

## **TYPES AND FORMS OF TOURISM IN THE VADU CRIȘULUI - ȘUNCUIUȘ AREA, ROMANIA**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to approach the various typologies proposed to classify the types and forms of tourism that are based on different criteria, considering the development of tourism in Romania that had an ascendant evolution during the last years and its numerous types and forms of manifestation. The particularities of tourism types in the study area, represented by the Vadu Crișului and Șuncuiuș Territorial Administrative Units from Bihor County, Romania, in the context of interdependence with the tourism potential and motivation as important criteria are presented, underlying in the same time the connection between the typologies and the regional characteristics. In the end, using the questionnaire as research method, the forms of tourism in the study area were identified as ways to conduct the tourism activities depending on the external influences.

**Key words:** tourism types and forms, cultural tourism, health care tourism recreational tourism, polyvalent tourism, Șuncuiuș, Vadu Crișului, Bihor County

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism typology of the forms and types constitutes a very important tool for tourism management and planning, being essential elements in local development policies through tourism. The characteristics of each region determines the diversity of the tourist activities, therefore attracts different types of tourists (Cocossis, Constantoglou, 2006). Moreover, each place attracts different type of tourists because of the differences recognized between the motives and the characteristics of the journey (Mansfeld, 1992). The study connects the tourist resources from the Șuncuiuș and Vadu Crișului Territorial Administrative Units, from Bihor County, Romania, generated by the natural environment and by the human factor, with the possibility of creating various types and forms of tourism, leading to a sustainable development environment at the local and regional level. Finally, this mostly conceptual paper provides only some aspects of the complex framework of tourist forms and types typologies.

### **DATA AND METHODS**

The complexity of the conceptual scientific approach in this article is based on a broad and comprehensive methodology that involves a number of geographical

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research methods, both classic and modern. The bibliographic documentation phase has an important role, the bibliography addressed, both Romanian and foreign literature, related directly or indirectly to issues addressed in the paper, offering a critical, analytical and scientific approach. Further, the field observation increases the understanding of the dynamic geographical reality (Cocean, 2005) especially to the valuable items for tourism, generated by the natural environment and by the human factor. The questionnaire, designed to contain clearly formulated questions, was used as another research method to identify the forms of tourism in the study area, this allowing specific addressing of the social groups, also interviewing people with different educational levels (Cocean, 2005). The analysis followed the methods of information storage, when the volume of data obtained by the above mentioned means came into processing. The analysis and synthesis followed the processing phase, the results used in an appropriate way as arguments for defining conclusions.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS**

### **The Geographical Outline**

Located in eastern Bihor County, Romania in the north-western part of the Apuseni Mountains, the study area is composed from the Şuncuiuş and Vadu Crişului Territorial Administrative Units. It is bordered to the north by the Plopişului Mountains (Şes) and to the south by the Pădurea Craiului Mountains. Placed on the western part of the study area, Vadu Crişului is located at an altitude of 270 m out of the defile of Crişul Repede River (Figure 6), on the E60 motorway (DN1) Oradea-Cluj-Napoca, at a distance of 50 km from Oradea and 100 km to Cluj-Napoca. The composing settlements of this T.A.U. are Vadu Crişului, Birtin, Topa de Criş, Tomnatic all together covering an area of 7470 ha<sup>1</sup>. The Şuncuiuş T.A.U. is situated in the eastern part of the study area, on the upper course of the Crişul Repede River, in the Pădurea Craiului Mountains. It includes four villages: Şuncuiuş, Bălnaca, Zece Hotare and Bălnaca Groşi covering a total land area of 7204 ha<sup>2</sup>.

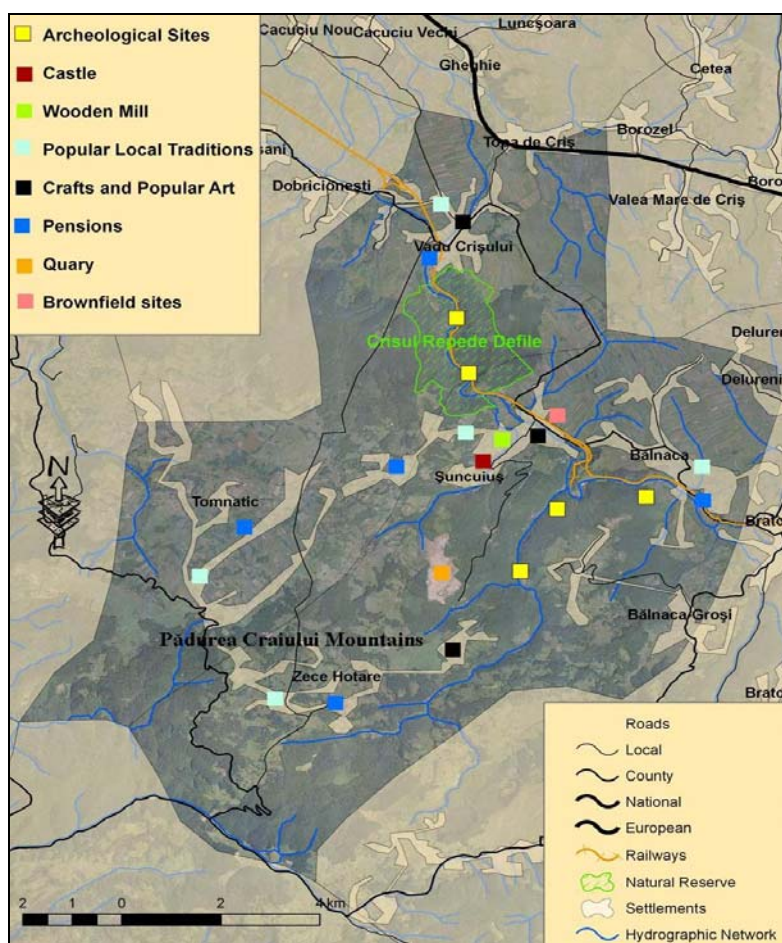
The largest part of the study area overlaps the Pădurea Craiului Mountains, with the northern part located in the upper basin of the Crişul Repede River, in the Vad-Borod Basin. Representing a typical graben (Berindei et al., 1977), this basin is a “*golf*” depression, framed by the Plopişului Mountains in the north and the Pădurea Craiului in the south. The relief variations within the Vad-Borod basin are a consequence of tectonic movements and external shaping agents (Berindei et al., 1977). To the east, the Şuncuiuş settlement is located in a small depression with unique landscape, a result of the geological and geomorphological structure. The Crişul Repede Defile (Figure 4) runs between the localities of Bologna (Cluj County) and Vadu Crişului, having a length of about 48 km. Consists of two main sections, Bucea-Şuncuiuş and Şuncuiuş-Vadu Crişului, the last having a length of 3 km, representing a protected area declared scientific reserve (Figure 1) in 1955, taken into custody of the Crişuri County Museum from Oradea, being crossed on its entire length by the railway Cluj-Napoca-Oradea (Cocean, 1988, Novac, 2006) (Figure 2). Further south, the geological composition of the Pădurea Craiului Mountains and the geomorphological processes are reflected in the morphology, more than half of their area consisting of limestone and dolomite. As mentioned, the Mesozoic limestone are widely spread in the the Pădurea Craiului Mountains, the altitudes are below 1000 m, the vast plateaus containing important tourist attraction. This „*high karst plateaus*” unit (Bleahu, 1982) appears suspended in relation to marginal depressions, creating the impression of a massive unit. Having altitudes between 600-800m, the relief is divided by deep, wild and inaccessible valleys,

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<sup>1</sup> The Localities Database (1991-2008), The Bihor County Institute of Statistics

<sup>2</sup> The Localities Database (1991-2008), The Bihor County Institute of Statistics

into karst plateaus (Berindei et al., 1979), leading to an intense fragmentation of the landscape. These plateaus with large fields of sinkholes are dominated by isolated peaks offering broad perspectives to the numerous karst depressions and to the main mountain range predominantly oriented northwest-southeast (Novac, 2006). Among the most widespread karst forms we mention the caves, the sinkholes, the karst valleys, the extensive underground karst hydro-graphic network and the karst springs (Figure 3). The tourism potential is important because of the relief carved in carbonate rocks which has the highest prevalence (Petrea, 2004) and generates specific activities such as climbing, speleology etc (Table 1). Finally, the Pădurea Craiului Mountains karst areas are favorable to developing tourist destinations due to the significant natural tourist resources (Ilieș et al., 1999).



**Figure 1.** Distribution of tourist resources in the Vadu Crișului-Șuncuiuș study area

### Tourism typologies

Tourism literature has developed a large number of tourism type's typologies. Many of those typologies proposed numerous attempts to classify the types of tourism that are based on different criteria, such as motivation, natural and anthropogenic tourism potential or the tourism infrastructure available. Researchers like Cocean (2007), Cocean et al. (2002), explain that there are four types of tourism (recreation and leisure, health care, cultural and complex (polyvalent)) and several forms of

practicing tourism defined by various criteria among which we mention the distance, the trip duration, the area of origin of tourists, the number of participants, the means of transportation used, the age of participants, the social contribution, the particularities of the region of destination. Muntele & Iaţu (2003) consider four classification criteria and types of tourism: the time criterion (weekend, holiday, transit), the location and motivation criterion (coastal tourism, alpine tourism, lake tourism, river tourism, urban tourism, rural tourism, ethnographic tourism, border tourism), the unit criterion (solitary tourism, family tourism, mass tourism, expeditionary travel, wildlife tourism, pilgrimage tourism, culture and sports tourism) and the geographical criterion (specific tourism types to the temperate, polar or tropical climate). Ielenic & Comănescu (2006) consider in their classification criteria the duration of action (weekend, longer stay), the specific of activity (the business tourism, spa tourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, nautical tourism, mountain tourism, alpine tourism, winter sports), the destination (city tourism, mountain tourism, rural tourism, itinerary tourism), the form of organization (individual travel and tourism through an tourism organization or association) and finally the space (regional, national, international tourism).

**Table 1.** The link between attractions-resources-types of tourism-forms of tourism  
(source: Morar, 2012)

T.A.U.	Tourist Attractions	Resources	Types	Forms of tourism
Vadu Crişului	Nature Reserve	Crişul Repede Defile	Speleology, Ecotourism, Scientific Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Crafts, folk art, pottery	Art and pottery at Vadu Crişului	Cultural Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Fair, festivals	Vama Sării Festival	Recreative Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Historic site	The medieval Tower Vama Sării	Historic-Cultural Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train
	Archaeological site	The caves from the Crişul Repede Defile	Scientific & Extreme Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train
Şuncuiuş	Natural Reserve	The Natural Monument of the Wind Cave	Hiking Tourism, Scientific Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Archaeological site, outdoor museum	The Museum of the Ungurul Mare Cave	Scientific & Extreme Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Cave, Archaeological sites	Mişidului Cave (Hallstatt)	Scientific Tourism, Hiking tourism, Extreme Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Pensions	Şuncuiuş, Zece Hotare	Agrotourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Karst Relief	Crişul Repede Defile, Zece Hotare Plateau	Scientific Tourism, Hiking, Extreme Tourism, Underground Climatic Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto
	Camping	The Camping from the Crişul Repede Defile	Recreation Tourism, Extreme Tourism	Youth and adults tourism; Tourism by train and auto

### **Types of tourism in the study area**

In the study area, based on tourism potential and motivation as important criteria in the tourism development, we distinguish four main types of tourism (Cocean, 2007).

#### ***Cultural Tourism***

The cultural tourism is also known as visiting tourism, as it involves visiting one or more tourist attractions (Cocean, 2007) and having the main motivation the existence of a rich cultural heritage. It has a large share in the study area due to the existence of many historical, religious, cultural attractions and other economic tourist objectives (brownfield sites) (Figure 1). Also, the cultural tourism involves various ethnographic elements with unique and original character, the Christian winter and wedding traditions (Petrea, 2004). In the study area the most common forms of practicing the cultural tourism are the rural tourism and tourism of visiting the brownfields sites. The *rural tourism* is based on the natural environment of rural settlements which enjoy a varied scenic landscape, presenting a rich variety of cultural, historical, ethnography, traditions, archaeological remains, ancient customs and traditions, authentic folklore elements that can be used in tourism (Petrea, 2004). The types of rural tourism practiced in the study area: the *agrotourism*, this type of tourism “*involves an active visit, of a person or group, in the natural environment of rural farms, involving in the same time cohabitation, observation, assistance and co-participation in the local social community*” (Cândea & Bran, 2001, 289); the “*green tourism is based on a green tourist space with a landscape very close to a natural ecosystem, it is part of rural settlements with easy access, preserving a real farm life in a traditional rural setting and maintaining the local customs and traditions*” (Cândea & Bran 2001, 287). The *tourism of visiting the brownfield sites* was developed in the study area in the period after 1990 and it is focused on visiting the cultural heritage represented by former mines, quarries, factories built in the years of Socialism in Romania. This type of tourism is widespread in the study area due to specific of the industrial-mining activities in the period 1950-1990. The local development policy should include maintaining and preserving the memory of the industrial past, this idea begins to take shape increasingly in recent years, because conversion of former industrial sites can be done into cultural destinations. This cultural heritage consists of the remains of the historical, technological, social, architectural or scientific industrial heritage. These remains include buildings and facilities, warehouses, factories, mines and processing sites, warehouses and stores energy installations energy generation and transport, other places used for social activities related to industry as such as housing, cultural centers etc. In the second half of the twentieth century, refractory clay widely exploited in the Pădurea Craiului Mountains in areas like Dumbrava-Recea-Runc and Bălnaca-Groși, had the center of mining, sorting and loading station at Șuncuiuş.

***The Health Care Tourism (Curative)*** in the study area includes the *Climatic Tourism* present in the Vad-Borod depression where the climate favors the arotherapy, in the enclosed basins where the air circulation is much attenuated, generating a specific topoclimate located at mountain-depression contact (Gaceu, 2006). It should be noted that here the indicators of thermic comfort values are not critical, therefore the climate is a contributing factor for tourist activities, the only negative element being represented by the temperature inversions during winters. Also, the underground tourism climate, present here due to the large karst areas from the Pădurea Craiului Mountains, has special features specifically recognized for underground environmental quality, with curative role in the treatment of respiratory diseases. The parameters uniformity is based on the fact that in many underground galleries the temperature, humidity, air circulation speed have minim variations (Cocean, 1988).

### **Recreational tourism**

The recreational tourism is preferred by a very large segment of the population, as it addresses the need for recreation generated by the stress of everyday physically and mentally consuming urban activities (Cocean, 2007). The variety of attractive resources in the studied area where the outstanding landscape of the mountains joins the unusual aspects of the scenic views of Crişul Repede River and its tributaries' courses, allows practicing several forms of recreational tourism, such as: the *hiking tourism* that has a broad extension in the study area. On longer distances this type of tourism can be combined with others, such as the cultural or sports tourism, visiting several attractions within a relatively short time. Walking is of great importance in planning trips, because the vast majority of tourist attractions are accessible on foot, by marked trails (Gunn & Turgut, 2002) as in the region the routes run from the mountain base, ascending the slopes, plateaus and mountain peaks of the Pădurea Craiului Mountains. The limestone areas from Vadu-Crişului-Şuncuiuş administrative territorial units are highly stressed due to the high attraction on sinkholes, plateaus, caves. *The Leisure and Entertainment Tourism* is practiced generally under an unorganized form, either individual or with the family, using an existing accommodation in the countryside; it is in general combined with the characteristics of the curative and health tourism (Petrea, 2004, 22). The tourist is tempted "to observe and contemplate the nature, in the same time it can be supported by the local community, for the integration into the daily activities of the locals", also it can get the natural nutritional products needed (milk, cheese, traditional drinks, agricultural products, dishes, etc.) or can understand the traditions and specific attitudes that place" (Petrea, 2004, 22). The Pădurea Craiului Mountains environment favors also the *extreme tourism* in the study area, practicing of sports tourism activities such as climbing, cycling, paragliding, angling, water sports, tourist orientation, winter sports etc. In some cases, the sport tourism turns into *adventure tourism*, when the aim is to practice "extreme sports" activities such as alpine crossovers, freestyle skiing, rafting, diving (Petrea, 2004, 23). The Vad-Şuncuiuş area concentrates the most climbing routes of varying degrees of difficulty, from the region. Due to the high numbers of cave speleology is practiced especially in the Crişul Repede Defile (Figure 4) and the Zece Hotare Plateau.

*School Tourism* is extended both during the school year but also during the holidays, having a large share due to the accommodation facilities such as *La Castel Şuncuiuş Camp* (Figure 5), here specific youth action organizations organize activities, for example in Şuncuiuş can remember: canyon descents, climbing, flying fox, caving, bow, archery, compass orientation, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, swimming games, arts etc.

### **Polyvalent (combined)**

Represents the combination of several types of tourism in order to meet needs knowledge and relaxation (Cocean, 2007). In this type it can be included the religious tourism, sport tourism, these having a higher percentage in the study area by the large number of participants in these tourism activities. We mention also in the study area the transit tourism and scientific tourism.

*The Transit Tourism* exists in the region because of the important rail and road traffic arteries that interconnect and allow the tourism flows between Oradea and Cluj Napoca by the European road 60 that connects the two cities and guides a major tourist flow from Crişana to Transylvania along the Crişul Repede River. The train halts from Vadu Crişului and Şuncuiuş should be noted as tourism transit landmarks.

*The Scientific Tourism* is developed mainly due to the existence of organizations and institutions of higher education and scientific research.





**Figure 2.** The Cluj-Napoca-Oradea railway in the Crișul Repede Defile



**Figure 3.** The Izbândiș Karst Sprig, in Șuncuiuș, Bihor County



**Figure 4.** The Crișul Repede Defile at Șuncuiuș, Bihor County



**Figure 5.** The Castle from Șuncuiuș, Bihor County



**Figure 6.** Crișul Repede River at Vadu Crișului, Bihor County



**Figure 7.** Brownfield site in Șuncuiuș, Bihor County

The *University of Oradea* and *Babeş-Bolyai* have important participation rate, organizing regularly scientific meetings and specific activities with national and international participation. In addition, other entities like various local and regional NGOs, or the *Crişuri County Museum* brought their contribution to this type of tourism. For instance the project “*Decentralized alternatives for the administration of the Nature 2000 protected areas sites*” was developed by the NGOs CAPDD Bihor and ECOTOP Oradea in the period December 2008 - October 2009. The project aimed at implementing a model of sustainable and participatory management system, as an alternative to the public management systems of Nature 2000 natural protected areas sites in Romania<sup>3</sup>. The scientific tourism is favored especially by the large number of caves, along the Crişul Repede River such as the Vadu Crişului and Vântului Caves, represent just some of the tourist objectives, subject of thorough scientific research of the speleologists and archaeologists across the country. For example, in 2001, in the Ungurul Mare Cave, the archaeological research campaign discovered parts of a pirogue, revealing this way ample evidence of presence of man and human habitation, the rich archaeological heritage belonging to the Igrîţa Culture<sup>4</sup>.

### **Forms of tourism in the study area**

*The tourism form is defined by the external criteria to the phenomenon insuring the activity course according to the chosen tourism type (organization and development mode, particularities of destination area, tourist’s origin, utilised transport type, tourist’s age, number of tourists, tourist’s interaction with the destination)* (Cocean & Vlăsceanu 2005; Tane, 2009).

The analysis of tourists questionnaires in the tourist area Vadu Crişului-Şuncuiuş area, involved a classification methodology forms of tourism according the United Nations <sup>5</sup> and to the researcher Cocean (2007), it reached the following conclusions (Morar, 2012):

- Analyzing the origin of tourists, it was found that 76% of respondents are Romanian tourists who participate in the formation of domestic tourism, it has the vast majority of tourists who visit the area on each year. The explanation is based by the action of complex reasons, such as the travel distance or the cost influences. The main international tourists are the Hungarians, as participating in international tourism, they representing 24% of respondents. The causes of international flows, especially Hungarian are multiple. These include the high tourist attraction degree of the Vadu-Crişului-Şuncuiuş area, the desire for knowing new phenomena and realities, also important reasons are visiting relatives and friends from Romania;

- Considering the tourist performances, the tourist phenomenon is organized in groups at a rate of 45% or it is represented by individual tourists and 55%; The organized tourism advantages results from the non-involvement of visitors in the trip organization, effectively filling the accommodation facilities. The disadvantage are represented by the lower revenues realized through a reduced purchasing power of the participants and tourists independence to a predetermined schedule (Cocean, 2007);

- The degree of mobility of tourists in the area that were applied questionnaires shows a high mobility preferred by 43% of respondents and a longer stay tourism, characterized by reduced mobility and spending holidays in one place, is preferred by 57% of respondents;

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.capdd-bihor.org/index.php/proiecte-si-programe/91-managementul-siturilor-natura-2000>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cclbsebes.ro/docs/sebus/o4\\_Ghemis%20Calin.pdf](http://www.cclbsebes.ro/docs/sebus/o4_Ghemis%20Calin.pdf), Ghemis, C., (2009), *A Neolithic Boat Model in the Şuncuiuş Cave of Unguru Mare*, in *TERRA SEBVS. ACTA MVSEI SABESIENSIS*, Issue 1 / 2009

<sup>5</sup> Forms of tourism, presented at *International Workshop on Tourism Statistics* UNSD/UNWTO Workshop Madrid 17/20 July 2006, source

[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/unsd\\_workshops/tourism\\_ws\\_july\\_2006.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/unsd_workshops/tourism_ws_july_2006.htm)

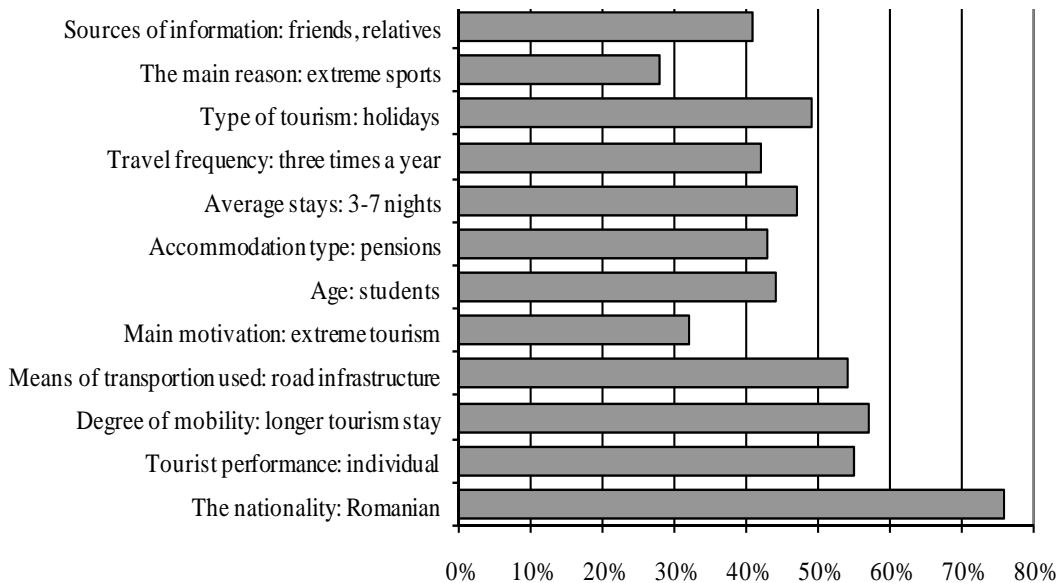


- Transportation means used are the roads (54%) due to road upgrading and increasing the overall level of welfare of the population from the last years, but also the railway system because the railway along the Crişul Repede River offering maximum accessibility in the region;

- The main motivations for travel are the recreational tourism 22%, adventure tourism 32%, school tourism 16% and polyvalent tourism 12%. The reason is that the mountain environment is favorable in the study area for practicing the extreme tourism and recreational activities such as climbing, cycling, paragliding, watersports (rafting, diving) or speleology. School Tourism has a wide representation based on the presence Şuncuiuş school camp;

- The age criterion of the tourists shows that 44% of the respondents are students, 35%, are adults, percentages explained by the tourism practiced by students with recreational and cultural connotation, in the same time the adults prefer a polyvalent tourism, extreme or recreational;

- The arrangements for accommodation options shows that rural tourism and agrotourism increased their share, these forms of tourism increasing their importance in the last decade, leisure in rural areas being the specific of this tourism forms, the accommodation structures being represented by the rustic farms, inns, campgrounds, farmhouses, pensions for example accounting for 43% of the tourist accommodation preferences.



**Figure 2.** The assessment of preferences based on the application of questionnaires to tourists in the Şuncuiuş-Vadu Crişului area (in percent)

(source: Morar, 2012)

## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism types and forms typologies are aiming at more effective tourism policies, also at targeting alternative local and regional development plans and marketing strategies.

The specific natural and cultural characteristic of the Şuncuiuş-Vadu Crişului region generates various tourism typologies, that have to be integrated in different approaches in tourism destination management process, as tourism development is part of the sustainable regional development mechanism. The local and regional tourism

development is based on the resources available at the local level and also other resources have to be brought in the tourism act, generating new types of tourism to address the existing market niches. Tourism has an important interface role due to its complex connections to the other socio-economic sectors, to its superior use of the available resources, therefore it stimulates the local economic development, stimulating the socio-economic system, finally representing the chance for revitalizing this rural area.

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