COMPETITIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE IN TOURISM. CASE STUDY FOR ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to address in terms of competitiveness and performance the situation of tourism industry in Romania. Despite the optimism displayed by the authorities and the efforts made so far, it has lagged behind other European countries' performances, including the neighboring countries. I have done a summary of the analysis made using the model of "diamond" designed by Michael Porter, about the Romania's situation in general, and Romanian tourism in particular. Starting from the advantages and disadvantages of this model, I concluded that is another more appropriate management tool to provide an overview of the phenomenon, namely the scoreboard. This paper proposes a way of adapting and applying the balanced scoreboard for the tourism industry, with the aim of evaluating performance and identifying solutions to improve them.*

Keywords: *competitiveness, balanced scoreboard, key performance indicators, performance, Porter's diamond, tourism industry*

I. Introduction

Porter's "diamond" became a famous model after the American professor published his book on the theory of competitive advantage, entitled 'The Competitive Advantage of Nations" (Porter, 1990). According to the theory developed by Michael Porter, companies can gain competitive advantage based on technological advantage they hold and not because of the relative abundance of factors of production. On the other hand, a company can create competitive advantage using the adopted strategy, the range of products manufactured and property rights that it hold. Nationally, the model highlights the competitive advantage of the country. The structure of "national diamond" comprises six elements, namely (see Figure 1): the factorial determinants, the demand determinants, upstream and downstream industries, the strategy, structure and competition between firms, the government and the chance.
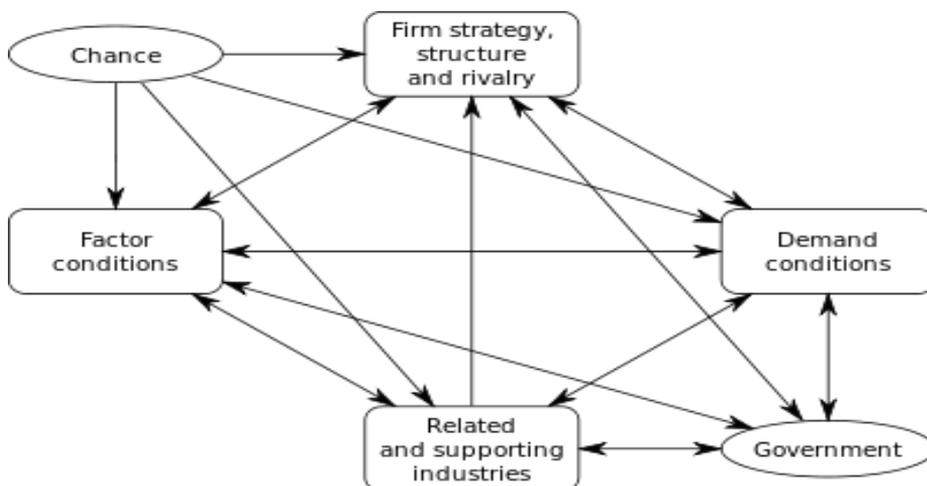
Fig. 1. The Michael Porter's "diamond"

Each of these elements contains certain components and plays a role in gaining competitive advantage. Thus, category of factorial determinants includes human resources, natural resources, capital, knowledge (know-how) and infrastructure. Determinants of demand fall in the category of size, structure, internationalization and growth in demand, customer complexity, etc. A related industry, upstream and downstream of the industry under consideration contributes to increased international competitiveness. Strategy, structure and competition between companies is a complex category, which includes companies objectives, methods and tools for management of companies, motivating employees, the existing competition in that industry, etc. The state has a major role through the influence it exerts on the development of production factors, manifested through investment policy and subsidies, and regulation of capital markets. The state alone has the power to create competitive advantages. Chance plays an important role when it comes to the success of some industries or companies or nations when they profit of your opportunity. Some examples devoted part inventions, new technologies such as biotechnology and microelectronics, as well as oil shocks, changes in financial markets, political decisions taken by foreign governments or wars. Determined by chance, the events are important because they create discontinuities. They allow modification competitive position, causing the cancellation of advantages previously established by competitors and create potential benefits in response to the emergence of new and different conditions.

American professor has studied the relationship between the six elements of the model, highlighting the fact that they work together and function as a powerful system to provide a sustained advantage. Losing a competitive advantage means destruction of "diamond" created. There are many causes that can lead to rupture of ties between elements of the "diamond",

namely: the technological changes, the worsening factorial determinants, the reduction in the competitiveness of the national economy and the unjustified State interventions in the market.

Hailed by some specialists and criticized by others, the pattern of "diamond" has evolved over time. Thus, the model of "simple diamond ", originally designed by Michael Porter at the end of last century, it was popular "double dual diamond ", via some models intermediary, called "model of the nine factors" and that model "double diamond" (Postelnicu, Ban, 2010). On the other hand, some experts have accused Michael Porter failing elements in its model, such as national culture, considered to be essential for the competitive advantage of European nations (van der Bosch, van Prooijen, 1992).

II. Michael Porter's "diamond" and Romania

In the last two decades, several studies have emerged that customizes the theory of competitive advantage, namely the classical model of "diamond", on the situation of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, respectively Romania.

One of these studies compares the key factors relating to competitiveness, taking into account seven economies in the region, namely Romania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Ungureanu, Burcea, 2014). According to the analysis conducted by the authors of the study, using a panel of selected statistical data for national economies, Romania has a small advantage in terms of "supply conditions". The competitive advantage for the rest of elements belongs to other countries in the region- Estonia, Poland, and Lithuania.

Regarding the situation in Romania, the authors recommended to policy makers to focus on certain aspects to ensure a competitive and efficient environment, such as: increasing investment in infrastructure, education and health; transparency of government policies; promoting clusters; a decrease diversion of public funds.

Another study used the "diamond" model to measure international competitiveness of Romania and highlights a possible comparative advantage of our country (Herciu, 2013). Considered to be a country located in the second phase of development in terms of competitive advantage, Romania has more competitive disadvantages than advantages. However, our country has some advantages compared with the European Union, like raw materials, machinery and transport equipment, and respectively other manufactured goods. In the opinion of the author, Romania's international competitiveness should be supported through measures on reducing production costs, increase product quality, boosting the exporting firms entering new markets and maintain the

exchange rate at a convenient level. In doing so, it will improve the competitive advantage of Romania's nature.

Another study within Romania's competitive edge in global competition is analyzing the products and services offered by Romanian companies in globalized markets and production (Pop, Drăghescu, Roşca, 2013). Romania's membership of the European Union is an opportunity that our country must take for its future development. Romania's chance lies in creating partnerships and strategic alliances with major international companies to take advantage of their development. Romanian companies will improve their performance if they understand that customer perception is critical to the quality of products and services. On the other hand, to have competitive advantages, it requires changes in people's mentality, a creative approach and an aggressive spirit in international competition. To these are added proactive macroeconomic policies, able to support Romanian exports.

The competitive advantage of Romania in the European Union was the subject of another study, which took into account the possibilities of recovery thereof (Iordache, Voiculeţ, 2007). Integration of our country in the EU actually meant contact with a strong economic area in terms of competitiveness. For this reason, the Romanian economy had to face a double challenge. On the one hand, it was necessary to redefine national competitiveness, and on the other hand, it began a process of reducing the gap between our economy and the average level of the main indices of social and economic U.E. According to the study of authors noted, redefining competitiveness means redefining its determinants. They further analyzed the components of the value chain at national level, assessing the performance and competitiveness of Romanian foreign trade and exports.

Compared to other Member States of U.E., Romania's economy has a relatively low level of competitiveness. This difference in competitiveness cannot be ignored because of the importance that the Community market has for our country. There are several explanations for this situation, namely: Attracting a low volume of foreign investments per capita, due to the lack of a transparent legal framework and a low diversification of Romanian exports. Some industries generate a low added value and do not require highly skilled labor force. They do not have an ability to create new jobs.

According to the study, authors said that Romania has not yet integrated into the matrix of specialization and competitiveness of the European single market, considering the need for a transition period to supply raw materials and products with low added value to the higher stages, where innovation and well-being have predominant role. The national strategy should focus on attracting investment and the development of skills and capacity in export sectors.

Appeared a few years later, another study reveals that differences between our country and the countries of the region remain (Postelnicu, Ban,

2010). On the other hand, importance should be given to the work of multinational companies in Romania. This activity should be quantified in order to provide a better picture of the competitiveness of the national economy. The study empirically demonstrates the need for an extended model of the "diamond" to measure the competitiveness of national economies internationally; the problem should interest the politicians, not only the economists.

A critical analysis of the competitive advantage of nation in general and the specific Romanian companies in particular question the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of the "diamond" model for an emerging country like Romania (Hagiu, Bărbulescu, 2013). According to the authors of this analysis, the competitive advantage of Romania is based on primary factors of production. To be successful in international competition, it is necessary for our country to solve its internal problems, such as infrastructure development, increasing the efficiency of production processes, etc. and participation in international trade. Due to parking between the first two stages of evolution competitive advantage, in Romania was not yet set the "diamond" for a dynamic national development.

Despite the negative aspects outlined above, there are some successful models of some Romanian companies, leading to the identification of new features for the "mix of national competitive advantage" (Lupu, 2013). The mentioned study analyzed the competitive advantage of firms' representative of Romania (in various fields) that has achieved good results. By aggregation, they can be transferred to the national competitive advantage. On the other hand, that study has tried to anticipate the measures that can provide any competitive advantage for the Romanian economy.

The competitive advantage of these companies was generated by private management, the possibility to use local labor force, cheap and well prepared, implementing an advanced know-how and the adoption of extensive refurbishment programs. The results achieved by these companies (compared to the parent companies) lead to the conclusion that Romania's economy has some competitive advantages in products intensive in capital and technology. On the other hand, the elements identified at this level may be the components of a Romanian "diamond" model of the success in results, increases the national competitive advantage and increases the external attractiveness.

III. Michael Porter's "diamond" and tourism industry

Even if the American professor neglected some elements when he formulated his theory on competitive advantage, such as national culture, the role of transnational corporations and foreign direct investment, it was successful. Based on the model of the "diamond", it was designed a model of competitiveness in tourism, called model C.R. (developed by Crouch and

Ritchie in 1999). It made the transition from the traditional approach centered on attractive tourist destination, to a modern approach, taking into account the competitiveness of the tourist destination. Lately, there have been a few studies addressing tourism in terms of pattern classic "diamond", designed by Michael Porter, and the theory of competitive advantage. In tourism, competitiveness problem arises from the viewpoint of a tourist destination, whether or not a tourist destination is internationally competitive. An empirical analysis of Romania as a tourist destination (before joining the European Union) uses the "diamond" model designed by Michael Porter and highlights specific elements for travel (Bobîrcă, Cristureanu, 2006). Assessing competitiveness based on this model, the study authors concluded that Romania is a destination less competitive tourism market, for several reasons: travel management is weak at all levels; the lack of experience and skills management for entrepreneurs; a low level of use of information and communication technology; an image issues adversely affect the country's credibility in the face of foreign tour operators; insufficient promotion of the Romanian tourism products by the government; inadequate funding a tourism activity. The mentioned study has identified opportunities for growth of tourism in Romania at the time, proposing some solutions to improve tourism activity, such as: a focus on the customer; a tourist product innovation; investment in human capital; a change of strategy and attitudes towards tourism.

A few years later (after joining the EU), another study has identified Romania's advantages as a tourist destination, stating that they are due to a very rich tourism potential and cultural heritage (Postelnicu, Dabija, 2016). The main priorities in the development of Romanian tourist industry are achieving a viable marketing and effective for Romania as a destination (including the creation of national tourism brand and a slogan to great effect), accelerate the construction of motorways, modernization of ports and airports, rehabilitation of railways, introducing environmental practices and preservation of tourism resources.

Another paper points out that clusters represent a strategic model of competitiveness in tourism, which is designed based on the theory of Michael Porter's competitiveness (Fundeanu, Badele, 2014). According to the authors, the basics of "diamond" pattern have the following structure:

a. The determinants factors: natural resources, geographical, cultural, historical; capital resources, human resources, tourism infrastructure;

b. The determinants of demand for products and services: market size and structure of tourism, cultural consumption habits;

c. The industries that support access to tourist activity: transport infrastructure, facilities for shopping, travel services;

d. The context for strategy, structure and company rivalry: size companies, strategic alliances, management quality. Although in Romania can

be practiced almost all forms of tourism from coastal tourism and ending with medical tourism, due to issues raised in the studies above, the perception of our country as an internationally tourism destination remains low.

IV. Performance in Tourism

The competitiveness of an entity, whether we are talking about a company, an industry or a national economy is closely linked to its performance. According to specialists, the performance is associated with two major aspects. One of these is the measurement of performance and the other is performance management.

Performance measurement focuses on identifying, tracking and reporting of performance through the use of performance indicators. In this context, the question is of defining performance indicators (K.P.I.'s), which must meet certain conditions: To provide a competitive advantage, linked to strategic objectives; To be directly linked to performance, measure clearly quantified causes of influence is predetermined; To ensure comparability with different references, geared towards future corrections.

The basics of the measurement and monitoring of performance, these indicators should be selected carefully to get the right combination that provides an overview of the situation at a time. In view of these indicators, the decision makers of a certain level will take measures necessary to achieve the desired objectives.

In turn, **performance management** focuses on planning and improves its future performance, rather than the retrospective assessment of it. As a process management, performance management is conducted cyclically the following steps: planning, action, monitoring and review (Armstrong, 2006) (Figure 2).
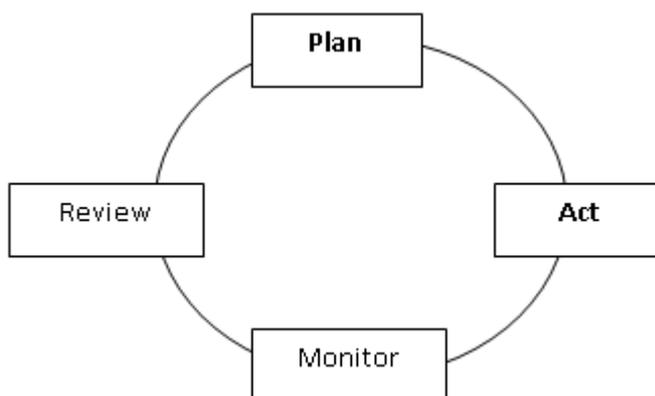

Fig. 2. Representing cyclic performance management

In the case of tourism, key performance indicators measure both the quality and efficiency of services, and tourism programs nationwide. In this context, it emerged Tourism Competitiveness Index (T.C.I.) developed by the World Economic Forum (W.E.F.). It aims to assess the elements that ensure the development of tourism in a country, taking into consideration three categories of variables that affect global tourism competitiveness, namely (see figure 3): Legal framework (subindex A); Business environment and infrastructure (subindex B); Human, cultural and natural resources (subindex C).
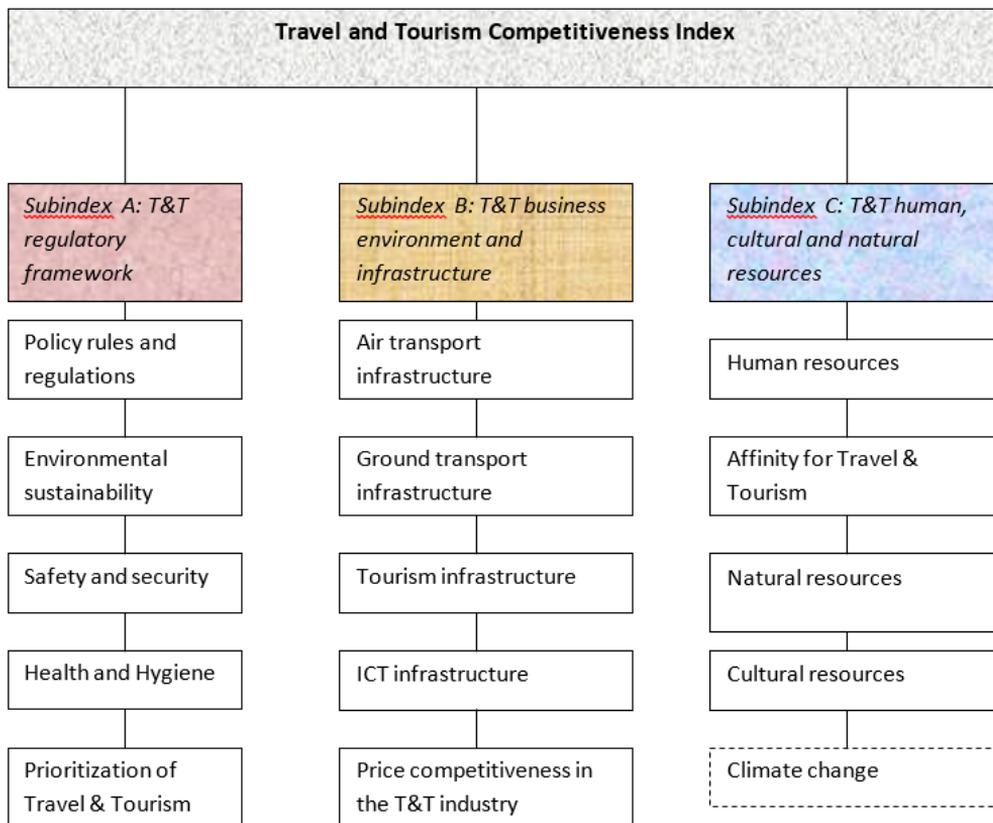

Figure 3. Structure of Tourism Competitiveness Index (2013)

Since 2015, the structure of T.C.I. was modified and developed of the four types of variables (see figure 4): Enabling environment (subindex A); T & T policy and enabling conditions (subindex B); Infrastructure (subindex C); Natural and cultural resources (subindex D).
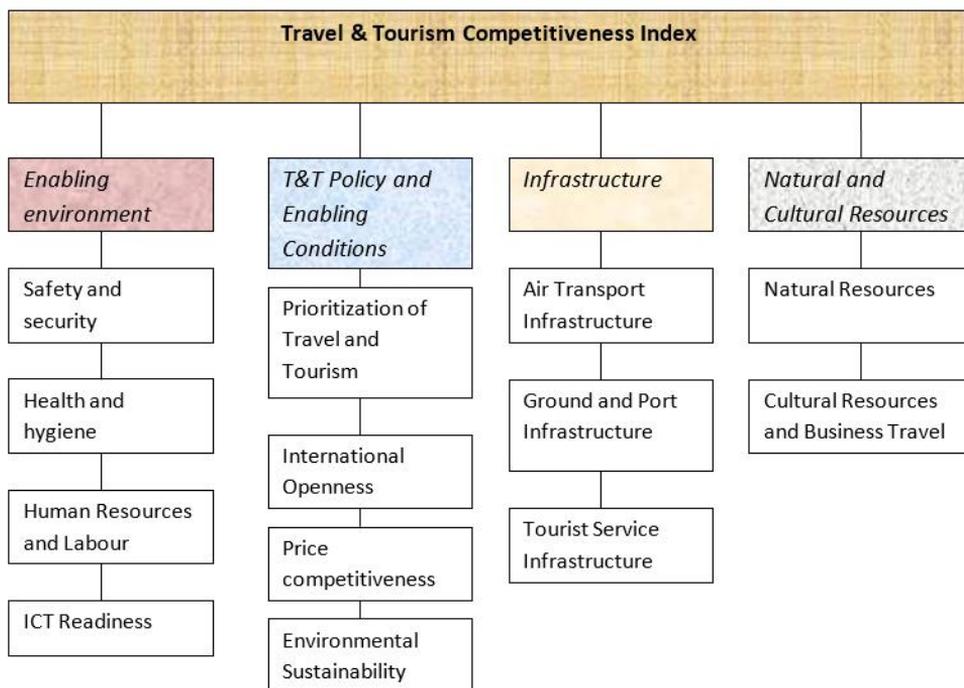
Figure 4. Structure of Tourism Competitiveness Index (2015)

The purpose of the T.C.I methodology is to create a common reference framework, in order to compare and analyze performances in tourism from different countries. An analysis made on the T.C.I. basis revealed the following (Croitoru, 2011): The first positions in the ranking are occupied by advanced countries. The development of a national economy is reflected by most of the components. The European countries occupy a good position in the standings. The E.U. expanding significantly increased the tourism potential of the region, the emergence of new tourist destinations. The most popular tourist destinations are in Europe, which is the most visited tourist region in the world.

Regarding Romania, T.C.I. values obtained in the period 2009-2015 (calculations are done biannually) places it in the middle of the rankings, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Romania's T.C.I. for the period 2009-2015:

Year	T.C.I. Position	T.C.I. Components			
		Subindex A	Subindex B	Subindex C	Subindex D
2009	66	61	64	77	---
2011	63	51	66	66	---
2013	68	66	68	73	---
2015	66	59	88	71	79

Source: Author's adaptation of World Economic Forum 2009-2015

Romania has occupied the best position in 2011, when the T.C.I. value has placed it on the 63rd position. The development of T.C.I. structure led Romania comeback on 66th position, which it has occupied in 2009. Compared to neighboring countries with which Romania is in direct competition, the unfavorable position of our country is being surpassed by them, so as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Comparison of Romania to neighboring countries (T.C.I. 2011-2015):

Country	Year		
	2011	**2013**	**2015**
Bulgaria	*48*	*50*	*49*
Czech Republic	31	31	37
Poland	49	42	47
Romania	**63**	**68**	**66**
Hungary	*38*	*39*	*41*

Source: Author's adaptation of World Economic Forum 2011-2015

A possible explanation for this situation would be that Romania has not a well-developed strategy in tourism. For this reason, it cannot benefit from the advantages of its favorable geographical position, nor do the tourist resources available, which prevent to capitalize competitive advantage, hold on the world tourism market. Romanian tourism situation is actually an issue of performance management in tourist destinations. In other words, Romania is not (at least yet) a performant tourist destination.

V. Balanced Scoreboard

Developed by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton in 1992, the balanced dashboard is a strategic performance management tool, whose philosophy is to learn from their actions, communicate clear goals and priorities, to identify directions action to be followed (Albu, 2005). One of its functions is to measure performance, in addition to being a strategic management system and a communication tool. Balanced dashboard enables behaviors alignment of concerned entities, for the purposes of the proposed strategy (Kaplan, Norton, 2006). Balanced scoreboard structure allows a business manager to look under four major issues, namely (see figure 5): a customer perspective, a financial perspective, a process perspective (internal), a learning perspective and innovation.
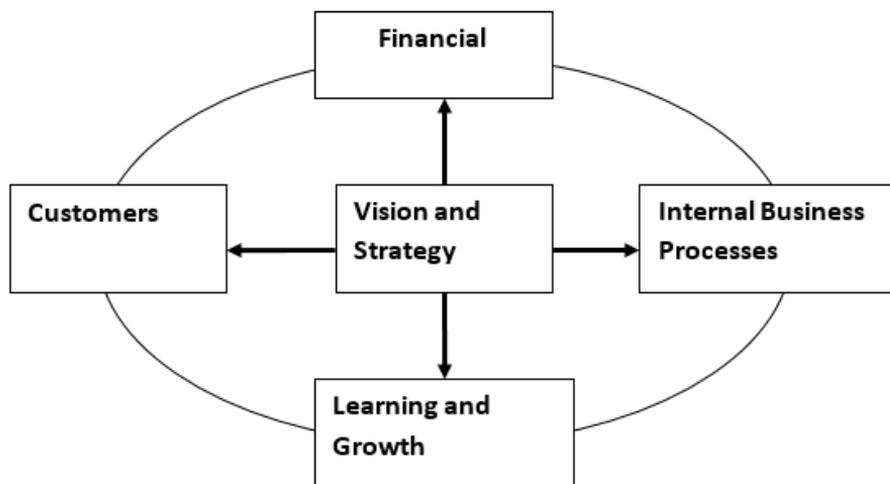
Fig. 5. The composition of the Balanced Scoreboard

Balanced scoreboard is based on the principle of cause and effect between current activities and results of strategic interest. The indicators used are the causal relationship and connection with each other (Albu, 2005). Considering the above issues, I consider it appropriate to use balanced dashboard for tourism industry. The sets of indicators that I propose are:

a. **Performance in the financial field:** Payments in tourism; Income from tourism; Result achieved in tourism;

b. **Performance in the customer:** Number of foreign tourists arriving in Romania (detailed by country of origin, types of transport means, types of accommodation units); Number of Romanian tourists left abroad (detailed by country of destination, types of transport means, types of accommodation units);

c. **Internal Performance:** The indicators included in Tourism Competitiveness Index;

d. **Organizational Performance (organizational learning):** Number of internal travel residents for holidays and business in tourist areas; Number of participants in the organized tourist tourists travel agencies; Number of Romanian tourists participants in the foreign tourism.

The indicators I proposed for this model of balanced scoreboard tourism adapted are going to meet the conditions of a good indicator (Albu, 2005): relevant, accessible, punctual; legible, controllable, foresight; are tied to a system of information; are included a in a continual process of refinement and improvement and are defined from top to bottom and vice versa. The score point of this dashboard created for the tourism industry is organizational performance (as will be seen below), because Romanian companies do not have the characteristics of a learning organization. Even if tourism is an area that

may apply benchmarking, its results are not very visible (Scurtu, Russu, Popescu, 2006).

VI. Case study for Romania

According to data published by Eurostat (2014), Romania is "one of the least attractive tourist destinations" for citizens outside the EU, as only 18% of foreign tourists come from outside the EU. On the other hand, Romanian tourism contributes less than 1% to G.D.P. because the number of Romanian tourists leaving to spend holidays abroad is much higher than the number of foreign tourists coming to visit Romania. In 2012, the numbers of Romanian tourists go on holiday abroad was equal to 5.4 million people. Number of foreign tourists who visited Romania in the same year was equal to 1.65 million people (which is three times less), most of them coming for business (1,230,000 individuals). Regarding financial performance, the results are unfavorable to our country, as it can be seen from the following table:

Table 3. Revenue and travel payments for Romania and neighboring countries (2012):

Country	Revenues (mil. EUR)	Payments (mil. EUR)	Results (mil. EUR)
Bulgaria	2917	1015	1902
Hungary	3782	1537	2245
Poland	8533	6842	1691
Czech Republic	5480	3345	2135
Romania	**1141**	**1427**	**-286**

Source: Eurostat, 2014

The negative trend in Romania's tourism balance is maintained further, as is clear from data published by the National Bank of Romania (2015). Thus, in 2013, tourism revenues were equal to EUR 1.225 billion, while payments amounted to EUR 1.499 billion amount. The result was a deficit of EUR 274 million. Customer performance is presented in the following tables:

Table 4. Structure of arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania, by means of transport (%) (2012-2013):

Transport means	Year	
	2012	2013
Road transport	75,9 %	77,9 %
Airline transport	18,5 %	16,8 %
Rail transport	3,2 %	2,9 %
Naval transport	2,4 %	2,4 %

Source: I.N.S.S.E. Romania 2014

Table 5. Structure departures of Romanian visitors abroad, by means of transport (%) (2012-2013):

Transport means	Year	
	2012	**2013**
Road transport	75,9 %	77,4 %
Airline transport	22,1 %	20,8 %
Rail transport	1,8 %	1,6 %
Naval transport	0,2 %	0,2 %

Source: I.N.S.S.E. Romania 2014

The internal performance results achieved by Romania for Tourism Competitiveness Index (2015) are shown in the table below:

Table 6. Tourism Competitiveness Index for Romania (2015):

T.C.I. Components	Subcomponents	Score	Rank
Subindex A- Enabling environment (1-7 best): Score = 4,9 Rank = 59	Business environment	4,1	96
	Safety and security	5,4	65
	Health and Hygiene	5,9	46
	Human resources and labour market	4,6	64
	ICT readiness	4,4	59
Subindex B- T&T policy and enabling conditions (1-7 best): Score = 4,4 Rank = 35	Prioritization of travel & tourism	4,3	88
	International openness	3.9	42
	Price competitiveness	4,9	54
	Environmental sustenability	4,4	46
Subindex C- Infrastructure (1-7 best): Score = 3,5 Rank =71	Air transport infrastructure	2,3	87
	Ground and port infrastructure	3,1	91
	Tourist service infrastructure	5,0	42
Subindex D- Natural and cultural resources (1-7 best): Score = 2,4 Rank = 66	Natural resources	2,7	79
	Cultural resources and business travel	2,1	49

Source: World Economic Forum, 2015

Mostly foreign tourists continue to come in Romania using road and air transport. The same means of transport are used by Romanian tourists to leave the country (see Tables 4 and 5). However, the score at air and road infrastructure within T.C.I. send us an unfavorable position, which shows that their situation has not improved recently. The performance of Romanian tourism firms is presented by data in the following tables:

Table 7. Domestic travel for vacations and business residents (million people) (2012-2013):

Year		2012	2013
Total:		15,83	16,35
Journey times	1-3 nights	9,75	10,36
	4-7 nights	4,92	5,00
	8-14 nights	0,95	0,79

Source: I.N.S.S.E. Romania 2014

Table 8. Number of participants in the organized tourist tourists travel agencies (million people) (2012-2013):

Year	Incoming	Internal tourism	Outgoing
2012	0,26	0,68	1,32
2013	0,13	0,52	0,68

Source: I.N.S.S.E. Romania 2014

Table 9. Number of Romanian tourists participants in the foreign tourism (million people) (2012-2013):

Year	Touroperator agencies	Retailer agencies	Total
2012	0,90	0,20	1,10
2013	0,41	0,16	0,57

Source: I.N.S.S.E. Romania 2014

Even though Romania has a rich tourist potential and cultural heritage on the extent to which we are very proud, they are not harnessed properly and not attract too many Romanian and foreign tourists (see Tables 7 and 8). Romanian tourists are more attracted foreign tourist destinations and quality of services there (see Table 9).

VII. Conclusion

The fact that internationally, is a low perception of Romania as a tourist destination and that the country is considered to be unattractive from this point of view is not a happy situation. The balanced scoreboard adapting to tourism in the form that I proposed in this paper, can corroborate internal statistics data (published by the relevant institutions) with data published abroad (through the Tourism Competitiveness Index). In doing so, we can get an overview, as objective, of the Romanian tourism, both inside and outside. On the other hand, they are highlighted Romanian tourism hot spots through Key Performance Indicators, which negatively affects the competitiveness of Romania as a tourist destination. To remedy the situation and improve these indicators need to be proactive in terms of performance management, which should lead to developing and implementing a new strategy for Romanian tourism. I think that adapting this management tool in the field of tourism is perfectible, being influenced of

theoretical and practical experience the specialists have. Certainly, the balanced scoreboard use is a way to find solutions to revive the national tourism.

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