



# REVIEW OF INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

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A JOURNAL  
OF ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL  
RESEARCH

**10**  
VOLUME

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ISSUE 1  
2024

# UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN DESTINATIONS: THE CASE OF CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA

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## **Article info**

Paper category: Original Scientific Paper

Received: 8.4.2024.

Accepted: 21.4.2024.

JEL classification: L83; M31

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32728/ric.2024.101/3>

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## **Keywords:**

residents' perceptions; resident's attitudes; resident-tourist  
interaction; resident's support; community satisfaction

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose.** *This study aims to explore the intersection of local community engagement and urban tourism development within the context of competitiveness, focusing on Cluj-Napoca, Romania, as an emergent urban destination. By examining residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism, this research contributes to understanding on how urban tourism can be a catalyst for competitiveness and sustainability in developing countries.*

**Design/Methodology/Approach.** *Using a descriptive research design, this study collected data from the citizens of Cluj-Napoca to analyze their attitudes toward tourism from a local perspective. The methodology involves surveying residents to gather insights into their perceptions and experiences with the city's tourism sector.*

**Findings and Implications.** *The findings reveal that a significant majority (94%) of the respondents, Cluj-Napoca residents, perceive the city to have a developed tourism potential, with 85% having interacted with tourists. Notably, 36% report no influence of tourism development on their daily activities, while a minimal 4% perceive a negative impact. Impressively, 96% identify a positive influence of tourism on their personal life. These results underscore the importance of resident support in the sustainability and success of urban tourism destinations, offering valuable insights for both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in tourism development. Destination marketers must employ a variety of techniques to reach their target market. Widespread education and awareness initiatives might be a first step toward a better knowledge of the sector and, eventually, more acceptance of its advantages for the community.*

**Limitations.** *The study's limitations include its focus on a single urban destination within a developing country, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the research design relies on self-reported data, which may introduce biases.*

**Originality.** *This paper contributes new insights into the field of tourism studies by focusing on the residents' perspective of tourism development in an urban setting of a developing country, a relatively underexplored area in existing literature. The positive perceptions and attitudes of Cluj-Napoca residents towards tourism, coupled with the minimal reported negative impacts, highlight the potential for sustainable urban tourism development that benefits both locals and visitors.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The competitiveness of the tourist destination is defined in terms of its capacity to optimize its attractiveness for residents and non-residents, to offer quality, innovative and attractive tourism services (e.g. value for money) and to gain market share on domestic and international markets, while ensuring that the resources available for tourism development are used in an efficient and sustainable way (Dupeyras and MacCallum 2013).

For an extended period, cities' economies were thought to be able to thrive through tourism. As a result, cities are among the most popular travel destinations in the world (UNWTO 2024). The urban environment and the lives of individuals who reside there are being shaped and altered by the exponential development in urban tourists, who are described as "mobile, temporary citizens of urban life" (Mordue 2017).

One of the most critical basic components of sustainable destination management is empowerment, which is also a crucial component of key stakeholders' decision-making processes for the growth of tourism. However, the increasing number of visitors to cities has fueled debates about how tourism affects certain locations. Urban life has been impacted by tourism, which has altered the social, economic, environmental, and cultural settings as well as the spatial dynamics of cities (UNWTO 2024).

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted travel and tourism, cities that had previously struggled to handle tourism's impact were left without tourists. This exceptional circumstance highlighted the significance of tourism in urban economies as well as the risks associated with overreliance on the sector. As city tourism recovered from the crisis, it became evident that improving impact assessment and initiatives to promote sustainable tourism is essential to cities' long-term viability and resilience (UNWTO 2024).

The application of social exchange theory (SET) to examine community support for tourism has been widespread (Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon 2013). According to SET, a process of cost-benefit analysis is used to establish a collaboration between two parties. Measuring the positive and negative aspects of a relationship might yield information on how much effort someone devotes into the relationship.

Research has been conducted on communities' perspectives and attitudes about expanding tourism in different destinations, particularly those experiencing overtourism. However, very few investigations have examined the perceptions of residents living in new urban destinations to better understand their support for tourism and participation in decision-making processes, being critical for sustainable tourism (Ahn and Bessiere 2023). To our knowledge, no study has been undertaken for Cluj-Napoca, Romania in this regard. The present research is conducted to fill this gap and better understand perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors

of the residents from a Romanian urban destination, Cluj-Napoca toward specific aspects of tourism. Both exploratory and descriptive research were conducted for the investigations. The tourism development in urban locations and community support were exploratory investigated through secondary data analysis. As descriptive research, it was used a survey to find out what attitudes and opinions the people living in Cluj-Napoca, Romania have about their unique role in the tourism destination development and how they contribute to tourism as a destination stakeholder.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies regarding the residents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism became common research subject due to their contribution as an important stakeholder to the tourism development in a destination (Teye, Sirakaya, and F. Sönmez 2002; Choi and Sirakaya 2005; Wang and Wang 2019). Recent research in Romania, on Galați-Brăila conurbation, underscores residents' dual perceptions of tourism, balancing its economic advantages against potential negative impacts, thus reflecting a broader national trend in urban areas' approach to tourism development (Șorcaru et al. 2022). The local community and residents stand as paramount stakeholders in shaping the trajectory of tourism development within a destination, underscoring their indispensable significance in guiding its sustainable growth. Numerous studies have examined locals' opinions regarding tourism development since the 1970s and have found several variables that may affect those views, including socioeconomic variables, geographic factors, economic reliance on tourism, and residents' perceptions of the effects of tourism (Gursoy et al. 2019). Both tourism and visitors have an immediate impact on the locals. Competitiveness emerges as a crucial factor in differentiating and ensuring the success of a destination. According to Ahn and Bessiere (2023), there is a significant link between tourism destination competitiveness (TDC), residents' empowerment, and their support for tourism, underscoring the mediating role of empowerment in the relationship between TDC and residents' support for tourism (Ahn and Bessiere 2023). These findings highlight the necessity of adopting a strategic approach that integrates destination's natural, cultural, and contextual attractiveness with community empowerment initiatives to maximize residents' support and ensure sustainable and inclusive tourism development (Abdullah, Carr, and Lee 2022; Scheyvens 1999). According to Gursoy et al. (2019), prior research generally indicates that residents' support for tourist development depends on how they perceive the possible economic, sociocultural, and environmental benefits. Studies have increasingly focused on the essential role of residents' perceptions in shaping sustainable tourism strategies, highlighting the need for an integrated approach that addresses both the positive and negative impacts of tourism on urban communities. Findings from Bucharest case study emphasize the critical role of local community engagement and sentiment towards creative

tourism offerings, pointing towards the potential for urban regeneration through tourism (Surugiu et al. 2023). Value co-creation and life satisfaction are positively impacted by locals' perceptions of the economic and social-cultural advantages of tourist growth, but perceived costs have the opposite effect (Lin, Chen, and Filieri 2017). Studies on tourism impacts framework were classified by different authors considering (Gursoy et al. 2019):

- a two-dimensional approach - positive (benefits) and negative (costs) perceived tourism impact,
- a three-dimensional approach - perceived economic impacts, socio-cultural impact, and environmental impact,
- overall perceptions.

As city governments usually aim to improve tourism, and for a successful interaction to happen, they depend on the city's residents' positive attitudes towards tourism (Popescu, Grigoraș, and Plesoianu 2018). Urban tourism, defined as a type of tourism activity that takes place in an urban area with its own distinctive characteristics characterized by non-agricultural centered economy such as administration, production, trade, and services, as well as by being nodal points of transport, has emerged as one of the most rapid-growing travel segments worldwide, with an annual growth rate of approximately 25% before COVID-19 pandemic (UNWTO 2019).

A positive tourist-resident interaction is vital in urban tourism; therefore, the local community and its hospitality has received a growing attention lately (Wang and Wang 2019). The local community contributes to the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry, and it influences the process of development within the tourist destination. Therefore, alongside attractions and services, the prosperity of the destination hinges on the hospitality extended by its residents. A study on Galați-Brăila conurbation case, underscores the essential role of integrating residents' perceptions for sustainable tourism strategies, addressing both positive and negative impacts on urban communities (Șorcaru et al. 2022). In Constanta, Romania, despite acknowledging some negative effects of tourism, strong local support exists for its expansion, indicating a significant potential for sustainable tourism development when managed effectively (Moraru et al. 2021). Tourism can be perceived as both positive (economic benefits) and negative (socio-cultural effects) by the residence (Andereck et al. 2005), therefore is it important to use a holistic approach and examine residents' attitudes in combination with the actual characteristics of the destination in question. In the research conducted by Gu and Ryan (2008) they pointed this out. However, the research has not "compared placed-based attitudes in different cultural contexts" and "the role of culture and local identity remains unclear" (Wang and Wang 2019). With this lack of knowledge, it is hard for the urban destinations to prepare their citizens and increase their knowledge of the urban areas uniqueness when meeting the tourists. Residents' perceptions

can significantly influence the trajectory of tourism development, highlighting the complex interplay between perceived economic benefits and the socio-cultural impacts of tourism (Moraru et al. 2021).

The urban 'place' under scrutiny together with the 'identities' of its citizens, are loaded (emotive) concepts defined by using 'meaning' attached to them. For example, Stets and Biga (2003) define identity as "a set of meanings attached to the self that serves as a standard or reference that guides behavior in situations". How will the residence identity affect how they behave towards the tourist and urban tourism? Previous studies had revealed that residents who perceive their city to be unique have more concern towards tourism impact (Bachleitner and Zins 1999; Sheldon and Abenoja 2001; Wang and Wang 2019). In essence, urban destinations lacking distinctiveness could potentially gain from promoting events, whether sporting or cultural, to showcase the city, thereby bolstering residents' sense of pride and identity. Tourism may provide better life for the residents because the city may develop itself because of it. To maximize the potential of tourism and contribute to a sustainable growth in the destination, management of urban tourism must be administrated and integrated in the wider political agenda (Cosma 2004; Dabija, Bejan, and Tipi 2018; Nistoreanu, Aluculesei, and Avram 2020).

The systematic literature review conducted by Azinuddin et al. (2023) reveals that, although there is no universal set of indicators for measuring the competitiveness of a tourism destination, elements such as destination image, tourism experience, and loyalty play a pivotal role in shaping competitiveness. This underscores the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the competitiveness concept in tourism, as well as the need for a deep understanding of the dynamics between the tourism supply and demand to avoid a strategic drift in conceptualizing and managing tourism competitiveness (Azinuddin et al. 2023). Previous study has shown that a reciprocal link between locals and the tourism sector promotes good social interactions. Residents have also reported favorable effects from tourism, and they are more inclined to be empowered to advocate tourism in their areas (Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon 2013). The goal of the current study is to gain a deeper knowledge of locals' opinions and views about the growth of tourism in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

### **3. THE URBAN DESTINATION OF CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA**

Cluj County is one of the most significant hubs for transportation in the country, including highways, railroads, and airplanes, and it is located in the ancient province of Transylvania. After Bucharest, the capital, Cluj-Napoca, the municipality of Cluj County, is ranked second nationally as a potential source of polarization, impacting the whole region of Transylvania (Cosma 2012). Cluj's official population, as reported by the National Institute of Statistics in 2023, is 286,598; however, considering

the population of neighboring localities that moved from city to country reaches almost 400,000 inhabitants (more precisely, 395,049) (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2023). Historically, Cluj-Napoca served as the capital of the Transylvania province within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, highlighting its pivotal role in the administrative, cultural, and political life of Transylvania. This period marked the city as a central hub, influencing various aspects of life in the region from governance to cultural development (Pál and Popovici 2022). Economically, Cluj-Napoca stands out as the strongest economic centre in Transylvania (Petrovici and Mare 2020), showcasing a dynamic growth that has positioned it at the forefront of technological innovation, education, and business in Romania. The city's economic vitality is powered by a robust ecosystem of universities, cultural institutions, startups, and multinational companies, attracting talent and investment from across Romania and abroad. Cluj-Napoca is renowned for its universities, with over 55,000 students enrolled, of whom more than 30,000 attend the nation's largest university, Babeș-Bolyai University (Popescu, Grigoraș, and Plesoianu 2018). The most successful is the IT industry, attracting giants like Google, Emerson, Endava, Bosch or Microsoft (Laza 2018; Fan et al. 2019; Maftai 2020; McElroy 2020). This vibrant economic landscape cements Cluj-Napoca's status as a vital driver of regional development and innovation, underscoring its contemporary importance as much as its historical legacy, entitling it to be referred to as an unofficial capital of Transylvania (Poterăși 2012). It is a significant academic, cultural, and commercial hub that offers a variety of attractions, including historical and cultural landmarks, a wide range of lodging options, dining options, nightlife, and major events.

Cluj-Napoca boasts a charming natural setting that appeals to a wide range of travelers (Cosma 2012; Bota 2014). Cluj-Napoca is considered a city with strong tourist potential. The top Forbes Best Cities 2019 considered that the music festivals Untold and Electric Castle, as well as other festivals such as TIFF or TIMAF, will become other consistent sources of revenue for the county (Ștefana 2019).

According to Forbes.ro, Cluj-Napoca has been in the last years the most dynamic city in Romania, competing in terms of the complexity of the services it can cover, especially due to the good training of the workforce. The acronym for the city is Cluj-Napoca, in permanent development. Cluj-Napoca ranked 26 places higher than Bucharest in Ernst & Young's survey of the 72 European cities with the best quality of life (Ștefana 2019).

The number of tourist arrivals had an increasing trend from 261,343 arrivals in 2007 to 371,505 arrivals in 2016 and a record of over 542,000 visitors in 2017 (Popescu, Grigoraș, and Plesoianu 2018). The year 2023 brought the most tourists to Cluj-Napoca, exceeding the historical values of 2019. Last year, 496,360 tourists were registered in Cluj-Napoca, an increase of 9.36% compared to 2022, and of these, 112,329 were foreign tourists, 37.68% more than in the previous year. Foreign



tourists came from Germany, Italy, Hungary, U.S.A., U.K., France, Israel, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands (Institutul Național de Statistică 2023).

#### 4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To ascertain the various attitudes and opinions held by inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, as urban destination, a survey was employed as a study method. Since this study was mostly empirical and exploratory, simple random sampling of the data was used (Cosma et al. 2012). The sample size was calculated using the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + \frac{N-1}{N} \times \frac{\sigma^2}{E^2}}$$

where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size (in this case, 286,598),  $\sigma$  is the population variance and  $E$  is the desired margin of error. Assuming a conservative estimate for the population variance and a desired margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$  to assure the reliability and representativeness of the results, the sample size needed was approximately 1027 respondents. The questionnaire was implemented in-person to all the neighborhoods of Cluj-Napoca to ensure broad coverage of the resident population. The research involved a complex data gathering and processing procedure. For the study were used 1014 valid questionnaires. Prior to administering the questionnaires to a representative sample of residents from Cluj-Napoca, Romania, students were used as pretest respondents to assess the questionnaires' level of clarity, their suitability from various perspectives, their order, and the sufficiency of the answers provided. A different aspect that was put to the test was how long it took for them to complete the survey.

A set of twenty questions was used as a data collecting tool to discover various concerns related to citizen' attitudes and views regarding the growth of tourism in urban areas. To gather various aspects of residents' attitudes and views, a variety of question formats were developed, including unstructured and structured questions, pre-coded questions with predetermined responses, and questions with scaled replies. There were two sections to the questionnaire. The first one has eleven questions that provide basic data for the study, including how locals view Cluj-Napoca's tourism potential, how often they get to interact with tourists, what activities are involved with tourists, and how they recognize and comprehend the effects of tourism on both the destination and the lives of the locals. The remaining nine questions in the second section provide sociodemographic data that was utilized to categorize the respondents (age, education, gender, occupation, average monthly income, nationality, number of years of residency in Cluj-Napoca, marital status, and neighborhood) (Cosma 2012).

In SPSS (v. 15), the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to assess the validity and reliability of the data (Dabija, Bejan, and Tipi 2018).

The main purpose of the present research is to identify the resident's perception and attitudes toward tourism development from Cluj-Napoca as an urban destination and involvement of the community in tourism related activities.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study analyses the questionnaire considering two main groups of information: one regarding the offline/ online implication of residents in tourism and the other referring to the impact of tourism perceived by residents. The question regarding the degree of involvement of the local community in tourism-related activities was analyzed using an attitudinal scale. This analysis was subsequently correlated with residents' perceptions of tourism potential development, opportunities for interaction with tourists, the perceived type of tourism practiced in the destination, and demographic characteristics of the sample. Table 1. consists of descriptive statistics of the above scores and the reliability analysis evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

**Table 1.:** Scores and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient regarding residents' participation in activities related to tourism

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
I have informed by telephone other people regarding activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	2.87	0.9	0.84
I have positively reacted ("liked") to an online page/ post promoting the city	3.09	0.89	0.83
I have shared an event or activity from/ about the city	2.81	1.01	0.83
I have spoken with somebody about the activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	3.26	0.74	0.84
I have showed to somebody pictures with the city	3.13	0.83	0.84
I have „checked-in” in a specific location/ at a specific event	2.79	1.04	0.83
I have commented with the Hashtag „#Cluj”	2.07	1.11	0.84
I have posted pictures with different attractions/ tourist objectives from the city	2.73	0.97	0.82
I have talked with people about the opportunities offered by Cluj-Napoca (educational, business, cultural, etc.)	3.27	0.76	0.84
I have promoted the tourist destination Cluj-Napoca	2.93	0.91	0.83

Source: developed by the authors

The question, evaluated with a Likert scale, regarding the impact of tourism perceived by residents was correlated with the influence of tourism on residents' personal life, the contributions of different aspects to the perceived tourism development in destination and demographic characteristics of the sample. Table 2. consists of descriptive statistics of the above scores and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine reliability.

**Table 2.:** Scores and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient regarding the impact of tourism perceived by residents

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Generates income for civic projects	4.12	0.75	0.81
Improves the city's image	4.49	0.62	0.81
Increases the level of education	4.12	0.84	0.80
Offers opportunities for spending free time	4.43	0.71	0.80
Makes the locals "proud"	4.12	0.89	0.80
Encourages the offer of new facilities	4.18	0.74	0.80
Improves the relations between locals and visitors	3.82	0.89	0.80
Creates employment opportunities	4.22	0.82	0.81
Creates the opportunity for shopping	3.91	0.97	0.80
Offers recreation activities for families	4.12	0.84	0.80
Contributes to maintaining the local culture	3.98	0.94	0.80
Contributes to increasing the standards of living	4.13	0.82	0.80
Contributes to creating the solidarity in the community	3.74	0.87	0.80
Contributes to developing the city's cultural life	4.27	0.74	0.80
Increases the criminality rate	2.90	1.23	0.83
Contributes to increasing the traffic crowd	4.26	0.9	0.82
Overloads the local public services such as police, firemen, utilities, roads	3.62	1.12	0.82

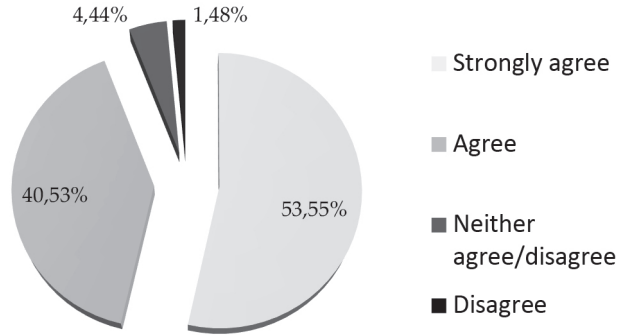
Source: developed by the authors

Values obtained are of and over 0.8 for each part of the questionnaire demonstrating a good internal structure of the used scales. Because the values are positive means that all the items are in concordance with the general idea of the questionnaire. The obtained values suggest that each brings a positive intake to the questionnaire.

In Figure 1., the perspectives of Cluj-Napoca residents regarding the city's tourist potential are depicted. A substantial majority of 94% of respondents perceive

Cluj-Napoca as possessing well-developed tourist potential, with only approximately 1% expressing disagreement with this assertion.

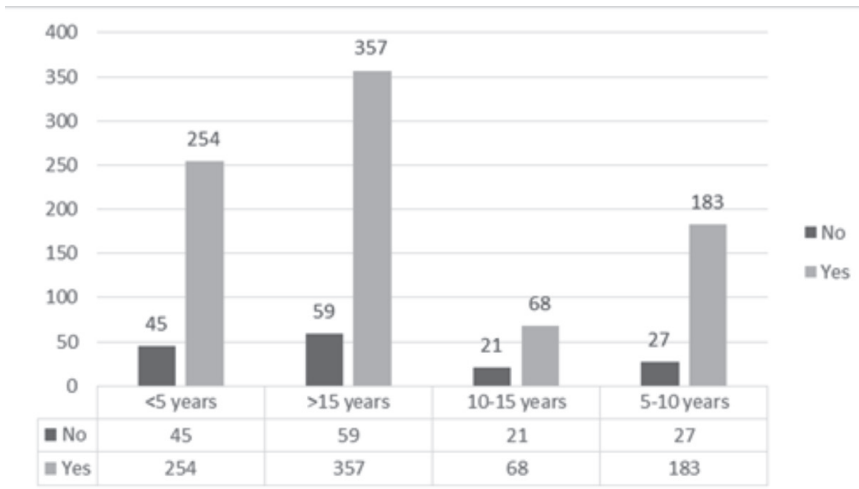
**Figure 1.:** The city of Cluj-Napoca has a developed tourist potential



Source: developed by the authors

Figure 2. reveals that 85% of the respondents had the opportunity to interact with tourists. They have an open attitude regarding tourism development and also, a high degree of acceptance and tolerance of visitors in this city. There are small differences between those who interact with tourists considering the length of residence in Cluj-Napoca. The results show that those living in Cluj-Napoca between 10 and 15 years are more involved in interaction than other categories.

**Figure 2.:** The opportunity to interact with tourists visiting Cluj-Napoca based on the length of residence



Source: developed by the authors

Table 3. presents the empowerment of Cluj-Napoca residents to support different tourism activities connected to the city.

**Table 3.:** Interaction with tourists

	Frequent	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
I have informed by telephone other people regarding activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	260	451	212	91
I have positively reacted ("liked") to an on-line page/ post promoting the city	381	414	146	73
I have shared an event or activity from/ about the city	302	349	227	136
I have spoken with somebody about the activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	431	436	129	18
I have showed to somebody pictures with the city	387	413	176	38
I have „checked-in” in a specific location/ at a specific event	315	327	218	154
I have commented with the Hashtag „#Cluj”	160	179	243	432
I have posted pictures with different attractions/ tourist objectives from the city	246	382	257	129
I have talked with people about the opportunities offered by Cluj-Napoca (educational, business, cultural, etc.)	443	417	136	18
I have promoted the tourist destination Cluj-Napoca	310	398	233	73

Source: developed by the authors

A major part of these activities (9 out of 10) is done by the majority of the respondents frequently or occasionally, with the exception of using the hashtag “#Cluj”. The results prove an intensive interaction between residents and tourists using online and offline media and instruments.

A Principal Component Analysis was conducted using all 10 items to assess engagement in tourism-sustaining activities in Cluj-Napoca. The analysis yielded two factors (Table 4.): online interactions and offline interactions. The first factor is composed of the five items having relatively high loadings (.67, .69, .74, .78, .72). The offline interactions are highlighted by the other five items (with loadings from .52 to .79). The PCA matrix was rotated by using the Varimax method and converged in 5 iterations.

**Table 4.:** The Rotated Component Matrix regarding online and offline interactions between residents and tourists

	Component	
	Online interaction	Offline interaction
I have informed by telephone other people regarding activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	.29	.52
I have ever "liked" a page/ post promoting the city	.67	.32
I have shared an event or activity from/ about the city	.69	.32
I have spoken with somebody about the activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca	.18	.75
I have showed to somebody pictures with the city	.31	.60
I have „checked-in” in a specific location/ at a specific event	.74	.16
I have commented with the Hashtag „#Cluj”	.78	.07
I have posted pictures with different attractions/ tourist objectives from the city	.72	.30
I have talked with people about the opportunities offered by Cluj-Napoca (educational, business, cultural, etc.)	.04	.79
I have promoted the tourist destination Cluj-Napoca	.27	.70

Source: developed by the authors

These two factors explain 55.27% of the total variance (Table 5.). All the final eigenvalues have values above 1 which means that the Kaiser criterion is met.

**Table 5.:** Total Variance Explained regarding online and offline interactions between Cluj-Napoca residents and tourists

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Online interaction	4.28	42.84	42.84	2.91	29.09	29.09
Offline interaction	1.24	12.44	55.27	2.62	26.19	55.27

Source: developed by the authors

Based on the research results, the primary type of tourism recognized by Cluj-Napoca residents is academic tourism, accounting for 36.16% of responses. This is followed by events tourism at 28.60% and cultural tourism at 17.33%. Business tourism is acknowledged by only 9% of respondents, while leisure tourism is represented by 3.7%. Other types of tourism are considered by a mere 0.42% of respondents.

Table 6. presents 17 perceived tourism impacts on residents’ day-by-day life. The research adopts a two-dimensional approach to assess the perceived impacts of tourism. Positively, it entails generating income for civic projects, enhancing the city’s image, elevating educational opportunities, providing leisure options, fostering local pride, stimulating infrastructure development, improving community relations, creating job prospects, facilitating shopping, offering family recreational activities, preserving local culture, enhancing living standards, fostering community solidarity, and enriching the city’s cultural life. Conversely, negative impacts include increased crime rates, traffic congestion, and strain on local public services such as law enforcement, firefighting, utilities, and roads. Additionally, a three-dimensional approach examines perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism.

**Table 6.:** Impact of tourism in the local community (residents) of Cluj-Napoca

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
Generates income for civic projects	318	523	151	17	5	4.11
Improves the city’s image	550	424	30	8	2	4.49
Increases the level of education	372	440	158	38	6	4.11
Offers opportunities for spending free time	535	400	57	19	3	4.42
Makes the locals “proud”	397	402	167	36	12	4.12
Encourages the offer of new facilities	353	515	122	22	2	4.17
Improves the relations between locals and visitors	231	449	263	61	10	3.81
Creates employment opportunities	421	444	103	42	4	4.21
Creates the opportunity for shopping	308	419	187	86	14	3.90
Offers recreation activities for families	369	449	148	43	5	4.11
Contributes to maintaining the local culture	328	431	175	64	16	3.97
Contributes to increasing the standards of living	357	483	130	36	8	4.12
Contributes to creating the solidarity in the community	190	464	280	71	9	3.74

Contributes to developing the city's cultural life	419	479	93	19	4	4.27
Increases the criminality rate	126	207	260	281	140	2.89
Contributes to increasing the traffic crowd	505	336	114	52	7	4.26
Overloads the local public services such as police, firemen, utilities, roads	258	322	260	135	39	3.61

Source: developed by the authors

The vast majority of Cluj-Napoca residents either strongly agree or agree with all the proposed assumptions regarding the positive impacts of tourism on the destination. Regarding negative impacts, it's noteworthy that residents of Cluj-Napoca do not perceive tourism as a factor that increases the crime rate. However, they do consider it to contribute to increased traffic congestion and the strain on local public services such as police, firefighters, utilities, etc.

A Principal Component Analysis was performed on the data regarding the impact of tourism activities in Cluj-Napoca perceived by the residents, being used all the 17 items. The analysis yielded two factors (Table 7.): positive impacts and negative impacts. The first factor is composed of the fourteen items having relatively high loadings (between .52 and .63). The negative impacts are highlighted by the other three items (with loadings from .72 to .81). The PCA matrix was rotated by using the Varimax method and converged in 5 iterations.

**Table 7.:** The Rotated Component Matrix regarding residents' perception towards positive and negative impact of tourism development in Cluj-Napoca

	Component	
	1 Positive	2 Negative
Generates income for civic projects	.52	.09
Improves the city's image	.57	-.12
Increases the level of education	.62	.13
Offers opportunities for spending free time	.60	.02
Makes the locals "proud"	.62	-.03
Encourages the offer of new facilities	.59	.08
Improves the relations between locals and visitors	.62	.03
Creates employment opportunities	.53	.09
Creates the opportunity for shopping	.47	.33
Offers recreation activities for families	.59	.06



Contributes to maintaining the local culture	.62	-.07
Contributes to increasing the standards of living	.62	.05
Contributes to creating the solidarity in the community	.63	.11
Contributes to developing the city's cultural life	.58	.06
Increases the criminality rate	-.02	.72
Contributes to increasing the traffic crowd	.04	.72
Overloads the local public services such as police, firemen, utilities, roads	.08	.81

Source: developed by the authors

These two factors explain 39.33% of the total variance (Table 8.). All the final eigenvalues have values above 1 which means that the Kaiser criterion is met.

**Table 8.:** Total Variance Explained regarding residents' perception towards positive and negative impact of tourism development in Cluj-Napoca

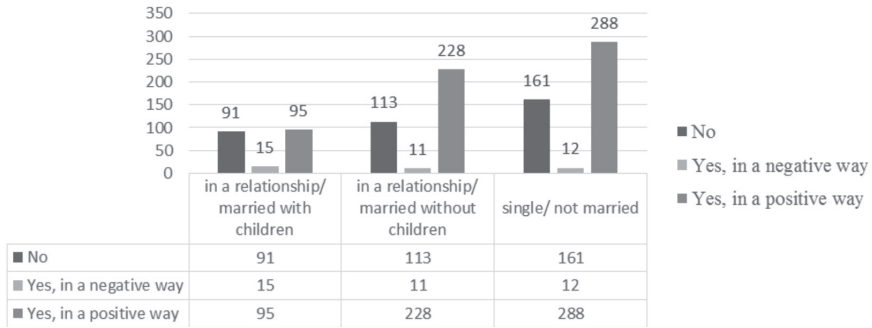
Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1 Positive	4.90	28.85	28.85	4.81	28.29	28.29
2 Negative	1.78	10.48	39.33	1.88	11.03	39.33

Source: developed by the authors

The residents' overall perception of tourism's impact on their personal life was analyzed. The research noticed that 36% of the respondents consider there is no influence of tourism development over their personal life. Taking into consideration only those respondents who consider tourism having an impact on their life, the findings revealed that the huge majority (almost 94%) point a positive impact.

Figure 3a). and 3b). present the way Cluj-Napoca residents perceive the impact of the tourism development over their personal life, based on their marital status and income.

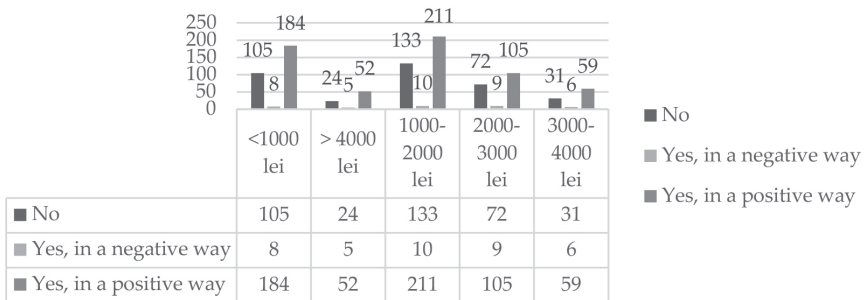
**Figure 3a).**: Residents' perceived impact of tourism development based on their marital status



Source: developed by the authors

Looking to the marital status and the perceived influence it can be noticed the same pattern: most of the respondents from all the marital status categories, have pointed that their personal life is influenced in a positive way, excepting families having children where smaller response differences between influence and non-influence were observed.

**Figure 3b).**: Residents' perceived impact of tourism development based on their income



Source: developed by the authors

Taking into consideration the income and the perceived influence, the same pattern is observed, showing no difference in responses between income categories and the perceived tourism influence on personal life. The respondents from all the income categories showed a positive influence of tourism on their life.

The respondents' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 9. A resilient sample structure is demonstrated by the fact that 44% of respondents are men and 56% of respondents are women. When it comes to the respondents' ages, the majority of them (60.75%) are in the 18-25 age range. Elderly people over 65 make up the lowest percentage (1.28%). In terms of education, the majority (56.91%) hold a university degree. According to the report, the vast majority of those surveyed have

completed post-secondary, university, and post-university education. The majority (53.26%) earn between 1000 lei (about 200 euros) and 3000 lei (roughly 600 euros) each month. About 46% of people are single when it comes to marital status. The fact that around 80% of respondents do not have children is useful information for determining the participant's profile.

**Table 9.:** Demographics characteristics of the sample

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	616	60.75
26-35	204	20.12
36-45	102	10.06
46-55	53	5.23
56-65	26	2.56
over 65	13	1.28
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	565	55.71
Male	449	44.29
<b>Education</b>		
basic studies	21	2.07
high school	280	27.61
post-secondary	64	6.31
university studies	577	56.91
post university studies	72	7.10
<b>Income</b>		
<1000 lei	297	29.29
1000-2000 lei	354	34.92
2000-3000 lei	186	18.34
3000-4000 lei	96	9.46
> 4000 lei	81	7.99
<b>Marital status</b>		
single/ not married	461	45.46
in a relationship/ married without children	352	34.72
in a relationship/ married with children	201	19.82

Source: developed by the authors

Further on it was assumed first an expected relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents and other basic information for the research (the local's perception about tourist potential of Cluj-Napoca, the resident's opportunity to interact with tourists visiting the city, the interaction activities with tourists, and the tourism impacts on destination and on local's personal life) and tested running a chi squared test. The study identified many weak correlations between these variables. It was revealed an acceptable correlation, negative (inversely

proportional), with statistical significance between the age and pictures with the city showed to somebody. Also, an acceptable correlation, direct proportional, with statistical significance between the marital status and informing by telephone other people regarding activities that take place in Cluj-Napoca, "liked" a page/ post promoting the city and showed to somebody pictures with the city, was identified.

Furthermore, the possibility of a relationship between the duration of residency in Cluj-Napoca (independent variable) and the perception of Cluj-Napoca's tourist potential (dependent variable) was considered. Subsequently, a chi-squared test was conducted to assess the presence of any such relationship, with the results presented in Table 10.

**Table 10.:** Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	11.36	9	.252		
Likelihood Ratio	10.49	9	.312		
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.43	1	.232		
N of Valid Cases		1014			
Symmetric Measures					
	Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. Tb	Approx. Sig.	
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.04	.03	1.4	.000
N of Valid Cases			1014		
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					

Source: developed by the authors

The results are indicating a weak relationship between the length of residence in Cluj-Napoca and the perception of tourist potential, with Kendall's tau-b 0.04, meaning a variation of 4% of the Cluj-Napoca tourist potential perception explained by the length of residence in Cluj-Napoca. Moreover, the results are not statistically significant ( $\chi^2(9) = 11.36, p = .252$ ).

Only several studies are investigating the tourism activity in different regions of Romania. Without looking at how locals or visitors view the growth of the tourism industry, they are mostly focused on secondary data analysis of statistical indicators pertaining to the flow of tourists and the availability of lodging (Muresan et al. 2019). Mure an et al. (2019) examined the perception of rural residents in Romania's North-West Development Region to analyze residents' perceptions of quality destinations among the region's counties and to evaluate the impact of sociodemographic characteristics on residents' perceptions of the quality of the

tourism destination. The present study used the same approach in analyzing tourism impacts as Gursoy et al. did in 2018 (Gursoy et al. 2019), but in a developing urban destination from Romania. In Cluj-Napoca, tourism is far from being one of the main industries considering the contribution to GDP but is perceived as offering an added value to the destination.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, urban tourism has become one of the fastest growing travel segments worldwide. The local community is contributing to the sustainability of the industry and influences the process of development within the tourist destination. This research represents the trial of understanding residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development and potential of Cluj-Napoca.

A high percentage of residents, specifically 94%, perceive Cluj-Napoca as having a well-developed tourism potential. Moreover, 85% of the respondents indicated that they had the opportunity to interact with tourists visiting the city. The majority of the respondents are frequent or occasionally interacting with tourists in different ways, the exceptions are just the use of hashtag (“#Cluj”) and the posting of pictures with different attractions. The respondents considered academic tourism, followed by events tourism and cultural tourism to be the main type of tourism in Cluj-Napoca. Major part of locals see tourism as improving the city's image and offering opportunities for spending free time and, as well, consider Cluj-Napoca a real tourist destination with developed tourist potential. Looking to the negative impacts of tourism, the residents from Cluj-Napoca don't consider the tourism as a factor which increases the criminality rate but consider it contributing to increasing the traffic crowd and overloads the local public services such as police, firemen, utilities, etc. A significant majority of residents, 94% of them, acknowledge the positive influence of tourism on their personal lives. The study reveals a weak relationship between the length of residence in Cluj-Napoca and the perception of tourist potential.

The study's conclusions include applications and suggestions, particularly for local government agencies, tourism-related organizations, and enterprises that are organizing the destination's future growth. The survey provides a deeper knowledge of locals' opinions and attitudes about how the tourist sector is developing in an urban area. The uniformity of the sample is one of the study's shortcomings. That is why the results cannot be generalized to all the locals, but they offer relevant insights into the residents' perceptions on tourism. Besides the limitations specific to any scientific research due to the complexity of the investigated phenomena, the present paper does not consider the residents profile of Cluj-Napoca, especially age intervals. As an urban, cosmopolitan and increasing desired living place by more and more Romanians, the residents' profile is constantly changing. Moreover,

locals are increasingly facing a dissolution of identity, specific to the big cities. Further investigations are recommended to better understand residence identity and residents' identity for enhancing value co-creation process, life satisfaction and increase the positive effects of residents-tourists interaction.

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ISSUE

Journal DOI: 10.32728/ric  
ISSUE DOI: 10.32728/ric.2023.91

ISSN 1849-9015



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