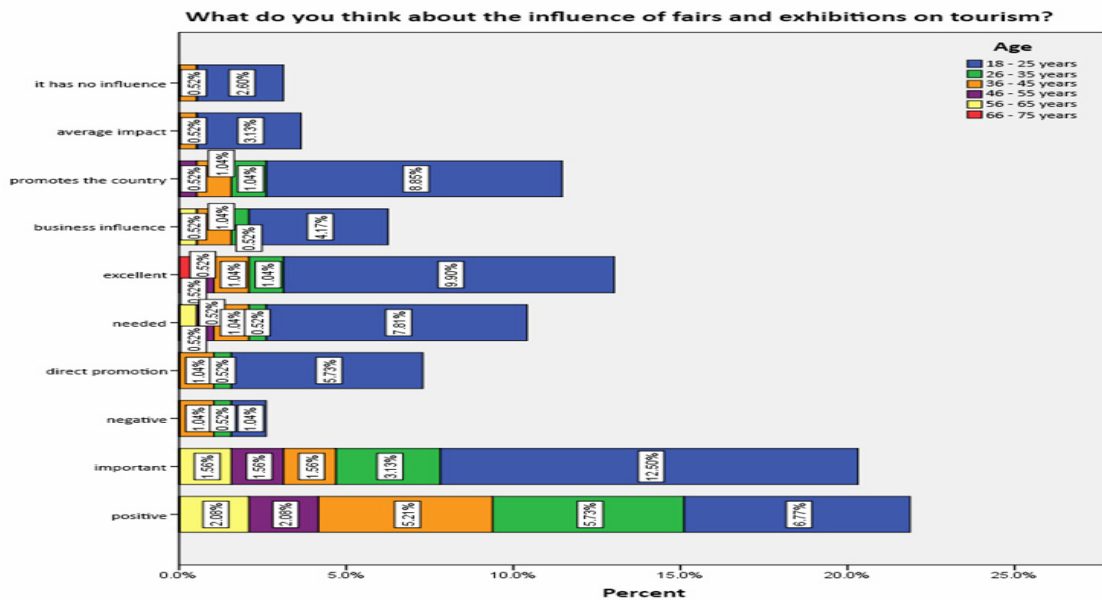
**Fig. no. 7 Evaluation of the importance of tourism market according to the sex of the visitors**

It is noticeable that the number of men is much higher among respondent visitors. Concerning the distribution of the influence of the fairs over the tourism based on the age of the visitors, analyzing the collected data we can say that the respondents aged below 25 years believe, in general, that the impact of the fairs for the tourism is a positive one (6.77% - positive, 12.5% - important, 9.9% - excellent). Almost the same believe also the respondents aged between 36-45 years (5.21% - positive, only 1.56% - important, 0.52% - no influence). We can identify a certain confidence of the visitors in these events and in their power to influence the tourism market.

From figure number 8, we can extract respondents' views according to their age, and indirect from education, because most of them have higher education. Thus, it is evident

that the young people have a positive attitude, approximately 9% believe the fairs promote the country, but adults over 35 years are a bit more reserved about the influence of the fairs and exhibitions over the tourism (only 1% share this opinion).

The conclusion is that young people are positive and that this attitude influences the organizers of tourism fairs, to specialize even more in order not to disappoint a critical and educated part of the potential customers at the next edition.



**Fig. no. 8 Distribution of the opinion on the influence of fairs on tourism according to the age of visitors**

### Conclusions

The more a manifestation of a tourism fair is visited by more people, the more the chance is that the exhibitors will be visited precisely by the target group they are targeting through the offer. Of course, not only their number is important, but also their quality of the purchasing power. Here we can also take into consideration several types of visitors, from the general public or from professionals, potential buyers or partners. The tourism fair through the stands, the rooms or the related events becomes an attraction and a catalyst for the promotion of the offered products in the tourist fairs of the tourist packages as well as the destinations. This type of event promotes the relationship between the seller and the buyer. As we have identified in our study, we have a significant percentage of young people who currently do not have a high purchasing power, but by participating in these exhibitions, they are actually interested in the tourist offer and this is very important for the participating travel agents. They may already observe the behavior towards which the young generation is heading, what they prefer as destinations, accommodation, and entertainment, and thus they can form their future offer.

Visitors of tourism fairs outside of the capital are automatically consumers of tourist services, and thus bring important incomes to the community through accommodation, food, entertainment, and income earned by applying different taxes and duties on these services and other tourist facilities. We found in the study that, after a fairy day, most visitors have a tourist consumption behavior aimed at visiting a museum or touring the capital, but also an overwhelming majority towards shopping and entertainment. The respondents also had a



number of proposals for the organizer of the tourism fairs, so 16.15% demand that the event be more publicized on all channels of communication, the visitors of both fairs in the proportion of 7% demand the elimination of the entrance fee at the fairs, but also the promotion of the destination: Romania 6.77% and Hungary 2.08%. In addition to investing in the infrastructure required by modernizing the pavilions, 4.69%, it is hoped that the organizer will have inspiration from other major international fairs such as FITUR, IMEX, etc. A proportion of 5.73% of Romanians and about 2% of Hungarian visitors recommend this.

A great advantage of the tourism fair for the community is held by the moment when it is organized. Because it takes place off-season, many tourist destinations rely on participants to attenuate the effects of seasonal tourism. As a final conclusion, we can say that a visitor to the tourism fair of Romania or Hungary is a consumer of tourist services, either a direct buyer of the tourism industry's offer as an exhibitor or a consumer of tourist services offered by the host community. Regardless of the role, its impact is important for the development of the economy, tourism, and the community indirectly, so bidders have to turn their attention to the critical mass and educate the young generation in the sense of a consumer who is conscious of its acquisition.

We can appreciate that a visitor to a fair or exhibit, which has a good impression on the event and the host location, becomes an "ambassador" for that destination.

### References

- Getz, D. (2008). *Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research*. *Tourism Management*, 29(5), 403–428.
- Godar, S., & O'Connor, P. (2001), *Same time next year: Buyer trade show motives*. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 30(1), 77-86.
- Kim, Sung-Bum, Dae-Young Kim, and Paul Bolls. 2014. *Tourist mental-imagery processing: Attention and arousal*, *Annals of Tourism Research* 45:63-76. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2013.12.005.
- Lee, C., Reisinger, Y., Kim, M. J., & Yoon, S. (2014). *The influence of volunteer motivation on satisfaction, attitudes, and support for a mega-event*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 40, 37-48.
- Lin, C., & Lin, C. W. (2013), *Exhibitor perspectives of exhibition service quality*, *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 14(4), 293-308.
- Pop, C.M & Dabija, D.C., 2009, *Fairs and Exhibitions - Modern Marketing Tools*, Cluj-Napoca: Riscoprint
- Scott, Noel, Christine Green, and Sheranne Fairley. 2016, *Investigation of the use of eye tracking to examine tourism advertising effectiveness*, *Current Issues in Tourism* 19 (7):634-642. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1003797.
- UNWTO, (2006), *Measuring the Economic Importance of the Meetings Industry – Developing a Tourism Satellite Account Extension – Report*
- Whitford, M.(2009), *A frame work for the development of event public policy: Facilitating regional development*, *Tourism Management*, 30(5), 674–682.