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THE ROLE OF NATION BRANDING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM

Empirical
study

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Abstract

This thesis approaches a current subject, in the context of the economic changes that are occurring on a global scale, that is, entrepreneurship and the benefits of its development for people. Whether it is manifested in the tourism industry or any other area of activity, the enterprise must be encouraged for at least two essential reasons: through the diversity of the goods and services that they offer, companies contribute to serving a large number of needs and creating new jobs.

The novelty of the theme is emphasized by introducing the subject of nation branding as an opportunity and, at the same time, as a challenge for entrepreneurs in the field of tourism, but also by pointing out how this can contribute to an increase of their income.

The purpose of the research is to highlight the role of nation branding in the development of entrepreneurship in tourism and the results of the research are outlined in an overview of the signals that the business environment that was the object of the research is giving off with regards to nation branding and its importance for Romania.

INTRODUCTION

In a period of perpetual change and adaptation to the economic changes that are constantly occurring, entrepreneurship can represent the mobilization of a country's economy, first of all by creating opportunities with regard to employment. Even though large companies offer a high number of jobs and have a complex operation system distributed into numerous departments, small and medium enterprises can offer stability in time, through the continuous involvement of entrepreneurs in their management and their attempt to make them profitable for them, their families and employees, who, over time, end up representing a small family that focuses its efforts towards achieving the same objective.

Entrepreneurship is starting to represent a more and more attractive option for the population which, wishing to escape the rigours of a fixed working schedule, a demanding job and a superior that they constantly have to report to, sets out to open its own business. In most cases, it's a family business or one started with the support of their close ones. Over time, it could become a medium enterprise that ensures jobs and, implicitly, the daily living of tens of employees and their families.

Through its inherent characteristics, tourism represents one of the economic sectors that are most suited for entrepreneurship.

The diversity of tourism products and services imposes the creation of an offer that is constantly updated, in order to satisfy the needs that exist in this sector. This way, one creates opportunities for the development of businesses in certain areas of activity in tourism (Lordkipanidze and others, 2005).

Customs and traditions, as elements of attraction, traditional forms of food and housing (villas, hostels, motels, vacation homes, restaurants that serve local cuisine etc.), entertainment (cart rides, sledding, horseback riding etc.), which are mostly observed in agrotourism, rural tourism etc., are activities included in the concept of tourism, carried out at a high quality level in businesses based on entrepreneurship.

This is why entrepreneurship in tourism, both in the case of large companies and especially in the case of smaller sized ones plays a very important role in the development of the quality of touristic products, in reducing the difference between the promised/offered product and in increasing the competitiveness of the Romanian tourism offer as compared to that of neighbouring countries or other European states.

Closely connected to the development actions with regard to the offered tourism product and its promotion amongst tourists are the nation brand and tourism brand, which are very important in outlining a clear image of the destination and the

country's representative and defining landmarks and in facilitating an increase in Romania's notoriety on an international level.

The thesis discusses the subject of nation branding in the context of the possibility of its use in order to develop entrepreneurship in Romanian tourism and presents the results of the research carried out on various categories of entrepreneurs in three important Romanian cities: Bucharest, Braşov and Constanţa.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP – FROM BUSINESS TO LIFESTYLE – IN A CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

There are many reasons that can cause a person to take the decision to start a company, but, besides the subjective explanations and arguments, which are linked to certain passions, to the gratitude towards a loved one or other similar motives, one of the essential reasons is that of carrying out an activity that ensures at least the income necessary in order to support the entrepreneur and their family.

Russell and Faulkner (2004) consider that entrepreneurship represents a critical factor in the development of tourism, both on a global and regional level. In this regard, the elements that entrepreneurs must take into account are the permanent changes, the industry disturbances and the unpredictability of certain factors, such as: weather conditions and their influence on holidays, variable demand, offers that require customizing, people's unstable income, etc.

If, before the worldwide financial crisis, it was easier for the population with a propensity for entrepreneurship to take risks, to chase after a dream or an ideal without giving it too much thought or regretting it afterwards, at present entrepreneurs have to analyse every step and business move that they want to apply, since a decrease in sales could determine a whole series of problems, such as: the impossibility to pay the suppliers and employees, losing customers to the ever fiercer competition as a result of products being more and more similar, the unification tendency in service provision or even running out of cash. All of these inevitably lead to insolvency and, in the most unfavourable circumstances, even to bankruptcy, with major implications on the future of the entrepreneur, their family and employees.

Small or family businesses are often seen in tourism. Whether they start up with a restaurant, a cabin or turn their own house into a hostel, entrepreneurs choose to seize the opportunity to provide their families with a better living.

In their paper, Getz and Carlsen (2005) mention that these businesses are usually focused on satisfying the needs of family members, ensuring a

constant income and maximizing profit. Moreover, in the long run, a well organized business, in which every family member is involved in the operation and contributes to the prosperity of the enterprise, can develop enough to help the community and even to promote the destination that it is a part of (e.g. Topoloveni marmalade contributed to the increase of the notoriety of the locality it was produced in).

Small and medium enterprises play an important role in the European economy, since they represent a permanent source of innovation and jobs, thus building a context that is favourable to the development of entrepreneurial abilities. The important position within the European Union of small and medium enterprises ensures a large number of jobs in the approximately 23 million SMEs, which represent about 99% of the total enterprises that cover approximately 75 million jobs (European Commission, 2005, p. 5). As a result of the current economic evolution, as well as the many changes in the economies within the European Union and in the context of its expansion through the acceptance of new members, it was highly necessary for small and medium enterprises to benefit from new rules, which could lead to the clearing of some of the barriers that are blocking their development (Olteanu and Curmei, 2010).

The identification of the entrepreneur with a certain destination has a significant and positive effect on his efficiency in the business that he carries out. Knowing the place where he works and the community stimulates the entrepreneur to achieve success so that his achievements can also bring prosperity to the community where he was born, raised and lives (Hallak and others, 2012).

In the global economy, entrepreneurship is influenced by a series of factors that facilitate or, conversely, hinder the sector's development. These regard both the external environment, as well as the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs, managing to offer an overview of the current opportunities and threats. The main factors that influence entrepreneurship are (Zimmerer and others, 2008):

- entrepreneurial education: classes in colleges and faculties, entrepreneurship centres and business incubators (Hatten, 2009);
- economic and demographic factors: age, economic growth;
- the development of the service sector: profitable sector;
- the strategies adopted by large companies in order to reduce work volume and outsource the services that they are not qualified in: generate opportunities;
- technological advantages: modern equipment, computers, low prices etc.;
- independent lifestyle;

- e-commerce and the extended world of websites;
- international opportunities;
- entrepreneurs as heroes: their achievements are considered worthy models for society (Borza and others 2009).

The term "entrepreneur" appeared for the first time in France, in the seventeenth century and was used to describe someone taking on a project. It later came to designate a person starting a new business, often a new type of business or a new (and improved) way to do business. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, French economist Jean Baptiste Say wrote: "The entrepreneur moves economic resources (such as wood or coal) from a low productivity area to an area with higher productivity and more consistent results." That way, according to Say, entrepreneurs add value to rare resources. Oil is a resource because it's used as fuel. Wood is a resource because it can be used to build a house or a table or to produce paper. Economists consider valuable resources "rare" (Mariotti and others, 2012).

According to the definition given to the concept of entrepreneurship, Austrian economist Israel Kirzner states that it is a possibility of recognizing profit opportunities, considering that the entrepreneurial activity is essentially competitive. Therefore, competitiveness is inherent to the entrepreneurial market process or, to rephrase, enterprise is normal in the competitive market process (Rusu, 2014).

Borza and others (2009) support a distinct orientation in professional literature, according to which entrepreneurship means accepting the risk of starting and running a business (Nickels and others, 2005). Even though entrepreneurship mostly focuses on starting a new business, companies that are already operational can have an entrepreneurial behaviour with regard to the fact that they are proactive, innovative and take risks. Companies that are already operational and have an entrepreneurial behaviour practice "corporate entrepreneurship" (Barringer and Ireland, 2006), which is encouraged by applying measures such as reducing the size of the existing subunits and delegating authority to subunits (Stokes and Wilson, 2006).

Risk and uncertainty always accompany economic activity everywhere, given that, at the time of their occurrence, both growth and recession phenomena are marked by risk and uncertainty. Economic risk (Dicționar de economie, 2001) represents an unsure and probable event or process that can cause a loss in an activity or action. According to Romănu and others (1997), economic risk can be objective, as well as subjective. Unlike uncertainty, whose cause can be very difficult to identify, and thus, to quantify, economic risk refers to a specified thing that can be estimated through a law of probability,

which means it can be quantified through the probability of the occurrence of a certain event. Professional literature references three types of decision makers (Lipsey and Chrystal, 2002) when it comes to risk, as follows: those who adopt a neutral attitude with regard to risk, those who have an aversion for risk and those who simply love risks. Thus, the analysis shows that every decision implies a risk (Nastase, 2011-2012).

However, the most important aspect with regard to entrepreneurs is still that they are persons who recognize the opportunity to start a business, an opportunity that other people might have missed, and take advantage of it. As economist Jeffrey Timmons points out in the introduction to the book "New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century", "A skilled entrepreneur can model and create an opportunity where others see little or nothing, or see too early or too late" (Mariotti and others, 2012).

A PERSPECTIVE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ROMANIAN TOURISM

Rusu (2014) presents an international comparison of national tourism performance based on the study published by World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2007 in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report. Even though it was published 7 years ago, the conclusions of the study are still available. The study establishes a ranking including 124 countries, with each country positioned as compared to the others, based on the competitiveness in the tourism and travel sector. Each country is given a position in the ranking, between 1 and 124, based on meeting the criteria established by WEF. In this ranking, Romania is the 76th, before Ukraine, but after Bulgaria and other selected countries. This ranking proves Romania's weak competitive performance compared to the neighbouring countries, as it is last when it comes to its legal framework and business environment and last but one based on human, cultural and natural resources. Comparing Romania's data to that of other countries in the ranking, one can observe that the intentions of starting a business are rather reduced, with only Russia having a lower level than our country. Romanians who are interested in entrepreneurship as a successful career are however close enough to the existing average of 71.33%.

The study *Antreprenorii vorbesc – Barometrul antreprenoriatului românesc* (2013) shows that entrepreneurs can boost the economic growth in Romania and are an important source of jobs for the population (Ecorys, EU SMEs in 2012: at the crossroads. Annual report on small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU, 2011/12 (ECORYS Nederland BV, 2012) p. 15).

According to the data mentioned in this study, in 2012, entrepreneurs generated 67% of the total jobs

in the European Union, and in China, entrepreneurs created 75% of jobs in the same analysed period (Chinese Ministry of Trade, english.mofcom.gov.cn).

Moreover, in the US, start-ups and companies that have been operating for less than 5 years are responsible for almost the entire net job growth over the last 30 years (D Stangler and P Kedrosky, *Neutralism and Entrepreneurship: The Structural Dynamics of Startups, Young Firms, and Job Creation* (Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2010), p. 13).

In Romania, according to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), SMEs represent 66% of the total number of employees in private companies.

Table 1 shows the main problems that entrepreneurs are confronted with, as well as the expectations they have from the population, the representatives of the state and the business environment as a whole in order to succeed in developing strong, competitive companies that are responsible in their relation to the community and can influence the economic changes that might occur more easily.

At present, the tourism industry is rapidly expanding under the influence of certain factors: an increase in population prosperity, demographic changes, extra time for travelling, the population's increasing mobility, the development of transportation, etc. The training of tourism entrepreneurs must focus on means of developing tourism in general, such as: urban and rural accommodation, publicity and promotion, programs and techniques of creating tourism programs, rules with regard to behaviour, food and food hygiene, taking advantage of traditional art and local traditions, tourism and service legislation (Rusu, 2014).

NATION BRANDING – A NEW CHALLENGE FOR TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS

The term "brand" is most often used with regard to large companies whose marketing departments are familiar with the concept and use it in campaigns for the promotion of the company's products and services.

Entrepreneurs use marketing in order to attract new clients and, unlike large companies where there are marketing departments made up of specialists in the field, that can approach the brand in a professional way, in the case of small and medium enterprises this is done by the entrepreneurs themselves, whether they are engineers, medics or financiers. Their abilities and experience determine the nature and complexity of the marketing methods that they use. This is why the marketing processes of small and medium enterprises aren't always visible or obvious from

the outside. The activities of entrepreneurs show an awareness regarding strategic marketing in areas such as market supervision, targeting certain market segments and improving client services and relations (Hatten, 2009). The essential marketing problems for new companies are represented by sales of advantages rather than of product or service characteristics, meaning the development of a *brand*. A marketing strategy that is based on the characteristics of a product (its technical specifications) is less effective than one that focuses on the advantages that it offers (Borza and others, 2009).

In analysing the concept of nation brand, Angheluță (2011) considers that a country is more similar to a company than a product, meaning that the country is not a primary brand, but a manager of a group of sub-brands or independent brands that belong to that country's brand portfolio.

That's why the development of entrepreneurship also involves, next to the responsibilities and permanent worries with regard to making progress, sales and profit, many advantages, both for the entrepreneur and for society in general.

Mariotti and others (2012) highlight these advantages for the entrepreneur, summarized according to the definition given by Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), as follows:

- creating jobs and offering opportunities for entrepreneurship;
- increasing energy efficiency, thus conserving natural resources and saving money;
- reducing the negative impact on employees' health;
- helping companies access new local, national and international finance sources;
- the possibility to profit from the consumers' preference for environment-friendly goods;
- the preservation of limited natural resources that companies and communities depend on for business and the quality of life.

Besides these advantages that are specific of entrepreneurship, in general, companies that operate in the tourism industry play an essential role in promoting the country and its name amongst Romanian and foreign citizens through the goods and services they offer, thus contributing to the consolidation of a nation brand through quality products, professionalism, respect towards tourists and the diversity of their offer.

The European Union supports the founding of small and medium enterprises and the main reason for this is that this type of business supports people's entrepreneurial involvement and stimulates the creation of new jobs (Wanhill, 2000).

One study with regard to the entrepreneurial process shows that the European Union is more and more interested in the development of rural areas, offering support for starting and developing

businesses, in addition to agricultural support. The results of the study published by OECD in 2003, regarding the influence of entrepreneurship on local economic growth, conducted in 30 countries, show that stimulating entrepreneurial activity can offer an alternative to paying unemployment benefits in rural areas, but that the direct effects on jobs and growth are small in those areas and often favour certain population segments. According to the study, there are a lot of obstacles preventing entrepreneurship from developing in rural areas, influencing both the size and form of the entrepreneurial activity and its chances of success. The study ends by highlighting the fact that unofficial institutional factors, such as the lack of positive entrepreneur examples (worthy models) and limited networks are a few of the most important barriers hindering the development of entrepreneurship in the rural environment (OECD, 2003). Without worthy models in the field of entrepreneurship, economic agents lack the necessary force to make the decisions that are needed for them to become entrepreneurs (Năstase, 2011-2012).

Thus, newly-founded enterprises in the rural environment can represent a first direction for the development of entrepreneurship by taking advantage of European financing sources, Romania's very high rural tourism potential and the fact that a large part of the population does not currently have a stable workplace and family enterprises can ensure them a profitable source of income and contribute to the promotion of the country.

Regardless of whether one approaches the possibility of integrating the concept of nation brand in the promotion policy of Romanian enterprises or another marketing strategy that is useful in order to outline the image of tourism in a certain country, all of these actions must be taken by entrepreneurs, who need to have the courage to take the risk with regard to the activities that they will carry out.

RESEARCH WITH REGARD TO THE ROLE OF NATION BRANDING IN DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM

The thesis was drafted based on quantitative research in order to identify the role of nationbranding for entrepreneurship in tourism and its development in the future.

Research methodology

The research was conducted between June 16th - August 16th 2014 on 121 respondents, in three cities that are representative for Romania, both from a social and cultural point of view and with regard to the number of tourists that visit them every year: Bucharest – the country's capital,

Braşov – a mountain city which is an important touristic attraction of the country and Constanţa – a seaside city, a Black Sea port that attracts a high number of tourists for Romania every year in the neighbouring resorts. The respondents are people aged between 24 and 67 and are representatives of companies founded for touristic purposes or with the purpose of satisfying the needs of tourists, meaning providing touristic services and selling goods.

In order to be included in the test group, the respondents had to meet certain criteria that were important for the hypotheses being studied, that is:

- to be at least 18 years old and own or represent, at the moment when the study was being conducted, an enterprise that operated in areas of activity that are relevant for the tourism industry, both provision of services and manufacturing and marketing of goods;
- to not work in the following fields: journalism, radio, TV, public relations, publicity, market research, marketing;
- to live in either Bucharest, Braşov or Constanţa, and for the enterprise to be registered and/or to operate in one of these cities or on Romanian territory;
- to not have participated in any study regarding the research subject in the last 6 months;

The research tool was the survey. It is a long and relatively complex one, comprising many sections and including both open and closed ended questions in order to obtain information that is as clear as possible on the research subject. Besides questions regarding the type of business, the operation time and the area of activity, respondents answered the questions in the section referring to the nation brand and its influence on the activities that companies carry out.

The research procedure consisted in collecting data through the survey, centralizing it, then grouping it based on the study's objective, interpreting the results and presenting them in the paper with the purpose of understanding the issue being researched and the particularities of entrepreneurship in the tourism industry.

The most important *objectives* of the research are:

- identifying as many tourism entrepreneurs as possible that carry out different activities in order to support and promote Romanian tourism potential;
- discovering and presenting the fields of activity/interest areas in which the enterprises that are part of the test group operate;
- establishing the extent of the tourism entrepreneurs' knowledge with regard to Romania's current tourism brand;
- establishing the necessity of the existence of a nation brand from the perspective of

entrepreneurs and its influence on their businesses;

- discovering the extent to which entrepreneurs use the enterprise brand in order to promote the business and how the nation brand could support the brands of their companies;
- presenting the importance of the nation brand for the tourism business environment;
- identifying promotion factors offered by the nation brand that entrepreneurs can use in promoting their products/services or their business as a whole;
- presenting the most important industries in Romania, from the perspective of entrepreneurs, based on a strong nation brand that is representative of the country, which could be created;
- discovering the extent to which tourism entrepreneurs collaborate with the public bodies in the field, that is, ministries, authorities, agencies, professional associations, etc.;
- identifying the extent to which entrepreneurs consider that the nation brand is famous enough amongst Romanian and foreign tourists, if it is well known and correctly and sufficiently promoted;
- presenting the promotion means which respondents would use to promote the nation brand.

Research analysis and results

In order to observe to which extent the research covered a vast array of fields of activity or interest areas in tourism, the 121 respondents were asked a question with regard to the profile of the enterprise that they were representing (Figure 1). Most entrepreneurs (27% and 12%, respectively) stated that they provide accommodation and housing services for tourists, followed by tourism agencies (15%) and those who provide public food service (14%); the fewest respondents provide treatment, spa and medical recovery services (2%), own websites/blogs (2%) that promote tourism or are tour-operators (1%).

When asked about the importance and usefulness of a nation brand for their business, most respondents approached the topic openly and stated that they were convinced that such a brand needed to exist (Figure 2).

The results show that 68% of respondents consider the existence of a nation brand important and very important, while 18% consider the subject useless. However, one can notice that a significant percentage of entrepreneurs (14%) are indifferent when it comes to using the nation brand and 18% actually reject the idea. One could interpret this as a lack of knowledge with regard to the subject or a misunderstanding of the information with regard to Romania's nation brand, due to its weak promotion amongst tourism entrepreneurs.

With regard to the effects of using nation branding to help develop their own business, entrepreneurs made the following statements (Table 2).

By analysing the answers, the most important results that they can obtain are, from the point of view of the respondents, using the nation brand as a "label" based on trust and having the guarantee of high quality for Romanian products (94%) and associating the country with a representative thing that could help boost tourism (92%).

With regard to the usefulness of the nation brand compared to that of their own enterprise's brand, entrepreneurs considered them both very important, but the brand of the enterprise is the most used and defining for the finished product offered to the tourist. Thus, all respondents stated that they use the brand in promotion campaigns, for 92% it's like a company calling card, and 52% of entrepreneurs use it to attract tourists, but don't consider it the most important means of promotion (Table 3).

However, 86% of respondents also observed the importance of the nation brand due to the fact that it helped to uniform companies with Romanian capital, regardless of their field of activity, in the sense of forming a unified image in the minds of consumers.

With regard to the notoriety of the nation brand, most respondents mentioned that it was not promoted enough and tourists have the tendency to mistake it for the tourism brand (67%), while 3% believe that tourists are not at all familiar with the brand (Figure 3).

Even though they consider that the existence of a nation brand would have a positive effect on their businesses, entrepreneurs don't believe it to be a determining factor for increasing sales and the number of tourists. Moreover, they consider that promotion activities need to be improved and multiplied in order to transmit a correct, coherent and continuous message to tourists, to avoid confusion between the nation brand and the national tourism brand since, even though the two may coincide, it's preferable for them to be distinguished at least at a conceptual level.

Asked to compile a top 3 of the most important Romanian industries, based on which a strong, unique and representative nation brand could be established, the industries that were most mentioned in the answers were: tourism (97%), agriculture (95%) and garments and leather products (92%). Other areas included: sports, gastronomy, the IT industry, education, traditional art and others.

With regard to the promotion media that entrepreneurs would use in order to increase the notoriety of the nation brand, most of them would opt for an information and awareness campaign targeting the entire population of the country (100%), the Internet (98%) and official bodies

(90%), while TV spots (47%) and the training of Romania's representatives both inside and outside the country with regard to the detailed knowledge of the nation brand (56%) were less attractive to entrepreneurs (Table 4).

By analysing these responses, one can understand that the respondents consider it very important for the entire population to be familiar with the nation brand, since people are the main promoters of its values both inside and outside the country, through travel and interaction with foreign tourists. People are the most important and valuable resource in communication and they can convince their acquaintances to visit their country of origin. The Internet also continues to be a strong source of information for people and entrepreneurs are able to use it, due to the very high degree of penetration and transmission of information towards society.

Another question that we asked respondents focused on their knowledge of Romania's current tourism brand. 87% of respondents stated that they were familiar with it, while 13% didn't know what it was. The high number of entrepreneurs that were familiar with the tourism brand is a good sign for the evolution of this sector, but the activities of the public bodies in this field must be oriented towards raising awareness with regard to its importance amongst those who are not familiar with it, towards its promotion in the Romanian tourism industry in order to increase the efficiency of the promotion campaign at a national and international level.

Closely connected to this subject, respondents were asked how often they collaborated with representatives of the public bodies in the field, that is, the ministry, authorities, agencies, professional associations and so on (Figure 5). Most entrepreneurs stated that they constantly collaborate with the public bodies in this field (51% often, 15% very often, respectively), while only 4% stated that their collaboration is merely sporadic (12% rarely, 4% very rarely, respectively). An important aspect that must be taken into consideration is that of entrepreneurs who are not interested in collaborating with public bodies in the field (18%), as they may not be correctly informed with regard to the decisions, laws, partnerships, agreements and other important aspects that are carried out at an official level and inevitably influence the company's activity. There can be multiple reasons for this, from lack of trust, interest or simply lack of access to information, due to the area in which the said enterprises carry out their activity. No matter what the answer is, the subject must be carefully monitored and solved based on the issue raised by each entrepreneur.

LIMITS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The lack of representativeness of the test group for the tourism entrepreneurial environment represents the main limit of the thesis, but also a starting point for the establishment of new research directions. Moreover, in order to clear up certain aspects that remained unclear based on the answers resulting from the quantitative research, it's recommended to conduct a qualitative study, in the form of an in-depth semi-structured interview.

A future research direction could be oriented towards conducting a more ample study, at a national level that would include respondents – representatives of enterprises from all cities and areas that are representative of Romania from the point of view of tourism and have a high potential for development. By identifying a large number of entrepreneurs and their knowledge or desires with regard to the nation brand and the national tourism brand, one can outline the bases of a large scale tourism promotion campaign, at the centre of which the nation brand reunites the most important attributes for the destination's specific features, the country's population, its customs, lifestyle, the culture and history that define it.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the fact that we have at our disposal natural resources that are unique in Europe and even the world and famous specialists in tourism and tourism marketing, entrepreneurship in Romanian tourism has a favourable context for development, as well as opportunities to access European funds in order to start enterprises with the purpose of integrating the available labour force in a common system of economic progress.

However, due to lack of access to information or an insufficient involvement of the authorities in the field in the identification of the problems which entrepreneurs are confronted with on a daily basis, the number of enterprises that provide services or manufacture goods for touristic purposes is significantly reduced compared to the actual potential of the destination.

By analysing the results of the research with regard to the identification of the role of nation branding in the development of entrepreneurship in tourism, one can state a few important conclusions, that is: tourism entrepreneurs ensure a large number of services offered to tourists, but that number could be improved by maintaining the standards in accordance with the progress made in countries with notable performances in tourism; the nation brand is often mistaken, both by entrepreneurs and by tourists, for the national tourism brand; at the level of the industry, it's necessary to create a nation brand, with the help of which entrepreneurs

can organize promotion campaigns with a high impact for tourists that are visible both in Romania and on an international level.

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ANNEXES

Table 1. Problems that entrepreneurs are confronted with in their activity

| No. | Definition of the problem to be solved | Short presentation of the problem | Percentage of total entrepreneurs |
|-----|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | I need to be allowed to develop a business | Entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with the level of taxation, tax uncertainty and bureaucracy | 43% |
| 2. | I need a culture that supports entrepreneurs | The improvement of the communication of entrepreneurs' success stories is expected to have a great impact on entrepreneurial culture | 52% |
| 3. | I need the tax environment to be simplified | They want taxation and regulations to be simplified | 91% |
| 4. | I need a predictable tax environment | They want a predictable tax and regulation environment | 94% |
| 5. | I need help to access financing | They believe that access to financing is difficult or very difficult | 88% |
| 6. | Through mentoring, I contribute to the development of other entrepreneurs | I mentor in a formal or informal setting | 80% |
| 7. | I need Government support | They believe that crediting plans for small entrepreneurs would be most efficient | 29% |
| 8. | I want society to tolerate failure | They believe that failure in business is perceived as a barrier to starting new businesses, as a failure in your career or an indication that you lack the necessary abilities | 81% |

Source: Realized according to the study "Antreprenorii vorbesc – Barometrul antreprenorialtului românesc", 2013

Table 2. The effects of nation branding on tourism enterprises

| The effects of nation branding on tourism enterprises | Percentage of total respondents |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Better visibility abroad | 88% |
| The association of the country with a representative place/thing/product/activity that could help boost tourism | 92% |
| Attracting a large number of Romanian and foreign tourists | 76% |
| Increasing sales | 78% |
| The possibility of applying client loyalty programs and attracting new clients from among the acquaintances, relatives and friends of the existing ones | 80% |
| Collaborating with foreign partners and conducting exchanges of experience between employees in countries with similar tourism potential or that have similar tourist accommodation conditions | 51% |
| Using the attributes of the nation brand in order to promote the brand of the company that they own and make image associations with the purpose of increasing sales of products/services | 57% |
| Increasing profit and using it in order to expand the business | 64% |
| In the case of goods, the possibility of penetrating the foreign market with more credibility and notoriety and thus increase Romanian product exports | 85% |
| Using the nation brand in order to create a "label" based on trust and having the guarantee of high quality for Romanian traditional products, products manufactured with Romanian labour or manufactured in Romania using the results of detailed studies and carefully observed recipes or work methods | 94% |

Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

Table 3. The usefulness of the nation brand vs. the brand of their own company

| The usefulness of the nation brand vs. the brand of their own company | Percentage of total respondents |
|--|---------------------------------|
| My company brand helps me attract tourists, but it's not the most important | 52% |
| I use the brand in promotion campaigns | 100% |
| To me, the brand is like a label, a company calling card and the services/products that I offer live up to the quality that I promised the client | 92% |
| The nation brand helps uniform companies with Romanian capital, regardless of their area of activity, in the sense of forming a unified image in the mind of the consumers, whether they are Romanian or foreign, with regard to the values and attributes that the population of a certain country is guided by | 86% |
| I don't believe that the brand is very important for the success of the business, what's important is what I offer the client | 34% |
| The nation brand cannot exist as long as Romania does not identify a representative product/landmark/area that is unique on a global level, attracts the attention of tourists and determines them to pick this destination | 77% |
| My business could use the differentiation and uniqueness attributes used in the promotion campaign for the national tourism brand both online and offline in order to promote its goods/services offer and Romania as a whole through the frequent use of the brand in presentation materials, the service offer, advertising spots, flyers, brochures, catalogues, etc. | 82% |
| The nation brand helps me when I attend fairs, exhibits and conferences in my area of activity for a better visibility and identification of my company on the map of tourism services and product providers in the entire world | 54% |

Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

Table 4. National brand promotion media mentioned by entrepreneurs

| Promotion media | Percentage of total respondents |
|--|---------------------------------|
| TV spots | 47% |
| Internet (websites, social media etc.) | 98% |
| Tour operators | 86% |
| By public bodies | 90% |
| National and international travel agencies, partners | 88% |
| Information campaign in the tourism sector staff / entrepreneurs who take direct contact with tourists | 82% |
| Information and awareness campaign for the entire population of the country, with the aim of knowledge, understanding and intense promoting among relatives and on holidays at home and abroad of national brand | 100% |
| Participation in international events, either in the field of tourism or related, which can stimulate and generate targeting tourists to Romania | 64% |
| Training Romanian representatives in the country and beyond on thorough knowledge of the country brand and its features and promoting romanian brand in order to attract attention of potential tourists choosing this destination | 56% |

Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

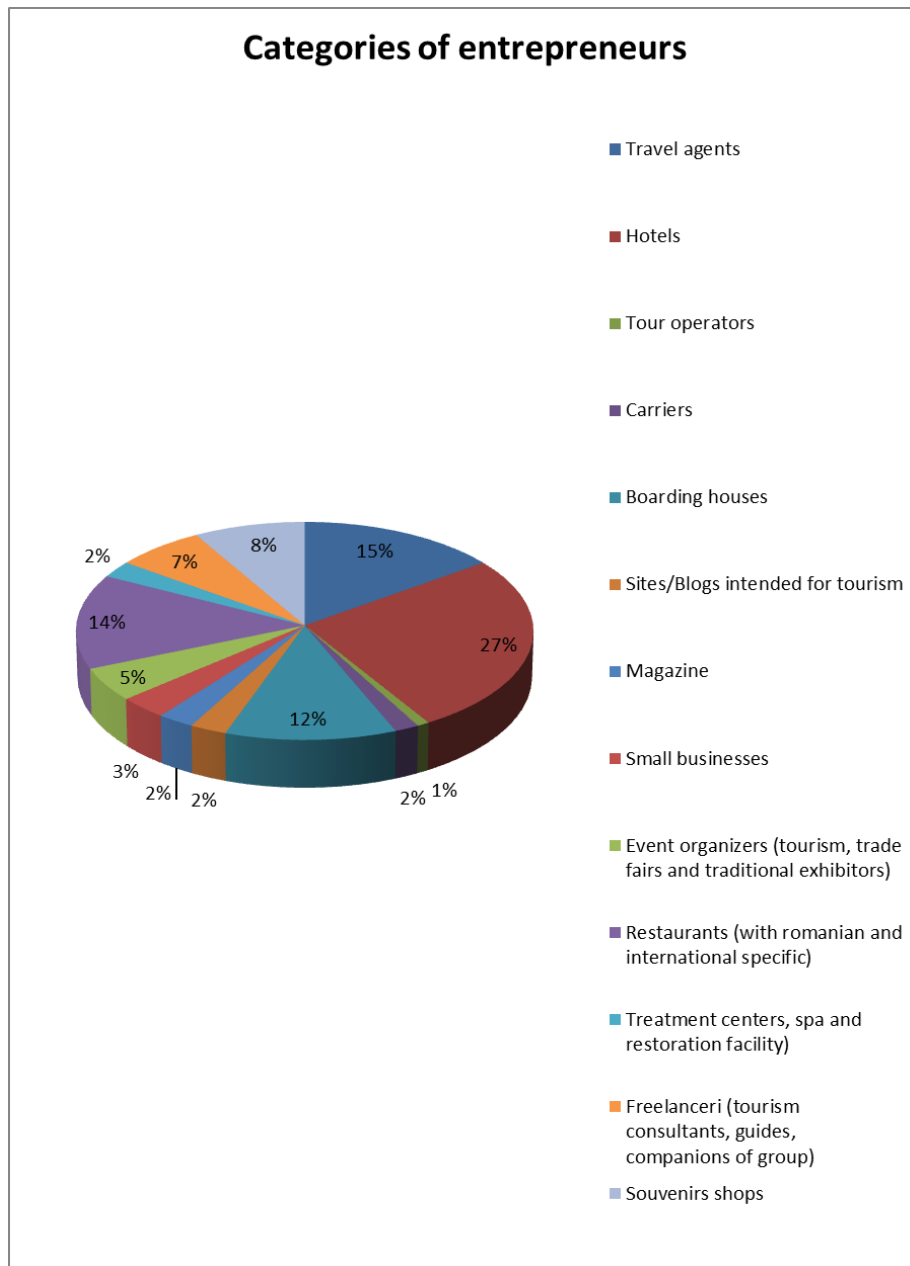


Figure 1. Categories of entrepreneurs from the sample research
Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

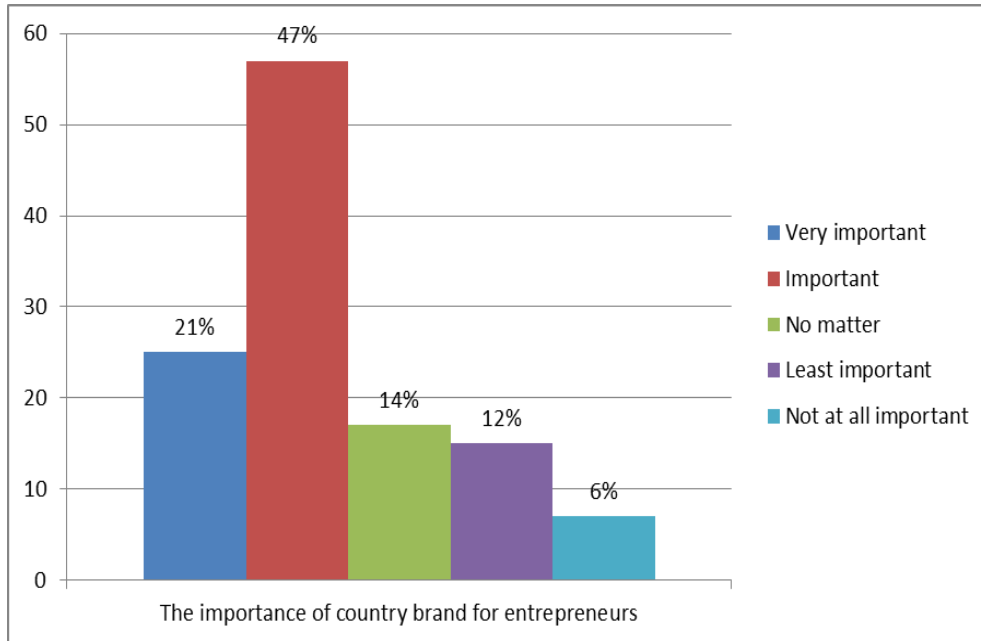


Figure 2. The importance of country brand for entrepreneurs
Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

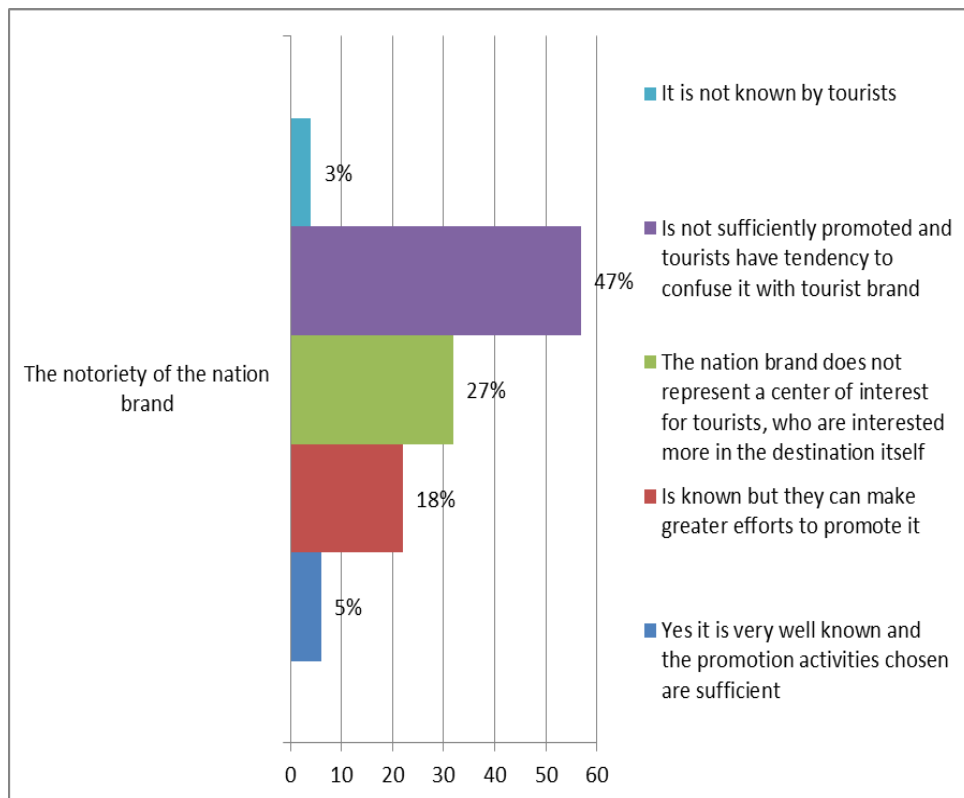


Figure 3. Notoriety enjoyed by the nation brand in the vision of respondents
Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

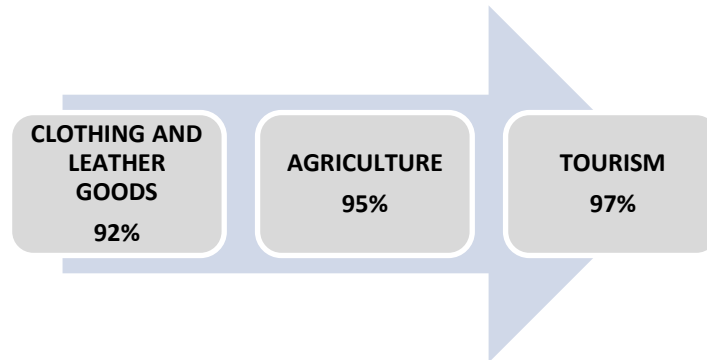


Figure 4. Top 3 industries mentioned by entrepreneurs
Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research

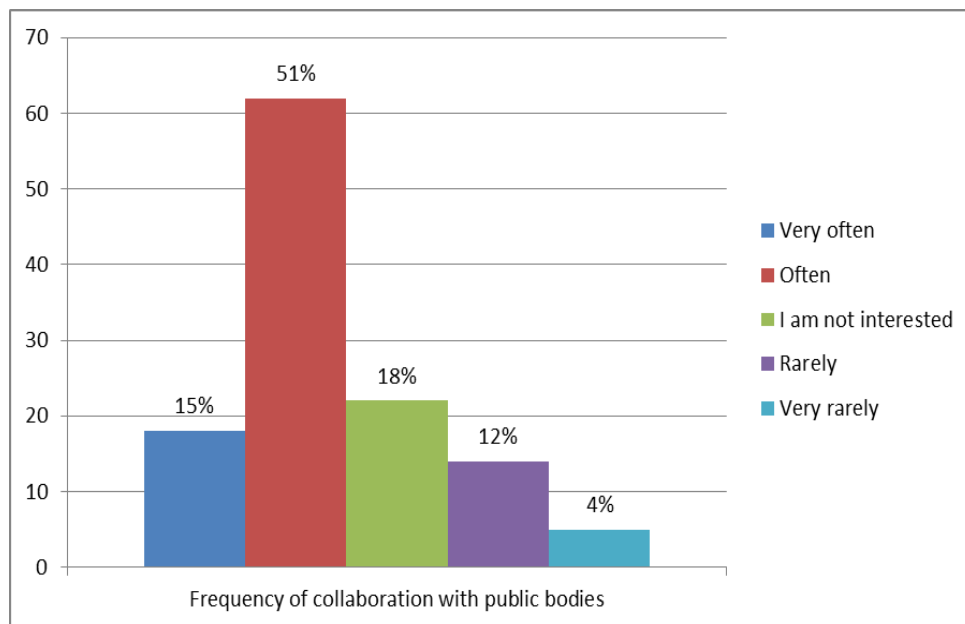


Figure 5. Frequency of collaboration with public bodies
Source: created by the authors based on the results of the research