

Article

Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Beiuș Land, Romania

Emilia Boc ¹, Anișoara Luminița Filimon ¹, Mircea-Sebastian Mancia ², Carmen Aurora Mancia ², Ioana Josan ¹, Mariana Laura Herman ³, Aurelian Claudiu Filimon ¹ and Grigore Vasile Herman ^{1,*}

¹ Department of Geography, Tourism and Territorial Planning, Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport, University of Oradea, 1 Universitatii Street, 410087 Oradea, Romania; boc.emiliaeva@student.uoradea.ro (E.B.); lufilimon@uoradea.ro (A.L.F.); ijosan@uoradea.ro (I.J.); cfilimon@uoradea.ro (A.C.F.)

² Faculty of Construction, Cadastre and Architecture, University of Oradea, 4 Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea, 410058 Oradea, Romania; mircea.mancia@uoradea.ro (M.-S.M.); amancia@uoradea.ro (C.A.M.)

³ Mihai Eminescu National College, 18 Episcop Roman Ciorogariu Street, 410017 Oradea, Romania; mariana-laura-herman@eminescu.rdsor

* Correspondence: grigoreherman@yahoo.com or gherman@uoradea.ro

Abstract: The dynamic interactions between cultural heritage and tourism lead to its assertion as an increasingly complex economic phenomenon, with social and cultural implications. At the same time, the cultural heritage has acquired a special importance among the decision makers and local communities, being associated with major tourist attractions and the cultural means of exchange, as well as educational tools for implementing sustainable management by conserving and protecting heritage elements. The importance of cultural heritage requires its evaluation, quantification, and capitalization through tourism. In this context, the present study aims, using the normalization method, to highlight the relationship between the cultural heritage and the tourist infrastructure in Beiuș Land, Bihor County, Romania. The results obtained provide a global (at the level of the studied area) and detailed image (at the level of the administrative territorial unit), regarding the relations between tourism and cultural heritage. Therefore, this study can provide impetus for the development of future research aiming at capitalizing the cultural potential.

Keywords: tourist infrastructure; cultural potential; normalization method; historical monument



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1. Introduction

Cultural heritage tourism is one of the oldest and most popular forms of tourism [1]. In the literature, the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage has been highlighted in numerous studies regarding the tourist motivation to travel [2,3], especially the one generated by the authenticity of cultural heritage [4,5], the demand for tourism [6,7], tourism expenditures [2], the use of innovative methods to facilitate the interaction between tourists and heritage [8,9], the impact of tourism on cultural heritage [10,11], etc. In this context, we state the importance of this study with a specific methodology to assess the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage at a spatial level, in an ethnographic area of “land” type specific to Romania; an area that benefits from many elements of cultural heritage.

Beiuș Land belongs to the category of the 18 “earth” type spaces in Romania [12], characterized as one of the most authentic Romanian spaces [13], preserving the local territorial identity. Romania’s “lands” are regional spaces, which have a number of common features: common historical background, according to the old local autonomies of the Middle Age Romanian Countries; the same sink-like morphological character; and whether they are located inside or outside the Carpathian Arch or the peripheral hills, they present an ethnic uniformity, they have a deeply rural character, and, finally, they have a strong regional coherence (a sense of belonging to a specific space and community) [14]. These are the expressions of a symbiosis between people and their living environment, still

maintaining, although diluted, a special spirit of belonging to the local community, a way of life with archaic accents expressed visually in the predominantly natural landscape, specific architecture, traditional occupations, and popular traditional culture (local traditions and customs, folk costume, authentic language, local cuisine, etc.). In a world of globalization, characterized by uniformity and standardization, capitalized by a coherent and sustainable development strategy, these spaces of identity can represent a consistent comparative advantage for Romania, constituting a true reservoir of local development, particularly attractive for companies that have already lost these ancestral features in favor of modernity. The potential success is demonstrated by emblematic figures worldwide that promote the authentic Romania (Prince Charles, Charley Ottey, etc.).

“Lands” are spatial mental entities with a specific identity in the environment in which they appeared and evolved. In Romania, there are 18 such well-defined spaces in terms of space and mentality as follows: “Beiuș Land”, “Oaş Land”, “Maramureș Land”, “Codru Land”, “Bârsa Land”, “Loviște Land”, etc. From a tourist point of view, these spaces or “lands” are very important because thanks to the mentality, customs, and traditions developed and perpetuated over generations, they keep a series of identity elements characterized by the following attributes: age, uniqueness, novelty, originality, etc. The previously mentioned attributes represent an important motivational element for the formation and affirmation of the tourist demand. Against this background, tourism, which is currently in a continuous process of development and diversification, is looking for alternative solutions to diversify the tourist offer in accordance with the increasingly sophisticated demands of today’s tourists, who are also increasingly educated and interested in the past by virtue of understanding the present and deciphering the future. In this context, a viable alternative in diversifying the tourist offer is the capitalization of the cultural heritage through tourism. Moreover, in the studied area, the opportunity to develop and assert cultural tourism is complementary to mountain tourism and agrotourism in the immediate area of the Apuseni Mountains.

Cultural heritage represents the totality of values, goods, beliefs, and the traditions of a people, identified as testimonies of human evolution in relation to the environment over time, translated by the creative potential of man. They are a beacon in understanding national culture and creating cultural identity in universal civilization [15]. Cultural heritage is a multidimensional, complex concept, being the material or immaterial testimony of past generations, whose existence has influenced present and future society. It represents the expression of a long historical process of evolution in national, regional, and local identities, being a cornerstone, irreplaceable, in the future development of any nation or community [15].

To streamline research, protection, conservation, and management, given the diversity and complexity of cultural heritage, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, two broad categories were delineated: tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage.

The specific Romanian legislation approaches the heritage from four perspectives: built heritage (historical monuments), archaeological heritage (archeological sites), mobile heritage (museums and collections), and intangible heritage (customs, music, beliefs, oral folklore, etc.) [15].

Cultural heritage is a common and collective good, considered by the community as a reflection and an expression of values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions in constant change [16,17]. In this sense, each of us has the right to benefit from the existence of cultural heritage, but also the responsibility to protect and respect it through sustainable techniques, which do not endanger its existence.

The economic potential of the cultural heritage is a major concern among decision makers, communities, tourism actors, and researchers, being the subject of various studies [18,19]. The links between cultural heritage and tourism are very strong, identified since the eighteenth century [20]. The economic dimension of the cultural heritage is the foundation of cultural tourism and more recently of heritage tourism, which was formed by

the appreciation, conservation, and promotion of cultural goods. However, there are some conflicts between the two concepts, tourism being an efficient tool from an economic, social, and political point of view. However, both can have a positive [21] and a negative [22] impact on cultural heritage.

Given its antiquity, historical and spiritual value, building materials, degree of perishability, the need for conservation, promotion, and sustainable use of cultural heritage, it has been the subject of research for numerous studies aimed at: analyzing air quality inside monuments and the impact on exhibits [23,24] and human health [25,26] and the assessment of the degree of health damage [27].

The aim of this study is to establish the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism in “Beiuș Land” by identifying and evaluating the cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure. In this sense, the aim was to perform a multicriterial comparative analysis between the spatial distribution of the elements of cultural heritage and tourist and technical infrastructure in 24 territorial administrative units in Beiuș Land, Bihor County, Romania to obtain a ranking with higher and minimum values. A ranking of territorial administrative units was made based on two criteria (cultural heritage and tourism and technical infrastructure), and the results were compared to obtain a validation of the non-uniform spatial distribution hypothesis.

The following research questions arise: is the hypothesis model validated in reality? Are there significant differences at units’ level between these two criteria? Are there areas where the tourist infrastructure is deficient compared to the cultural heritage and vice versa? Can the existence of relations between cultural heritage and tourism be established? This paper aims to outline the answers to these questions by validating the evaluation methodology applied.

2. Methodological Framework

2.1. Study Area

From a geographical point of view, Beiuș Land occupies the south-eastern extremity of Bihor County, having the character of a closed pericarpethian depression on three sides of the Apuseni Mountains. Overlapping almost completely over the inner bay of the Beiuș Depression (Pocola Depression), from a natural point of view it has the appearance of a semi-closed amphitheater (meadows, terraces, foothills, and mountain peaks), the altitude decreasing from the peaks of Craiului Forest, Bihor-Vlădeasa, and Codru Moma to the hearth of the depression, drained by the Crișul Negru River and its tributaries (Figure 1).

Human communities and the main communication routes have been established along the hydrographic network, most of the valleys housing a succession of villages from upstream to downstream. From an administrative point of view, Beiuș Land brings together 24 communes and 4 cities, and Beiuș is the traditional polarizing center of the entire space. A specificity is the large fragmentation of the habitat in many small villages, arranged at short distances from each other, following the typology of morphological fragmentation. The depression character of this area represented an advantage in the preservation of the authentic Beiuș culture, being surrounded by Apuseni mountain with altitudes up to 1849 m (Vf. Cucurbăta Mare), which was difficult to cross in the past centuries.

Tourism is an economic branch, with major implications in the development of local economies and real development prospects in the studied area. There is a large number of natural quality tourist resources (the avenue from Câmpeneasa, mineral water from Criștioru de Sus, etc.) and anthropic ones (Izbuc Monastery; the wooden churches from Rieni; Valea de Jos and Fânațe; the museums from Beiuș, Izbuc and Chișcău; ceramic centers from Izbuc, Săliște de Vașcău, Leheceni, Criștioru de Sus, Criștioru de Jos, Valea de Jos, etc.). Each of these tourist resources are defined by a high degree of attractiveness and specificity, able to satisfy the most diverse motivations and tourist aspirations by practicing various types of tourism, including leisure, recreation, cultural, and rural. Local tourism is supported by a specific infrastructure consisting of 98 accommodation bases with a capacity of 2132 seats and 27 catering structures with a capacity of 2364 seats [28]. The tourist

promotion of the studied area is achieved through five tourist information and promotion centers (40% of the total number of tourist information and promotion centers in Bihor County) located in Beiuș, Cămpani, Nucet, Vașcău, and Cărpînet. The large number of these centers is also explained by the role of the transit corridor of Beiuș Country (along the European road E79) towards the Apuseni Mountains.

The defining characteristic of tourism is the fact that there is a big discrepancy between its potential and its poor capitalization, generated by the precarious accommodation infrastructure, insufficient tourist facilities, and lack of a tourism development strategy [29].

The lack of investments in tourism and the absence of an integrated development strategy represent problems at national level, being necessary to approach the financing of the tourism field through the recovery and resilience plan of Romania, Component 11—Tourism, evaluated by the European Commission, with a deadline of implementation by 2026. The measures proposed in this strategic document regarding investments in tourism development and marketing are found in the creation of the 12 cultural thematic routes throughout Romania, which connect tourist areas or areas with high tourist potential, and the creation of organizations of tourist destination management at regional level [30]. Beiuș Land is included in these cultural routes due to the potential of local cultural heritage to be promoted at touristic level and the need for investments in this field.

Regarding the study area, Beiuș Land represented the object of study in many pieces of research on cultural heritage, approached from different perspectives: geographical regionalization [14,29], the analysis of activities and cultural events [31], tourists [32,33], and the analysis of the interior microclimate of monuments [34,35].

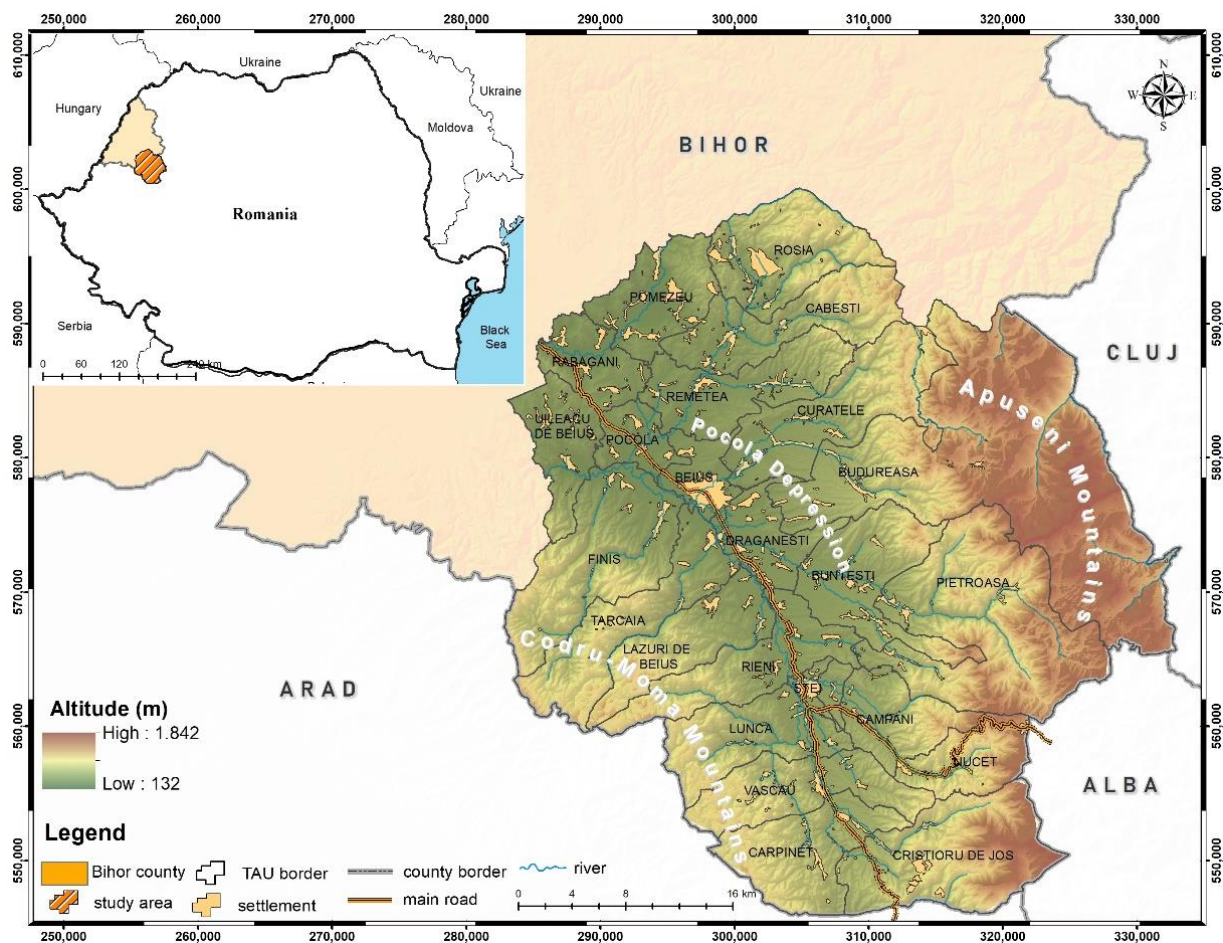


Figure 1. Study area [36].

2.2. Materials and Methods

The assessment of cultural heritage and technical and tourism infrastructure can be a challenge for researchers in studies regarding the economic, social, ecological, and territorial aspects of tourism activities [37,38]. These aspects cannot be defined and analyzed by a single indicator, thus, their complexity in territory and society cannot be neglected, and they are placed at the interference of several fields of study and activity.

Multicriteria analysis methods (MCA) involve a structured approach, created on predefined decisions and objectives on complex phenomena and processes. The evaluation is based on objective criteria, which are in turn defined by a set of indicators, correlated with indicators related to other analysis criteria [39]. The very concept of a complex phenomenon involves many criteria and variables, and its analysis contributes to the assessment of the qualitative state of the phenomenon [40]. In this sense, the variables have a multidimensional character, different units of measurement and value limits, which gives a higher degree of complexity to the evaluation process and comparative analysis.

It is not a novelty that the evaluation methods, which included the catalog of multicriteria measures (MCA), have a very wide applicability in various fields, being suitable in taking necessary decisions to target predetermined objectives. Studies related to this topic applied MCAs in the assessment and conservation of cultural heritage [40,41], the identification of landscapes and cultural values [19,42], the assessment of the socio-economic development of a population [43–46]. Zero unitarization method (ZUM) is part of the MCA methods and is a method of standardizing index values to obtain an aggregate value for each criterion.

It is also called min–max normalization, scaling method, or value mapping method [47]. It is applied in various studies: economic, which assesses the standard of living [44], the national level of sustainable development [48], studies on the quality of environmental factors [49,50], studies on the development of rural areas and cultural heritage [19,40], and also being found in fields, such as medicine, information technology, data mining, etc. The normalization of variables' values can be applied through techniques, such as: the normalization of min–max, which ensures a linear transformation of the original data, framed in a boundary with predetermined limits, using two values: maximum and minimum; z-score normalization uses the difference between the x value and the arithmetic mean of all values of a variable, relative to the standard deviation and the decimal normalization [47]. The new values resulting from the normalization are included in the range [0.1].

The min–max normalization method was transposed in the present study by following the next steps:

1. Preprocessing/preparation of variables.

Establishing the specific and relevant variables for the analyzed objects (domains): cultural heritage and tourist infrastructure (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Sets of variables established for study analysis.

Data Source	Variable	Unit of Measure
Ministry of Culture [36]	X1—Archaeological monuments	Number of X1/TAU
	X2—Architectural monuments	Number of X2/TAU
Ministry of Culture & National Office for Heroes [51]	X3—Funeral and Memorial Monuments	Number of X3/TAU
National Institute of Statistics [52]	X4—Museums, collections, and public libraries	Number of X4/TAU
County Directorate of Culture [53]	X5—Popular artists and musical and traditional ensembles	Number of X5/TAU
	X6—Festivals, fairs	Number of X6/365 days * 100
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration [54]	X7—Public expenditures in culture	Amount of expenditures/100 inhabitants

Table 1. *Cont.*

Data Source	Variable	Unit of Measure
Ministry of Tourism [28]	Y1—Tourism accommodation structures	Number of Y1/TAU
	Y2—Tourism accommodation capacity	Number of beds/structure/TAU
	Y3—Reception and public supply structures	Number of Y3/TAU
	Y4—Tourist information centers	Number of Y4/TAU
National Institute of Statistics [52]	Y5—Overnight stays	Number of Y5/TAU
Open Street Map [55]	Y6—Intern accessibility by road	Km/Km ²
Environmental Protection Agency [56]	Y7—Ecology services (protected areas)	ha/100 inhabitants

* TAU—territorial administrative unit.

Table 2. The type of data expressed by variables.

Variable	Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Data	Type of Data
X1—Archeological monuments	Cultural Heritage	Tangible	Archeological sites Necropolis Settlements Fortifications Fortresses Churches	Quantitative
X2—Architectural monuments			Palace Churches/wooden churches Houses Urban ensemble	Quantitative
X3—Funeral and Memorial Monuments			Personalities Tomb/Grave Memorial houses Heroes Obelisks/crucifix	Quantitative
X4—Museum, collections, public libraries			Museums/ethnographic museums Collections & Libraries	Quantitative
X5—Popular artists and musical and traditional ensembles			Traditional artists in decorating the Easter eggs, making folks costumes, paintings	Quantitative
X6—Festivals/fairs		Intangible	Customs festivals: holidays festivals, gastro-nomic fairs, traditional music, practicing some customs during the festivals, etc.	Quantitative
X7—Public expenditures in culture		Tangible	Public investments in local culture	Quantitative
Y1—Tourism accommodation structures	Tourism infrastructure	Specific infrastructure	Hotels, Motels, Pensions/guests house, Agritourist houses	Quantitative
Y2—Tourism accommodation capacity			Number beds/units	Quantitative
Y3—Reception and public supply structures		Auxiliar structures	Restaurants Shops Commercial centers	Quantitative
Y4—Tourist information centers		Specific infrastructure	Tourist information centers (guidance, maps, brochures, touristic information, marketing)	Quantitative
Y5—Overnight stays			Number of stays with minimum 1 night	Quantitative
Y6—Intern accessibility by road		General infrastructure and services	European road, County Road, National and Local roads	Quantitative
Y7—Ecology services (protected areas)			Protected areas surface reported to 100 TAU inhabitants	Quantitative

Extracting the values of variables (numerical data, statistics, reports, etc.).

Grouping variables into types. These are: stimulant (S)/higher-the-better (HTB), whose value positively influences the synthesis value and establishes a positive correlation between variables; de-stimulant (D)/lower-the-better (LTB), category opposite to the first category and nominated (N), with a positive correlation up to a certain value, which will enter in category D after this value.

In this study, all variables belong to type S.

Applying the min–max normalization method to the values of the variables.

Normalization is based on the hierarchy of normalized objects, which reflects the qualitative evaluation of the analyzed object, and takes the form of a matrix:

$$X = [x_{ij}] = \begin{bmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} & \cdots & x_{1n} \\ x_{21} & x_{22} & \cdots & x_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ x_{r1} & x_{r2} & \cdots & x_{rn} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (1)$$

where x_{ij} is the value of the variable X_j for the object O_i ,

The normalization of the variables follows the formula:

$$Z_{ij} = (X_{ij} - \min X_{ij}) / (\max X_{ij} - \min X_{ij}) \quad X_j \in S, Z_{ij} \in [0.1] \quad (2)$$

where: x_{ij} is the value of the variable j for object i ; z_{ij} is the normalized value of the variable j for object i ; $\min \{x_{ij}\}$ is the minimum value x of the variable j for object i ; $\max \{x_{ij}\}$ is the maximum value x of the variable j for object i .

In this study, by using the method of normalization min–max, the values of 14 indicators were evaluated and quantified, 7 for cultural heritage, 7 for tourist infrastructure (Tables 1 and 2). These indicators were chosen to represent as comprehensive as possible the fields of study, cultural heritage, and tourism while encountering limitations in terms of the existence of statistical data.

It is considered that the final result is influenced by the choice of variables and their value intensity in the territory. However, in choosing the variables to be analyzed, the following were considered: research of the literature and papers with similar topics, identification of gaps in previous similar and connected studies, validity, cost of obtaining data, and relevance of data statistics.

For these reasons, we chose 7 variables to assess the cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure in Beiuș Country (Tables 1 and 2).

The variables X_1 , X_2 and X_3 represent classes of historical monuments, taken from the list of historical monuments drawn up by the specialists from the Ministry of Culture [48]. Within the inventory of historical monuments, their evaluation is performed, based on the criteria mentioned below to be able to later classify them into two large groups (A—national interest and B—local interest) and in four other subordinated groups (1. monuments of archeology; 2. monuments of architecture; 3. monuments of public; 4. memorials and funerary). The classification in the mentioned groups is made by weighting the values obtained by each monument to evaluation criteria, such as: age (seniority) criterion, architectural, artistic, and urban value criterion, frequency criterion (rarity and uniqueness), and memorial-symbolic value criterion.

Variable X_6 , festivals and fairs, includes data referring to customs and traditions encountered at festivals or fairs organized to practice a custom in a specific period of year; already publicly valued customs by the authorities responsible for their periodic and cyclical organization were considered.

2. Obtaining of the summary value (aggregate value).

After normalizing the 14 variables proposed for the study, the new values are aggregated into a single value (q_j).

$$q_j = \sum_{j=1}^n z_{ij} \quad (i = 1, \dots, r), \quad (3)$$

The evaluation of the object through the value of the variable is done through the synthesis value, Q_i :

$$q_j = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^n q_i \quad (i = 1, \dots, r), Q_i \in [0.1] \quad (4)$$

3. Determination of the constant value (k) for classifying objects into groups.

Given the number of 24 objects (TAUs, territorial administrative unit) analyzed, we decided on a number of 4 qualitative groups. For this step a numerical delimitation threshold must be established, a constant, determined as follows:

$$R(Q_i) = \max Q_i - \min Q_i \quad k = \frac{R(Q_i)}{4} \quad (5)$$

- Group I contains the highest level of development of the analyzed phenomenon.

$$Q_i \in (\max\{x_{ij}\} - k, \max\{x_{ij}\}] \quad (6)$$

- Group II includes an average level of development of the analyzed phenomenon

$$Q_i \in (\max\{x_{ij}\} - 2k, \max\{x_{ij}\} - k] \quad (7)$$

- Group III includes a small level of development of the analyzed phenomenon.

$$Q_i \in (\max\{x_{ij}\} - 3k, \max\{x_{ij}\} - 2k] \quad (8)$$

- Group IV includes a very low level of development of the analyzed phenomenon.

$$Q_i \in (\min\{x_{ij}\}, \max\{x_{ij}\} - 3k] \quad (9)$$

The last stage of the methodology involves the visualization of the development groups of the analyzed phenomena, the cultural heritage, and the tourist infrastructure, respectively. Mapping the data obtained on thematic maps of choropleth type is the most efficient method of interpreting the results obtained at the level of the 24 territorial administrative units. The creation of the database and the collection of data corresponding to each variable were done in Microsoft Excel. Obtaining and processing the vector structures cataloged as roads was done by using the OSM (Open Street Map) plug-in in the QGIS 3.6 program, and the final cartographic material represented a layout operation in the ArcMap 10.6 program.

3. Results

3.1. Cultural Heritage

To evaluate the cultural heritage, seven variables that can be classified into three typological categories were considered: (1) immovable and movable cultural heritage (X1–X4); (2) the human component involved in culture (traditional artists, craftsmen, carriers of traditions, and customs) (X5); and (3) events, regular and cyclical festivals (X6) and the expenses of local authorities in culture (X7).

The maximum potential for each territorial administrative unit has a value of 7, while for the entire analyzed territory it has a maximum value of 168.

Following the quantification of the cultural heritage in Beiuș Land through the zero unitarization method (ZUM), a value of 33.37 was obtained, which represents 20% of the maximum potential value of the cultural heritage.

The analysis of the value of the cultural heritage thus obtained at the level of the seven variables taken into account indicated that the biggest contributions in obtaining the value of the cultural heritage (33.37) were given by the variables X7 “public expenditures in culture” (7.8 amount of expenditures/100 inhabitants, 23.2%), X3 “funeral and memorial monuments” (7.3 units/TAU, 21.8%), and X4 “museums, collections and public libraries” (6 units/TAU, 17.8%), while at the opposite pole were the variables X2 “architectural monuments” (3.5 units/TAU, 10.5%), X5 “popular artists and musical and traditional ensembles” (2.6 units/TAU, 7.9%), and X6 “festivals, fairs, customs” (2.3 units/365 days * 100, 6.9%).

The variable X7, “public expenditures in culture”, was represented by a budget of RON 12,802,865.00 (EUR 2,587,012.27) [40], distributed at the level of the all 24 territorial administrative units analyzed. The highest values of “public expenditures in culture” were registered for Beiuș (RON 1,832,910; 14.3%), Ștei (RON 1,742,280; 13.6%), Lunca (RON 1,445,361; 11.3%), while the lowest were for Roșia (RON 51,195; 0.4%), Finiș (RON 50,000; 0.4%), Răbăgani (RON 45,450; 0.4%), and Vașcău (RON 8358; 0.1%).

X3 “funeral and memorial monuments” represents the second variable in weight (7.3 units/TAU, 21.8%) in the quantification of the cultural heritage, being distributed in 81 monuments, unequally distributed in 21 territorial administrative units. Most of these monuments are in Beiuș (11 units, 13.6%), Cărpinet (8 units, 9.9%), Târcaia (7 units, 8.6%), and Răbăgani (7 units, 8.6%), while three territorial administrative units (Nucet, Finiș and Uileacul de Beiuș) do not benefit from such monuments.

The third variable as a share in the evaluation of the cultural heritage was represented by X4 “museums, collections and public libraries” (6 units/TAU, 17.8%), being distributed by 54 units. Most museums, collections, and public libraries are in Beiuș (6 units, 11.1%) and Ștei (6 units, 11.1%), while Cămpani, Lunca, Buntești Drăgești, and Curățele only have one unit (1.9% each).

The analysis of the cultural heritage at the level of the territorial administrative units indicated the existence of the next hierarchy: Beiuș (5.1%), Lunca (2.7%), and Cărpinet (2.4%), while at the opposite pole are Cămpani (0.5%) and Uileacul de Beiuș (0.5%).

The predominantly rural character of the study area determined the shaping, practice and perpetuation of certain activities, habits, and a specific rural lifestyle in general, but with strong local imprints, which contributed to the affirmation of the reality of Beiuș mental space, built based on the territorial space. The excellent preservation of specific elements: traditions, originality, village lifestyle, and simple and profound philosophy of life facilitate and encourage the development and promotion of rural tourism [19]. “Beiuș Land” presents a large concentration of cultural heritage, the exponent being the municipality of Beiuș, the main city in the analyzed area, being the polarizing center for the entire area [17]. It has stood out throughout history with important political, social, religious, economic, and cultural contributions. The municipality of Beiuș hosts 11 historical and architectural monuments (the urban ensemble “Piața Samuil Vulcan” from the XVIII–XX centuries; the Roman Catholic Church “Sfânta Treime” from 1752; the Orthodox Church “St. Archangels Michael and Gabriel” (1784–1790); Reformed Church (1780–1782), “Samuil Vulcan” National College; Romanian Casino; Ioan Ciordaș House, today hosting the Beiuș Municipal Museum; the former Greek-Catholic Civil School for Girls and the Pavelian Boarding School for Girls; the former Greek-Catholic School for Girls; Forgach House and “St. Great Martyr Dimitrie Izvorător de Mir”), 11 funerary monuments (the monument to the Romanian soldier in the Heroes’ Cemetery; the tomb of Nicolae Bolcaș and Ioan Ciordaș; the monument in memory of the soldiers of the 3rd Mountain Hunters Division; Doina Printing House and Bookstore from 1911; two obelisks in the Municipal Central Park and on Română Street; two commemorative crosses in the cemetery and on Română Street, and also a crucifix on Română Street), 5 museums, collections and public libraries (Beiuș Municipal Museum, Ethnography, History, Memorials section; the municipal library “Constantin Pavel”; the library of the National College “Samuil Vulcan”; the library of the Technical College “Ioan Ciordaș”; the library of the Pedagogical High School “Nicolae Bolcaș”), 11 folk craftsmen; 3 traditional musical ensembles (Taraful “Dor bihorean”; Ensemble “Muguri și brădițe de Tezaur”; the Ensemble of Gymnasium School “Nicolae Popoviciu”), 25 festivals, fairs, customs (Beiuș Municipality Days; “Easter Egg” Festival; Beiuș Fair every Thursday; Autumn Fair; Christmas Fair; Beiuș Beer Days; Bihor Variety Festival; Regional Festival of Popular Traditions and Popular Creators; Days of Union of Romanian Principalities; Viennese Ball; Dragobete; International Women’s Day; International Women’s Day; Flower Show; National Folklore Festival “Sing, sing dear mouth”; Events dedicated to the holidays of the city; Children’s Day; International Environment Day; “Eminescu-eternal among us”; Festival of Popular Art School; “I want to

become something”; Beiuș Cultural Week; Romanian Army Day; Romania’s National Day; Winter Traditions and Customs Festival; “It’s carol evening”) with public annual expenses in culture, religion, and recreation in the amount of RON 1,832,910.

Lunca is the second territorial administrative unit in terms of contribution to the cultural potential, and it is represented by an archaeological site (ruins of a church from the XIII–XVIII centuries), six funerary monuments (a monument and two crosses in the village of Șuștiu and three monuments in Lunca, Hotârel, and Seghiște), a folk craftsman and traditional musical ensembles (Lucreția Popa—decorated with eggs), two festivals, fairs, customs (Heroes’ Day in Lunca Commune; “Briheni Pie Festival”) and an annual public budget of RON 1,445,361 spent on culture, religion, and recreation.

Cărpinet is the second territorial administrative unit in terms of contribution to the cultural potential, this being represented by eight funerary monuments (a cross and a crucifix in Cărpinet, three crosses in Călugări, Leheceni and Izbuc); two museums; collections and public libraries (Cărpinet Communal Library; Potter’s House in Leheceni village, 18th century); two festivals, fairs, and customs (Cărpinet Commune Day; Pilgrimage to Izbuc Monastery); and a budget of annual public expenditures on culture, religion, and recreation of RON 353,272.

3.2. Tourist Infrastructure

To evaluate the tourist infrastructure, seven variables, which can be classified into three typological categories, were considered: (1) tourist infrastructure (Y1–Y3, Y5), (2) accessibility (Y6), (3) tourist promotion and information support (Y4), and ecological services offered in protected areas (Y7).

The maximum potential for each territorial administrative unit has a value of 7, while for the entire analyzed territory it has a maximum value of 168.

Following the quantification of the tourist infrastructure in “Beiuș Land” by the zero unitarization method (ZUM), a value of 25.71 was obtained, which represents 15.30% of the maximum potential value of the tourist infrastructure.

The analysis of the value of the tourist infrastructure thus obtained at the level of the seven variables taken into account indicated that the biggest contributions to the value of the tourist infrastructure (25.1) were made by the following variables: Y7 “ecology services (protected areas)” (5.2 ha/100 inhabitants, 20.3%), Y4 “tourist information centers” (5 units, 19.4%) and X6 “internal accessibility by road” (4.3 km/km², 16.8%), while at the opposite pole were the variables Y2 “tourism accommodation capacity” (3; 11.8%), Y3 “reception and public supply structures” (2.8; 10.8%) and X5 “overnight stays” (2.1; 8.2%).

The variable Y7 “ecology services (protected areas)” had a value of 84,127.8 ha/100 inhabitants, unequally distributed at the level of all 24 territorial administrative units analyzed. The highest values of Y7 “ecology services (protected areas)” were registered by Budureasa (19,177.4 ha/100 inhabitants, 22.8%), Pietroasa (14,265 ha/100 inhabitants, 17%), Criștioru de Jos (8506.4 ha/100 inhabitants, 10.1%), while Ștei, Beiuș, Drăgănești, and Pocola have the lowest (0 ha/100 inhabitants, 0%).

Y4 “tourist information centers” represents the second variable in weight (five units, 19.4%) in the quantification of the tourist infrastructure, being distributed in five tourist information and promotion centers, located in Beiuș, Vașcău, Nucet, Cămpani, and Carpinet.

The third variable in weight in the evaluation of the tourist infrastructure was Y6 “internal accessibility by road” (4.3; 16.8%), having a density of the road network of 41.8 km/km². The highest values were recorded in Budureasa (67.1 km/km², 6.7%), Remetea (59.1 km/km², 5.9%), Curățele (58.6 km/km², 5.8%), and Beiuș (58.2 km/km², 5.8%), while the lowest were registered in Tărcaia (24.7 km/km², 2.5%) and Lazuri de Beiuș (24.7 km/km², 2.5%).

The analysis of the tourist infrastructure at the level of the territorial administrative units indicated the existence of the following hierarchy: Nucet (5.3), Pietroasa (2.9), Budureasa (2.8), Beiuș (2.5), while at the opposite pole Lunca, Rieni, Rabagani, Cabesti, and Pomezau are located, each with a value of 0.2.

The town of Nucet is represented by 30 accommodation units with a capacity of 670 places, 23,245 overnight stays, 8 catering units, and a tourist information and promotion center. It is characterized by 3497.1 ha/100 inhabitants of protected areas and a density of the road network of 39.4 km/km².

The Pietroasa commune is represented by 16 accommodation units with a capacity of 299 places, 5767 overnight stays and 9 catering units. It is characterized by 14,265.9 ha/100 inhabitants of protected areas and a density of the road network of 50.7 km/km².

The Budureasa commune is represented by 18 accommodation units with a capacity of 357 places, 10,217 overnight stays and 2 catering units. It is characterized by 19,177.4 ha/100 inhabitants of protected areas and a density of the road network of 67.1 km/km².

The city of Beiuș is represented by 5 accommodation units with a capacity of 134 places, 730 overnight stays, 5 catering units, and a tourism promotion and information centers. The city of Beiuș is characterized by a density of the road network of 58.2 km/km².

The analysis of the studied area highlights an average and high concentration of natural and anthropic tourist resources at the level of the territorial administrative unit but with deficiencies regarding the technical and tourist infrastructure. This is also reflected in the values of the variables regarding the tourist infrastructure, lower than those of the cultural heritage.

The statistical data used in the study indicate three territorial administrative units with a high concentration of accommodation units (Nucet—30; Pietroasa—16; Budureasa—18) compared to the rest of the area, where the most common value (module) is zero. Receiving units and public catering are found in the above-mentioned areas with the highest concentration of accommodation units, to which is added the municipality of Beiuș, the largest locality in terms of population.

The technical infrastructure and the accessibility are closely dependent on the restrictive or favorable conditions of the relief morphology, on the population density, the distribution of the localities, the development of the services, etc. The road network largely converges towards the main artery, the national road DN 76 or European E79 on the Oradea–Deva route, with its main branches: DN 75 in the direction of Lunca–pasul Vârtop–Turda, DJ 764 Beiuș–Roșia–Bratca, and DJ 764A Beiuș–Budureasa–Stâna de Vale. The road network is constantly expanding and developing, its synchronization with the economic and social evolution being necessary. The average density of the road network is 41 km compared to the average of 74.75 km² of the entire depression.

Another expressive and relevant indicator of the tourist infrastructure we considered the protected areas (Nature Reserves, Natura 2000 sites of SCI (Sites of Community Importance) and SAC (Special Areas of Conservation). Once designated, they provide a range of environmental services, managed by custodians or authorities in the management of protected areas. Tourist routes, information support, guidance, and specific and increased attractiveness of protected areas are important components in the evaluation of tourism infrastructure.

3.3. Establishing the Relationship between Cultural Heritage and Tourism

The comparative analysis of the synthetic values of the two variables, the cultural heritage, and the tourist infrastructure shows significant differences at the level of territorial administrative units. An analyzed object (TAU, territorial administrative unit) can comprise the highest degree of development of the cultural heritage, while the tourist infrastructure can be included in a lower group. These differences in the level of objects regarding the quality of the two phenomena, but also the similarities, are explained by a series of economic, social, and historical factors, which outline the evolutionary path of cultural tourism. Tourism infrastructure and cultural heritage are the basic elements in assessing the potential of cultural tourism, but the development of tourism in this rural area requires an integrated approach in the general development plans [19]. To obtain a unitary result regarding the cultural tourism, the arithmetic mean of the two synthesis values for each

territorial administrative unit was calculated. The resulting values were grouped into four categories of quality/development of cultural tourism, using the natural breaks method.

The cartographic representation of the results obtained following the application of the normalization method on the set of variables from the two analyzed phenomena, cultural heritage, and tourist infrastructure was performed at the level of the 24 territorial administrative units considered, using thematic maps or choropleth type (Figure 2). The territorial administrative units were ranked and classified into four classes, according to the normalized values (qx) and according to the synthesis value (Qx) of the two criteria considered, cultural heritage, and tourist infrastructure. The maximum potential for each object considered (territorial administrative unit) is seven, i.e., the total number of variables considered, both in the case of cultural heritage and tourist infrastructure. The maximum development potential for the two analyzed phenomena is 168; a value that once reached represents the validation of the hypothesis of a homogeneous and uniform distribution of the analyzed phenomena at the level of the entire analyzed space. Practically, each territorial administrative unit records the maximum value of each variable, which is too unlikely but plausible [27]. The utopian character of this hypothesis demonstrates the existence of an uneven spatial distribution of the analyzed phenomenon, of the presence of the differences between the obvious territorial administrative units in their classification according to the normalized values obtained.

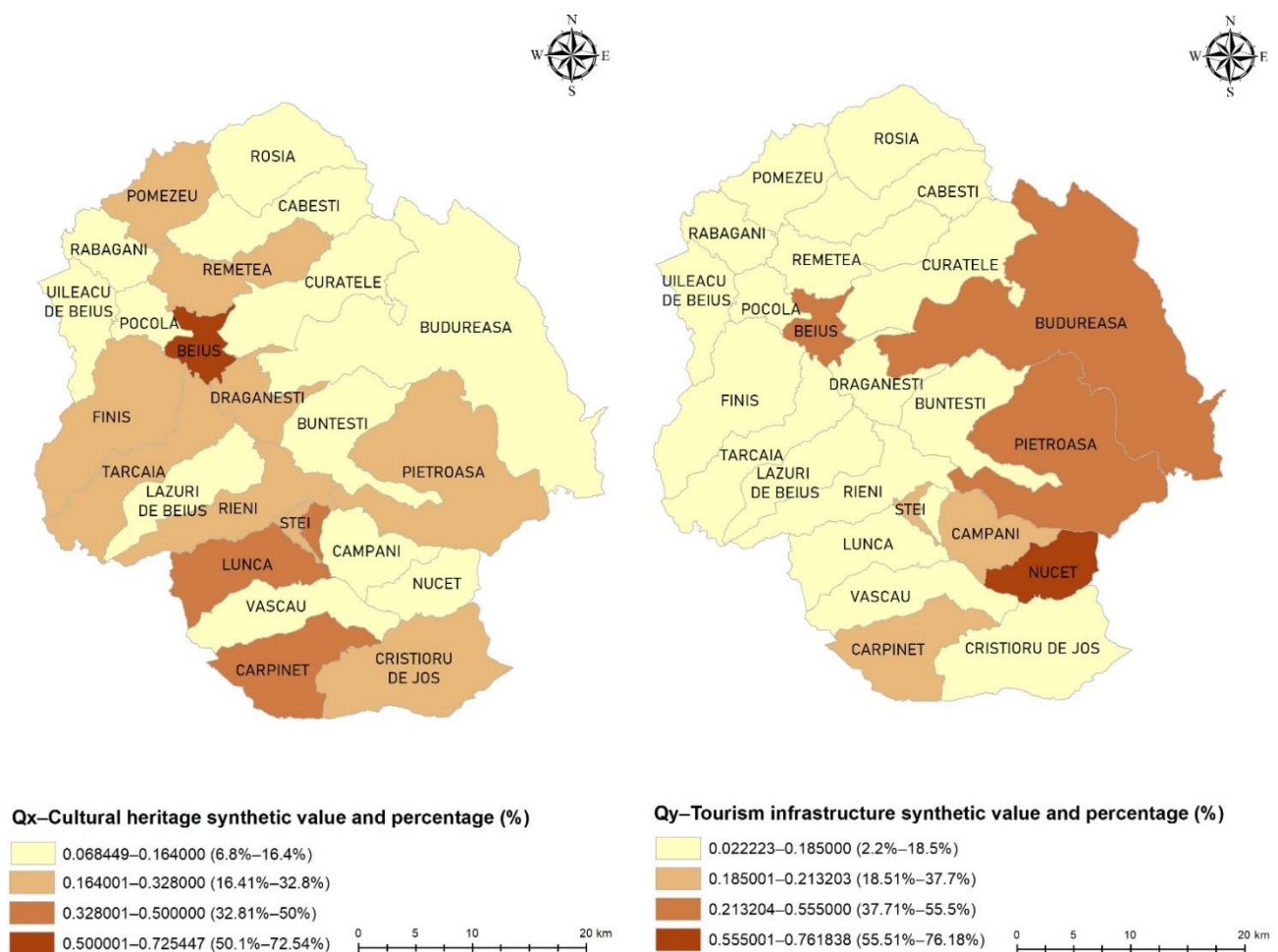


Figure 2. Distribution of the synthetic value (values and percentage) of cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure.

The total value of the cultural heritage variables (X1–X7) is 33.73 (20% of the maximum potential), which is higher than the total value of the tourism infrastructure variables (Y1–Y7) of 25.71 (15.30% of the maximum potential). The weight of each set of variables from

the maximum potential indicates that the discrepancies between territorial administrative units are obvious and major, the normalization taken as reference value, and the maximum value of each variable in the entire analyzed area, at the time of the study. Thus, this set of variables leads to a ranking and a result, while the selection of a different set of variables will inevitably lead to another ranking and result. For this reason, the authors took steps to select a set of variables as relevant as possible to the chosen criteria. Thus, the same area can present maximum values regarding the tourist infrastructure but being at the bottom of the ranking regarding the cultural heritage (see TAU Nucet).

From the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the values related to the cultural potential and the one regarding the tourist infrastructure, the existence of the following categories of relations between the cultural heritage and tourism can be deduced: very strong (Beiuș, Nucet); strong (Pietroasa); weak (Remetea, Budureasa, Lunca, Ștei, Criștioru de Jos and Cărpinet), and very weak (for the rest of the territorial administrative units) (Figure 3, Table 3).

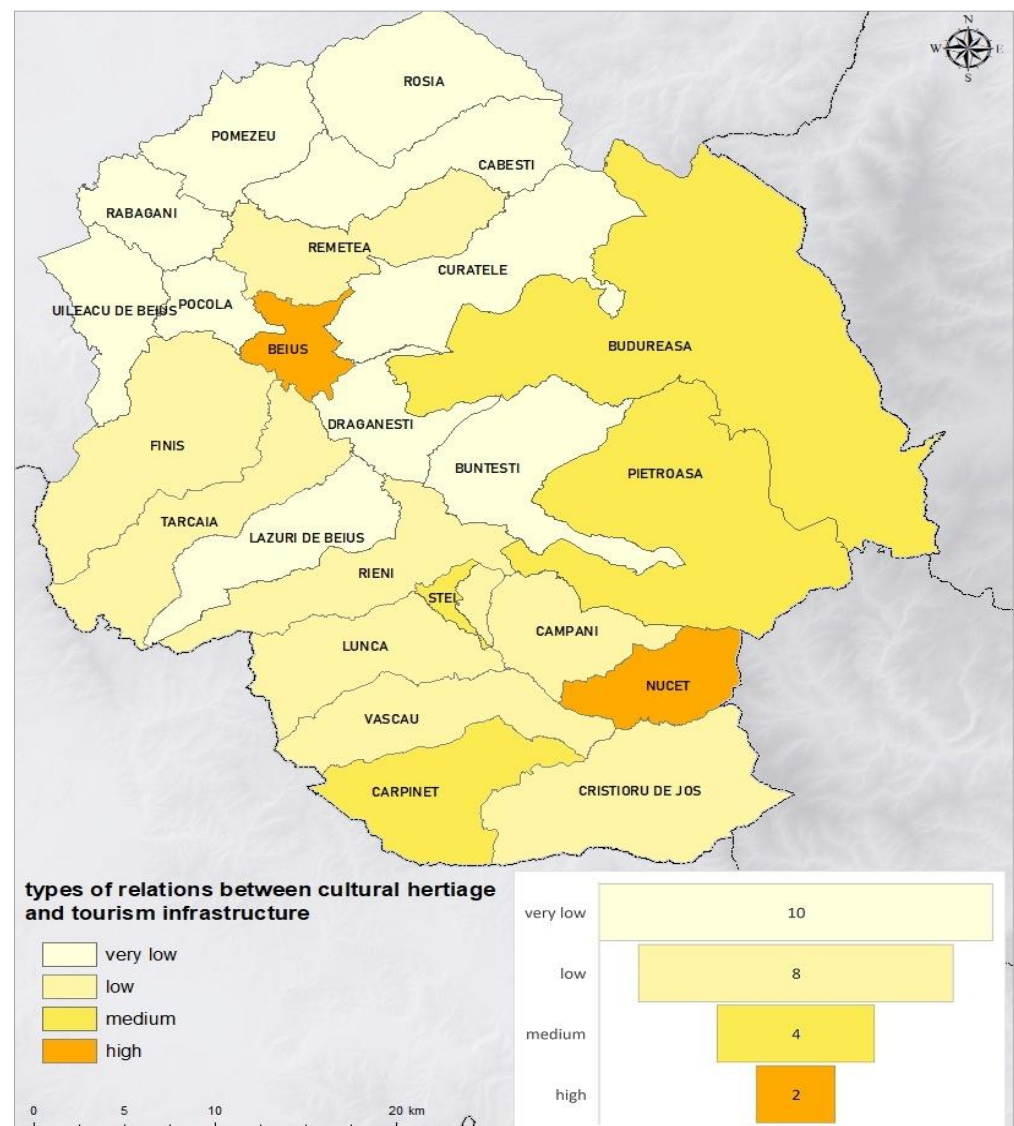


Figure 3. Types of relations between cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure in Beiuș Land, Bihor County.

Table 3. Sum of normalized values and synthetic values.

UAT	SUM X1–X7	Qx	SUM Y1–Y7	Qy	P
Cărpinet	2.370757125	0.338679589	1.492423129	0.213203304	0.551883
Criștioru de Jos	1.493150991	0.213307284	0.986066192	0.140866599	0.354174
Vaşcău	0.663838384	0.094834055	1.279930422	0.182847203	0.277681
Nucet	0.58921839	0.084174056	5.332868873	0.76183841	0.846012
Câmpani	0.479141559	0.068448794	1.310434164	0.187204881	0.255654
Lunca	2.681010101	0.383001443	0.232718754	0.033245536	0.416247
Ștei	2.068882521	0.295554646	1.396185738	0.199455105	0.49501
Rieni	1.860342709	0.265763244	0.220832373	0.031547482	0.297311
Cărpinet	2.370757125	0.338679589	1.492423129	0.213203304	0.551883
Lazuri de Beiuș	0.819414234	0.117059176	0.321725887	0.045960841	0.16302
Tărcaia	1.721503361	0.245929052	0.377243529	0.053891933	0.299821
Pietroasa	1.731824787	0.247403541	2.906404477	0.41520064	0.662604
Buntești	0.976806589	0.139543798	0.325121798	0.046445971	0.18599
Drăgănești	1.150233617	0.164319088	0.426771728	0.06096739	0.225286
Finis	1.258065223	0.179723603	0.603432575	0.086204654	0.265928
Beiuș	5.078127695	0.725446814	2.530881212	0.361554459	1.087001
Pocola	0.849670999	0.121381571	0.378117748	0.054016821	0.175398
Uileacu de Beiuș	0.479735918	0.068533703	0.261898306	0.037414044	0.105948
Remetea	1.859761683	0.26568024	0.600829728	0.085832818	0.351513
Curățele	0.879978454	0.125711208	0.538086798	0.076869543	0.202581
Răbăgani	1.043025489	0.149003641	0.206083509	0.029440501	0.178444
Budureasa	0.749586371	0.107083767	2.794593427	0.399227632	0.506311
Căbești	0.764841691	0.109263099	0.155558342	0.02222262	0.131486
Pomezau	1.353798859	0.193399837	0.169794386	0.024256341	0.217656
Roșia	0.811882448	0.115983207	0.862881788	0.123268827	0.239252

4. Discussions

Research on the assessment of cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure through multivariate methods has shown a great potential and a large applicability, given the complex nature of cultural heritage and tourism. In the context of studies on cultural landscapes, cultural heritage, and tourism define the socio-economic dimension of a region, driven by anthropogenic modeling agent.

These studies can be very useful in a decision-making framework because they highlight the territorial discrepancies regarding the evaluated criteria and can support future efforts regarding the development of tourism infrastructure, investments in conservation, and the promotion of cultural heritage, but also, they can increase the community and deciders awareness concerning the strategic economic role of the patrimony in the context of the socio-economic development.

Król, K [19] applies the ZUM method to assess the potential of cultural heritage in Poland, analyzing a set of 21 variables in 16 voivodeships, obtaining the ranking list of the highest potential areas. The analysis results indicated significant disproportions among the areas, which may contribute as a key element in the decision to prioritize future investments in the field of cultural heritage and socio-economic development of those communities.

The same evaluation method was applied in studies on the assessment of urban functionalities among major European cities, using an index composed of six indicators [46], resulting in a ranking list on criteria of “smart” cities. Most studies using the zero unitarization method belong to the socio-economic sphere, assessing social and economic development at regional and local level [41,43–45].

In line with other research, this study aims to assess the current situation of cultural heritage and tourism, ranking the 24 TAUs according to these 2 criteria. Territorial discrepancies were highlighted after obtaining the synthetic value of the analysis, which concentrates the values of all indicators belonging to a criterion but also illustrates differences between the representative values of the two criteria. Thus, an overview of the spatial distribution of the two criteria is outlined, which can represent an important el-

ement at the decision-making level regarding the development of these aspects for the respective communities.

Our research results can be applied in administrative, touristic, educational, and cultural fields and provides an overview of the current situation in the territory regarding the distribution of the specific elements of the two analyzed directions: cultural heritage and tourism. Starting from these results, comparative analysis can be done between the current situation and the potential of the area, following the development possibilities by identifying the gaps in the present infrastructure. Assessment studies regarding the “density” of cultural heritage and the development of the infrastructure in an area are effective tools to decide on directing investment funds and community development by raising the awareness upon the impact that the promotion and protection of cultural heritage have on increasing the number of tourists and the development of tourist infrastructure. Thus, our recommendation for the local public authorities and stakeholders involved in the development of tourism is to concentrate the efforts to capitalize on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Beiuș Municipality, particularly rich and varied, through tourism. This is supported by the very strong relationships that have been established between cultural heritage (5.07 total value of cultural heritage variables, 15.05% of the total) and tourism (2.53 total value of tourism infrastructure variables, 9.84% of the total). These relations were facilitated by the social, economic, and administrative functions performed by Beiuș Municipality over time, as well as by the fact that Beiuș is currently both a pole of local convergence and a transit corridor to the Apuseni Mountains.

5. Conclusions

This paper does not want to summarize the whole process of evaluation and quantification of cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure to a simple superficial summation of indicators. Both the tourist infrastructure and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage are important elements of the development potential of a community located at the interference of a combination of various factors, from different levels of society, which betrays their structural complexity and difficulties in assessing them. Their quantitative and qualitative analysis involves many variables with origins in different fields, expressed in different units of measurement and values. By using the normalization method, it was possible to perform the comparative analysis by eliminating the size of the variables and expressing them in the same value range [0.1]. We can summarize in a few conclusions the results of the application of the normalization method on the analyzed area:

- The standardization method is an effective tool in the analysis, understanding, evaluating, and ranking complex phenomena, regardless of their nature and related disciplines/fields.
- By applying this method, we obtained a raw overview of the spatial distribution of the elements of the cultural heritage and the tourist infrastructure.
- The result is directly influenced by the number of variables subject to normalization, by their representativeness in the territory and by the limits of the analyzed area. The values of the variables are related to the minimum and maximum values recorded within the established range. Therefore, there is no pre-established area or reference value by applying this methodology.
- The method presents limitations due to the relevance and validity of the necessary data in order to define the variables, the results obtained representing an overview achieved at a certain moment in the cultural tourist evolution of the analyzed space.
- The application of the standardization method in an evaluation study is dependent on the quantitative and qualitative aspect of the variables, on the experience of the research team, on the evaluation process, and on the degree of desired details. At the same time, a study that uses the normalization method can be a preamble for more complex research.

- This study is an essential informational support for other future investigations on cultural heritage and the possibilities of capitalization through tourism, in close correlation with the need for its conservation and protection.

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