

## HOW THE NATIONALITY AND TYPOLOGY OF TOURISTS INFLUENCE THE LENGTH OF STAY PRIOR AND DURING PANDEMIC CONTEXT - CASE OF FULL-SERVICE HOTELS FROM MAMAIA RESORT, ROMANIA

Adina Letiția NEGRUȘA\*, Erika KULCSÁR\*\*, Oana Ruxandra BODE\*

University Babeș-Bolyai, \*Faculty of Business, Cluj-Napoca, 7, Horea Street, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Phone: +40 0264 599 170; \*\*Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, 58-60, Teodor Mihali Street, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Phone: +40 264 418 652; Emails: adina.negrusa@ubbcluj.ro, erika.kulcsar@ubbcluj.ro, oana.bode@ubbcluj.ro

**Corresponding author:** oana.bode@ubbcluj.ro

### Abstract

*The length of stay of a tourist is an index having a high significance for tourist destination management given that a longer length of stay leads to a higher occupancy hotel rate and higher revenues. The aim of the present paper is threefold. Firstly, it determines the average length of stay in the most popular Romanian Black Sea resort – Mamaia, for the four, respectively five-star hotels. Secondly, it concisely examines the extent to which the typology and nationality of tourists influence their average length of stay in this seaside resort. Finally, it examines the extent to which season's year and the months of summer season influences the average length of stay. The data was collected from the platform Booking.com. The results indicate that, in Mamaia resort, the length of stay is mainly explained by the residential status of the tourists, their nationality and typology, respectively by the season's month.*

**Key words:** tourist behaviour, length of stay, nationality, typology of tourists, Mamaia resort, Romania

### INTRODUCTION

In many countries at the global level, tourism was seen as being an important economic engine, even though the Travel and Tourism industry is facing nowadays an unprecedented period, as this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacted it the most. As a result of this pandemic, there have been important changes in the behavior of tourists all over the world. Each tourist destination has a particular character, highlighting different models of tourist behavior that plays an important role to adjust the supply of touristic services in the area.

Among the most favourite tourist destinations worldwide can be highlighted the seaside resorts. The reasons for choosing a hotel in a seaside resort are given by the purpose of tourist's visit: recreational tourism or business tourism. Despite the purpose of visit, the length of stay (LOS) of a tourist has high relevance for any seaside touristic destination because reveals consumption and revenue levels collected. This index has high relevance

for tourist destination management since a longer length of stay determines the consumption of more goods and services. Therefore, a higher length of stay is beneficial to local economies.

The incentive for the present research is given by the fact that seaside tourism at the Black Sea in Romania is a subject that has not attracted many researchers so far, despite its significance at the national level. This research emphasizes the tourist's behavior in the seaside area at the Black Sea.

According to the best of the authors' knowledge, the present study is the first to highlight the influence of the typology and nationality of tourists on the average length of stay of tourists in seaside resorts and the influence of seasonality over the number of tourists, respectively over the average length of stay. Therefore, this paper contributes to tourism literature for the Black Sea. This contribution of the present paper is given by the focused view of the factors influencing the LOS in the main seaside resort from the Romanian Black Sea, which can be seen as a

premise for the analysis in all main international Black Sea resorts.

The current study aims to explore the influence of two factors, nationality and tourists' typology, on LOS in the case of 4- and 5 -stars hotel guests at the seaside. Thus, the study makes several contributions to the literature. Firstly, by considering the impacts of pandemic context on tourist behaviour. Such an approach has not yet been employed and the study investigates the influence of the COVID-19 situation upon the length of stay using a comparison with the previous times. Secondly, the study is focused on the Online Travel Agency (OTA) clients for the hotels of 4- and 5-stars classification, which presents more pieces of evidence regarding the tourist behavior of this market segment.

The main purpose of the present paper is to investigate and identify how the typology and nationality of tourists influence the average length of stay of tourists in Mamaia seaside resort for full-service hotels. Also, it concisely examines the extent to which seasonality influences the number of tourists, respectively the average length of stay.

In Romania, seaside tourism plays a significant role in tourist activity even though this form of tourism is characterized by an acute seasonality, which creates significant problems for the providers of tourist services in this area. Annually, the season in Romania begins officially on the 1st of May and ends at the end of September.

In terms of accommodation infrastructure, the seaside area encounters 8.44% of the entire national accommodation units and 18.4% of the country's hotels. The units present in this region have been settled to serve the mass tourism development, thus consequently the number of rooms the seaside accommodation units count 23.2% of the total at the national level, registering a higher value in the case of hotels, around 34% [13].

The most popular Romanian Black Sea resort is Mamaia. It is populated mostly during the summer and has more than 85% of accommodation units seasonal operating. Hotels range from 1-star to exclusive 4- and 5-star hotels. The classification of the hotels from the analyzed resort, based on OTA's

database (Booking.com September 9, 2021), is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of hotels in 2021 in Mamaia resort depending on the level of compliance

Classification based on star	Number of hotels	Percentage
2 stars	5	5.10
3 stars	44	44.90
4 stars	36	36.73
5 stars	1	1.02
Unclassified	12	12.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' calculations based on Booking data, September 9, 2021 [5].

#### *Literature perspective*

The research activity regarding tourists' length of stay at destinations and accommodation units represent a topic that has captured attention in the last years. Length of stay matters because it has a direct effect on the occupancy rate and income of tourism, therefore should be taken seriously by managers and entrepreneurs in planning and promoting their offer. A strong investigation path of the cultural values influences upon the tourists' behavior [17], [19] and style of tourism [20] revealed the link between nationalities and length of stay.

Existing studies investigated different typologies of tourists and using their profile examined the influence upon the LOS. Consequently, an additional factor observed to play an essential role in determining the duration of the tourists' trip is the motive or travel reason. Thus, Oliveira-Santos, Ramos and Rey-Maqueira [15] found out that tourists visiting friends or relatives stay for a longer time. Instead, Rodriguez et al. [21] concluded that those who travel for business reasons registered a longer length of stay. In terms of tourist typology, some studies revealed that individual travellers stayed for a longer period than other categories [9].

A previous experience in the destination seems to affect the length of stay. Thus, [9] and [12] observed that tourists who travelled before to the destinations stayed for more days compared with those on their first visit. Again, this assumption is not sustained by other studies [11] which found by contrary the

repeated visit being correlated with a shorter duration. Also, it was researched the effect of a destination's attractiveness or image upon the length of stay, because some destinations are recognized in the market due to some special attributes or characteristics [11]. Thus, findings strengthen the idea that some destination attributes, related to a well-established reputation, such as gastronomy, nature, sea, culture, have a positive impact on the hazard of the length of stay, suggesting growth of LOS. This result implies that each destination should be analysed independently and the length of stay is specific to each tourism destination [16].

Since tourists' behaviour is influenced by social factors such as social stimuli, family or social roles, some studies included in the LOS' research model the companionship status [4], [10], [18]. The social group represents in many cases an essential influence factor in the choice of a holiday destination, the sources of information used to make decisions, the facilities and services preferred during their stay, the type of tour packages and even the length of stay, because deciding how long to stay is decided in consensus with the other members of the social group.

Some studies [8] concluded that single tourists tend to stay longer because they only spend for themselves. This segment travels most of the time with friends, being engaged in more activities at the destination. In comparison with the married couple, single tourists may have the freedom of spending more time on vacations. Instead, other studies [1] concluded that party size appears to exert a negative influence upon LOS. Thus, Gomes de Menezes, Moniz, & Cabral [10] identified that in comparison with couples, those tourists who travel with friends prefer a shorter length of stay. Still is not a consensus in the literature about the relation of companionship with the tourists' length of stay.

In summary, we find that different explanatory variables seem to influence the number of days spent by tourists in a destination. Most of the studies indicated that, even if there are mentioned sometimes contradictory effects for the same variable,

sociodemographic characteristics influence in a relevant manner the tourists' LOS.

Starting from these findings and conclusions, six hypotheses to be tested in the case of tourists spending their summer holiday at the Romanian seaside area were advanced. In the process of defining the hypothesis, the following criteria have been considered: the new pandemic context which could affect the tourist behaviour; the main season for spending the holiday at the Romanian seaside – from May to September and two criteria for the tourist characteristics (nationality and social group).

H1: The length of stay is higher in the case of international tourists in comparison with residents ones.

H2: The season's year influences the tourist's length of stay.

H3: The interaction between the variables tourists' residential status (resident or non-resident) and season's year is correlated with length of stay.

H4: Nationality, as a social-cultural characteristic of tourists, influences the length of stay at the 4- and 5-stars Romanian hotels.

H5: The month of the summer season determines significant differences in the length of stay.

H6: The length of stay is higher in the case of families as a category of the tourist typology based on social group.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the next section emphasizes the research methodology that has been employed. The paper continues with an in-depth discussion of the research findings and finally points towards the most important conclusions of this topic.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering the main objectives of the present paper, the studied population is represented by Romanian and foreign tourists who have chosen Mamaia as their tourist destination and who have benefited from four, respectively five-star hotel services. In the present research, the sampling unit is represented by the hotel, and the observation unit is represented by the resident or foreign tourists.

The results of the research will extend to the entire studied population, i.e. to the level of all tourists who, during the analyzed period [2018; 2021], visited Mamaia and were accommodated in the four, respectively five-star hotels. To ensure the level of statistical and structural representativeness, an equivalent of the sampling base intended to provide a probabilistic sample has been designed and used. The starting point for the establishment of the sampling base was the realization of a probabilistic group sampling, because each hotel represents the expression of a group of tourists, even if the structure of each hotel maybe, to a certain extent different. In order to compass the main objectives of our research, the procedure for establishing the sample base and the sample was as follows:

-the data was collected from the platform Booking.com;

-the data collection was between 15.09.2021 – 08.10.2021;

-the data was collected according to the following variables:

(1) the **year** in which the tourists accommodated in Mamaia holiday resort: 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021;

(2) the **typology of tourists**. The following categories were identified: families, couples, groups of friends, respectively individual travellers;

(3) **number of stars**: four, respectively five-star hotels;

(4) **nationality**. The following categories were identified: tourists from Romania, Germany, England, Italy, France, Austria, Sweden, Moldova, Spain. In the category "other nationalities" were included tourists arriving from the USA, Bulgaria, Poland, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Colombia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Northern Macedonia, Philippines, Luxembourg, British Ocean Territory of India, Turkey, Russia, Greece, Netherlands, China, Israel, Czech Republic, Portugal, Ukraine, Finland, Sweden;

(5) **length of stay** (days);

(6) the **month** in which the tourists accommodated in Mamaia;

- in the case of four-star hotels, it was chosen to include in the sample those hotels, at the

level of which, the number of ratings was the highest, respectively, whose rating averages were dispersed;

- in total, data related to 5,676 tourists were used, as follows: at the level of four-star hotels, the number of tourists included in the research was 4,457, and in the case of five-star hotels 1,219;

- the data was processed using the SPSS program.

The validation of the sample was carried out by employing a test to compare the differences between the percentages. Only one practically possible variable was considered, namely, the number of hotels according to the level of compliance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results analysis based on the main objectives of the research and hypotheses advanced, drive to the following findings.

The average length of stay of the tourists scrutinized in the present study registered an increasing trend: from 2.587 in 2018 to 2.811 days in 2021. In 2020 was registered the highest length of stay (2.835), while in 2019 there was the same case as in 2021. A possible explanation is due to the increase in the number of Romanian tourists (pandemic determined most of them not to give up on their vacation plans, being willing to stick to domestic seaside destinations). Other than this, holiday vouchers supplied to Romanian citizens by the state have been a stimulus leading to a higher length of stay during vacations.

Concerning the average LOS of Romanian and foreign tourists in Mamaia, in the analyzed period, data shows that the highest value was registered for the international tourists (3.185 days), for the Romanian tourists being just 2.752 days. The most significant non-resident tourists markets are from Spain, Moldova, Germany, the UK, French and Italy. Other than this, Spanish tourists accommodated the longest, followed by Moldavians, Germans and English people. Italians accommodated the smallest period, followed by the French. If we examine deeply the data, it is interesting to highlight that

tourists from Spain recorded the longest period of stay in 2019 and 2020, while in 2021 Moldavians did that. By contrast, tourists from Italy recorded the shortest period of stay in 2019 and 2021, while in 2020 Austrians did that. In the case of Romanian tourists, the longest stay was recorded in 2020 (2.856), followed by 2021 (2.729). Even though the Pandemic had, and has, a negative influence on humanity, it had a positive contribution in terms of capitalizing on the touristic potential in Mamaia.

In terms of the Typology of tourists, in the analyzed period, families accommodated the longest. A possible explanation is that many families will tend to go on vacation in the same place and for a longer time, if possible, due to familiarity and because it reduces the risk of an unsatisfactory experience if they choose another place. By contrast, individual travelers accommodated the least in 2019 and 2020 and groups of friends in 2021. This can be influenced by travel reasons.

Further, a difference concerning the season's month preferred for vacation in Mamaia resort is registered based on the tourist's residential status: resident tourists tend to prefer August and September, while non-resident tourists July and August. Other than this, both category of tourists tends to prefer a shorter LOS in May, while September tends to become more popular.

The literature suggests that domestic and international tourists may respond to factors affecting their demand to varying degrees. From this perspective first, it was investigated if there are some differences regarding the length of stay between the Romanian and international tourists.

Since the database includes variable's values registered in the last 4 years, have been employed the average lengths of stay, separately for each annual summer season and category of tourists (domestic and international). Thus, as Table 2 reflects, with one exception of 2020, the value of LOS in the case of non-resident tourists is higher than the average computed for the resident tourist category.

Table 2. Analysis of LOS for domestic versus international guests for Mamaia hotels

Year	Domestic/ International	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
2018	Domestic	2.378	.279	1.831	2.926
	International	<b>3.444</b>	.566	2.335	4.554
2019	Domestic	2.651	.052	2.550	2.753
	International	<b>3.409</b>	.100	3.212	3.606
2020	Domestic	<b>2.856</b>	.045	2.767	2.945
	International	2.600	.152	2.302	2.898
2021	Domestic	2.729	.053	2.626	2.833
	International	<b>3.216</b>	.118	2.986	3.447

Source: Authors' calculations.

According to the Eurostat Statistics report [6] the number of nights spent by foreign tourists in 2020 compared with the previous year decreased in all EU Member States, but the largest decreases of more than 80% were observed in Cyprus and Romania. If in the case of Cyprus this negative impact has been compensated with an increase (15%) for the number of nights spent by residents, in the case of Romania the tourism drop was amplified in 2020 by a decrease with 18% of the domestic tourists' number of nights spent in accommodation establishments. So, due to the travel restrictions and the other Covid precautionary measures taken in 2020, the number of nights spent by non-residents of the country fell dramatically and influences consequently also their length of stay. This pattern is not observed in the case of residents of the country. Even if it was registered a reduction of the number of nights spent by resident guests, their average length of stay in 2020 slightly grew and continues to grow in 2021.

Thus, another essential empirical result is the reverse tendency of LOS for both categories of tourists during the period studied 2018-2021: a decrease for non-residents guests and a significant growth for Romanian tourists. This emphasizes how the pandemic context changes the tourist's behaviour in general. Therefore, the behaviour at the seaside followed the same tendency identified at the European level: a steady recovery of domestic tourism for 2020-2021 accompanied by an important growth of the number of nights

spent by EU tourists’ residents in their country accommodation units.

To evaluate the research hypothesis H1, H2 and H3, the ANOVA test was applied with two independent variables (residential status and Summer season's year) with an interaction between each other. The findings of this analysis highlight that both variables influence the length of stay. Moreover, the dependent variable is also influenced by the interaction between the two independent variables. According to H1, H2 and H3 which are confirmed by the research results, the actual pandemic context determined a new predisposition of travel behaviour for both groups of guests which influence eventually also their length of stay.

Table 3. The results of ANOVA test for research hypotheses H1, H2 and H3

H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>3</sub>
F= 9.326	F= 3.319	F= 9.438
df: 1	df: 3	df: 3
Sig: .002	Sig: .019	Sig: .000
F <sub>.05;1;4160</sub> =3.84	F <sub>.05;3;4160</sub> =2.60	F <sub>.05;3;4160</sub> =2.60

Source: Authors’ calculations.

The analysis of the non-resident tourist’s nationality for the 4- and 5-stars hotels from Mamaia revealed that the most important international markets are in the following order, based on the number of clients and number of nights spent: Spain, Moldova, Germany, UK, Sweden, France, Austria, Italy. According to the average length of stay computed in the case of the Nationality of tourists variable the lowest value of 2.629 is characteristic for Italian tourists, while the highest mean of 4.048 days is reached for the tourists from Spanish, as Table 4 presents.

Regarding the influence of nationality, it is important to underline that tourists from Germany represent the most important international market for 4- and 5-stars hotels from Mamaia, from both perspectives: in terms of the number of guests and the LOS. Besides, Moldavian tourists correspond to the tourists with the most effective length of stay, but with a less significant volume, while

tourists from Spain represent an opportunity to be fruitful since they have a higher LOS.

Table 4. Results of descriptive analysis of Average Length of Stay in relation to Tourist Nationality

Nationality	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Romanians	2.752	.029	2.696	2.808
Germans	<b>3.699</b>	.167	3.371	4.027
English	<b>3.223</b>	.154	2.920	3.526
Italians	2.629	.287	2.065	3.192
French	2.955	.256	2.452	3.457
Austrians	2.818	.362	2.108	3.529
Moldavians	<b>4.000</b>	.694	2.640	5.360
Swedish	3.000	.425	2.167	3.833
Spanish	<b>4.048</b>	.371	3.321	4.775

Source: Authors’ calculations.

Further, the present study investigates how the social group predilections, which determine four tourists types (i.e. Families, Couples, Groups of friends, Individual travelers), influences the length of stay. In the analyzed sample, it is acknowledged the existence of differences between the averages of LOS at four groups formed according to the Typology of tourists. The average number of days booked in Mamaia resort during the analyzed period by the families is 3.100 days, while for the group of friends is 2.432 days, the daily difference being .668. From the analysis of the confidence interval, it is observed that some of them intersect, which suggests that between the averages of those categories there may be no differences.

Table 5. Results of descriptive analysis of Average Length of Stay associated to Tourist Typology

Typology of tourists	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Families	3.100	.043	3.016	3.183
Couples	2.724	.039	2.648	2.800
Group of friends	2.432	.085	2.265	2.599
Individual travellers	2.446	.098	2.253	2.639

Source: Authors’ calculations.

To gain a more detailed knowledge regarding hotel service consumer behavior, the mean of the variable length of stay, based on subgroups formed by crossing the

independent variables (Typology of tourists and Nationality), was analyzed.

Related to these subgroups, the following findings can be underlined:

- the longest LOS is recorded in the case of families from Moldova (an average of 7 days);
- the shortest average length of stay, namely 2.778 days, was found in the case of families from Italy, followed by families from France. In their case the average length of stay was 2.818 days;
- the longest LOS in the case of couples was for Sweden tourists (an average of 4.2 days);
- couples from Moldova stayed for the shortest period in Mamaia, with an average length of stay of only 2 days;
- for the category groups of friends from France and Spain, the average length of stay is 4.0 days;
- in the case of groups of friends, the longest length of stay characterized tourists arriving from France and Spain (average: 4 days) and the shortest referred to groups arriving from Austria (average: one day);
- the longest average length of stay – in case of tourists travelling individual – referred to tourists arriving from Spain: 5.5 days. Regarding the analyzed variable, the lowest value was found in the case of tourists arriving from Austria (one day).

To create marketing strategies and policies, hotels should aim to describe the relationships between variables that define the hotel sector. In our opinion, these variables include the Type of tourists and the Nationality of tourists. With the help of factor correlation analysis, it is possible to capture the association between the categories of the respondents based on the variables mentioned above. Small differences between the respondent categories indicate a strong association and large differences indicate a weak or no association.

According to the data presented in the figure below, it can also be noticed a strong association between couples and families and domestic tourists. Also, the same association was registered between these categories of tourists and those coming from the UK. Tourists who travel alone are associated with

the following nationalities: Austria and Italy. Tourists arriving with groups of friends are associated with Spain and Austria international market segments. It is also possible to observe relatively large distances of association in the case of tourists arriving from France, Moldova and Sweden related to the variable Typology of tourists.

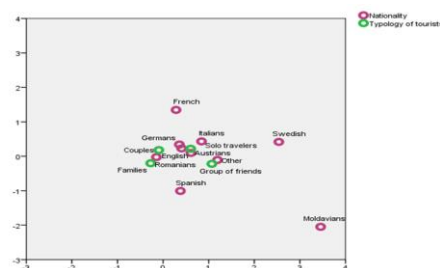


Fig. 1. Association between: Typology and Nationality of tourists

Source: Authors' calculations.

To test the research hypothesis (H4) and (H6), the ANOVA test was applied considering two independent variables (Tourist Typology and Tourist Nationality) with no interaction between each other. The findings of this analysis highlight that both variables have an impact on the independent variable Length of Stay in the seaside resort 'Mamaia'.

Table 6. The results of ANOVA test for research hypotheses H4 and H6

H4	H6
F= 32.980	F= 8.173
df: 3	df: 9
Sig: .000	Sig: .000
F <sub>.05;3;4155</sub> =2.60	F <sub>.05;9;4155</sub> =1.88

Source: Authors' calculations.

To plan and design the appropriate strategies, hotels need to understand the tourists' behavior during the summer season, so another aspect to be investigated is to identify the demand pattern. Thus, the analysis of the season's month influences upon the number of nights and length of stay have been developed. A better approach to investigate the variable impact was to perform separately for resident and non-resident tourists. Thus, as Table 7 presents, resident tourists prefer for

summer holidays September and August, while non-resident tourists are present in higher ponder during August and July.

Table 7. Results of the demand pattern analysis

		Season's Month					Total
		May	June	July	August	September	
Domestic	Count	442	607	766	812	913	3,540
	Expected Count	434.9	591.1	764.4	855.3	894.3	3,540.0
International	Count	70	89	134	195	140	628
	Expected Count	77.1	104.9	135.6	151.7	158.7	628.0
Total	Count	512	696	900	1,007	1,053	4,168
	Expected Count	512.0	696.0	900.0	1,007.0	1,053.0	4,168.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

To test the relationship between the residential status of tourists and the season's month to spend their summer holiday it was applied a Chi-square test. Since the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) .000 is less than .05, (i.e.  $\chi^2$  calc20.743  $> \chi^2_{.05;4} = 9.488$ ), the differences between the observed and expected frequencies existing in the sample are statistically significant to guarantee with 95% probability that there is a relationship between the two variables. Thus, there is a correlation between the season's month and tourist residential status.

Table 8. The results of Chi-Square for testing the correlation between Season's Month and Tourist Residence situation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.743 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	19.988	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.359	1	.244
N of Valid Cases	4,168		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 77.14.

Source: Authors' calculations.

This came following the statistical results at the European level revealed by the Eurostat report [6, 7], where August and July resulted in the months characterized by the highest demand for international tourists.

Regarding the years included in the analysis, the difference between the average Length of Stay in August and September shows a continuous decrease. In 2019 the difference

was 1.007 days, in 2020 it was .661 and in 2021 it meant .360 days. As such, the month September continues to become more and more popular among tourists visiting Mamaia resort. May is still the month with the shortest Length of Stay.

According to the data presented in the table below ( $H=456.316 > \chi^2_{.05;4} = 9.488$ , respectively Asymp. Sig. = .000  $< .05$ ), H5 is confirmed, meaning that among the five population groups (based on the seasonal months) there are differences regarding the Length of Stay.

Table 9. Results of the Kruskal - Wallis test for research hypothesis H5

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
	Length of stay
Chi-Square	456.316
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Month

Source: Authors' calculations.

The findings support the hypothesis considered. It is found that non-resident tourists influence the LOS, validating H1 (hence, the international tourists increase LOS in Mamaia); season's year influence the LOS, validating H2 (it is a broadly intuitive result). Then, nationality and typology of tourists explain LOS, validating H4 and H6 (Moldavians, Germans and Spanish represent some of the most important international tourists; families accommodated the longest period). Further, the season's year and month explain the LOS, validating H3 and H5 (the conclusions relative to the residential status of the tourists are different).

## CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings revealed that there are several considerations about the impact on the seaside tourist behavior during the pandemic context. The first conclusion regards the appropriate research methodology to clarify the influence of the six variables upon the average length of stay, in the case of full-



service hotels. Thus, the study highlights the convenience and reliability of using as the main data source Booking.com listings. In comparison with tourists who address to travel agencies or tour operators for a complete summer holidays package at the seaside, those who opt for an OTA (online travel agency) channel represent a different market segment that required distinctive attention in studying its behavior at the destination. If in the case of the first category of tourists there is a kind of standardization of the LOS based on the package's elements established by a tour operator, in the case of OTA guests we can talk about higher flexibility and a higher influence of the customer's features upon the LOS.

Consequently, resulted interesting differences in the length of stay across nationalities. First, it was confirmed the positive association between the international market and length of stay in full stars hotels. Similarly, with other studies [2], [3], [22] and [14] in terms of nationality, our results confirm that Spanish and German tourists are positively related to a longer LOS. This pattern has an important effect on the international tourists' LOS specific for the Romanian seaside. On the other hand, the typical UK tourists' behavior who spent their summer holiday in full-service hotels from Mamaia doesn't confirm the previous studies [2] and [14], which concluded that they prefer a shorter length of stay at the destination, corresponding for a weekend time. In contrast, when they spend the summer holiday at the Romanian seaside, using an OTA platform, their average length of stay is higher. In conclusion, according to nationality, international tourists who use OTA for booking seaside holiday accommodation at full-service hotels tend to have longer LOS.

Furthermore, this study provided strong pieces of evidence related to the fact that the pandemic context did not interfere in the positive evolution of LOS for domestic tourists. More than that the 2020 year provided the circumstances when this average surpasses the average for international tourists. Contrary, to international tourists the Covid 19 context determined not only a

decrease in number but also in the LOS at the seaside. At the same time, it was statistically proved that the season's month is a significant determinant of the LOS at the full-service hotels from Mamaia resort. If for Romanian tourists September seems to be preferred, in the case of international guests' results lead to August. This result is very important as a distinguishing element that can be used in the local tourism strategy targeting how to promote a destination for summer holidays and by full-service hotels in their competitive operations strategies.

Compared to other studies in the literature it was analyzed not only the LOS according to the social group typology, but even more, associated with nationality. In this respect, resulted that for residents' guests the highest LOS at the full-service hotels is in the case of families and for international tourists is in the case of individual travellers. Thus, from a managerial perspective knowing who are the determinants for the length of stay provide a practical approach to more targeted extended stay policies.

In terms of an average length of stay at 4- and 5 stars hotels from Mamaia resort, even if lately there is a clear increasing tendency, however almost 3 nights spent represents a short period in comparison with other summer holiday destinations from this region. This implies that financially capable tourists, as are those who are attracted by the full-service hotels' offers, are not inclined to stay in Mamaia resort for a long time. This finding suggests that the destination even may be unable to provide superior and comfortable accommodations favorable to relaxation, as well as to offer a wide selection of tourist activities and attractions for tourists or the pricing strategies might be unbalanced with the value offered.

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