

Hospitality - – a component of Romanian Rural Tourism Products

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important sector of the economy, with a remarkable growth, with much higher opportunities than other sectors of the economy, which has shown that it can overcome some of the States yet. In the coming years expects tourism to develop in such a way that its effects are unlikely to occur with more intensity on a large number of urban and rural settlements. From the perspective of modern man, rural tourism can represent great chance in the sprawling unification process, offering the possibility to approach people, to know, to discover the life and culture of others filming his fellowmen, to better understand those with whom they live, to struggle together, thus creating natural or cultural heritage, hoping to maintain his and transmission as it looks today. The sustainable development of the rural areas constitutes a high priority for Romania.

KEYWORDS

tourist product, rural tourism, tradition, gourmet, food, hospitality, village

JEL Classification

L83, O19

Introduction

In recent decades, rural areas were faced with numerous changes in social, economic, environmental benefits arising as a result of industrialization, urbanization, modernization etc. Thus, tourism has turned into a thriving activity with a rapid growth and an important role in the economic development of rural communities and to revitalize the workforce in rural areas.

Rural tourism is a distinct, identifiable, global tourism market that emerged and developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, as a result of the improved complication and/or accessibility in rural areas, mobility, higher incomes and leisure of the population. Interest for recreation in the countryside has emerged and intensified especially due to congestion and pollution in industrial cities. Currently, tourism in rural areas is ever more appreciated and desired by people living and working in increasingly stressful conditions, representing a return to nature, to what is pure, unadulterated and clean.

For the host communities of rural tourism, this constitutes an alternative to the decline of agricultural activity, stimulating economic development and decreasing the process of depopulation of areas by exploiting local resources through individual and collective income growth through better employment, by encouraging entrepreneurship etc. Rural development is part of regional development. Changes in the economic structure of rural areas and the creation of attractive environments for living and doing business have shown to be crucial (Perligerova, Vaishar, 2012).

1. Romanian village as a tourism product

Rural tourism is no longer a novelty. The majority of the inhabitants of Europe, United States of America, New Zealand, Australia love the holidays in the countryside, both by users (tourists) and providers. Tourism activity from village life proved to be profitable, especially due to the change of

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tourists preferences and their customs to individual tourism, at the expense of mass tourism or industrial type.

On the other hand, migration to the city, modernization of the agricultural sector, changes caused by increasing competition in rural tourism market have a counterpart in rural tourism. Activities in the field of tourism can boost the village economy, if the benevolent attitude of their residence – to receive and accept the finicky guests – is perceived favorably.

Romanian village represents an unique tourism product, both for national and international market.

From another point of view, Romanian tourism village could contribute to the discovery of our country – as a possible tourism destination, creating interest towards Romania, as a place which offer a wide range of experiences, quality holidays and even business opportunities.

This statement is based on (Nistoreanu, 2010):

- Wide range of natural and cultural resources,
- Various facilities and tourism experiences,
- Good price-quality ratio,
- Specificity and uniqueness characteristics of our country:
 - People (groups and different religions),
 - History (buildings, events, legends),
 - Culture (written, art, costumes, music, dance, theatre, crafts, gourmet, special skills),
 - Geography and topography (mountain areas, beach areas on the Black Sea coast, Danube Delta wildlife, etc.).

At the same time Romanian village meets:

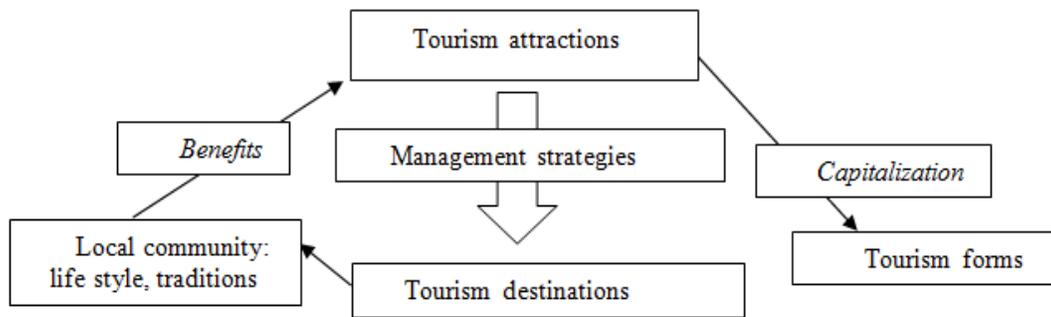
- Important mountain, river and picturesque places,
- Religious and cultural heritage,
- Thermal and mineral water, unique flora and fauna,
- Old traditions, internationally acclaimed and respected: arts and crafts (painting, poetry, dance, sculpture, etc.),
- Wide range of attractions and tourism facilities.

Installation, harmonization, concentration and assimilation of some of the perennial values of tourism village arrangements lead to the production of Romanian rural tourism products with a certain value and unmistakably unique character.

Deeping our analysis, we find that tourism destination – village, farm, boarding rural house or room in a cottage, is not the only one tourism product, or the only component of it, knowing that usually a destination includes several kinds of different tourism products. Direct result of Romanian village included in the tourist circuit, might be, at the same time, a component of many types of tourism products. Thus, it can be (Nistoreanu, 2010):

- Holidays destinations in the countryside,
- Host of a seminar for 7 days with a number of participants,
- Post house for tourism circuit in Moldova or Oltenia province,
- Skill of folk crafts workshop (ceramics, pottery, wood carving, paintings on glass or painted eggs, woven baskets etc.),
- Chance for practicing or skilling of some activities in urban areas, too (gardening, cooking, making juice, jams and marmalades, etc.),
- Initiation in to the art scene dance or folk song.

As easily we can see tourism village has and offer various tourism products, which simultaneously are using the same basic technical-material and the same tourism attractions (folklore, landscape, mountain, balneological resources, historical monuments, dendrological parks and so on). Local community is a social unit that shares the same specific lifestyle and sense of belonging to a particular region. Its role is particularly important because without their involvement the tourism activity would have been forgotten. Although at first glance minor participation, we cannot say that we could easily discard the items related to the daily ritual of population and completes and emerging tourism destination image. Items such as costumes, crafts, gourmet products, handicraft articles are elements that determines tourists to return back.

Figure 1 Causal – effect local community – activity tourism relationship

Source: adapted by authors

In general, the natural landscape of a country or geographical area is one of the most important attraction factors, with a large share in the motivation of choosing one tourist destination or another (Balaure, et al., 2004).

In a list made by famous specialist Krippendorf J. (1971), there are 20 reasons for choosing a rural destination:

- Landscape attraction,
- Gourmet quality,
- General atmosphere (the region's reputation, indigenous population),
- Curiosities regions,
- Quality of the environment related to health,
- Rest and relaxation,
- Round journey,
- Housing conditions,
- Reasonable price,
- Language problems,
- Personal contacts with population,
- Cultural attractions,
- Infrastructure,
- Entertainment, day or night,
- Arrival and reception,
- Local folklore,
- Possibilities to practice sport activities,
- Travel planning and formalities,
- Shopping,
- Other hobbies and entertainment.

These are the main trends that hidden motivations of tourism consumption, but the is changing and motivations knows radical changes. There is no more searching in "sedentary" tourism products, and the pretentious tourists are looking for sensational and experimentally tourism products.

2. Components of Romanian rural tourism product

Tourist destinations tend to follow similar development patterns. Eventually, all destinations enter the market maturity stage leading to a decline in visitors. To prevent visitor decline, tourism managers and policy makers try to reposition their destinations appealing to more tourist segments. A multi-segment strategy is expensive and may create a fuzzy destination image, further accelerating the decline (Kozak, M., 2012).

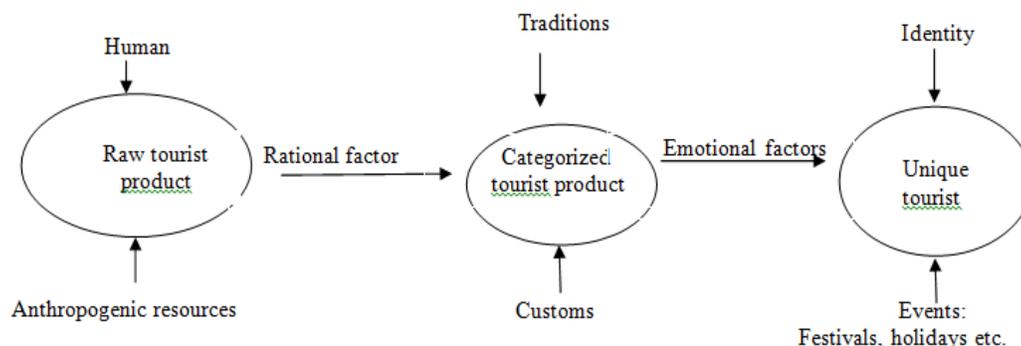
The Romanian rural tourist product, like many other rural touristic products that exist in the rural world, includes:

- ✓ basic components (accommodation, catering and transport);
- ✓ auxiliary components (balneo-therapy, leisure and sports activities, etc.).

A crucial question in marketing of a destination is then to create and manage successfully a distinguishing feature and attractive image of that zone. This is related directly so by Romania's efforts to create a distinctive image, and promote target markets.

The identity is applied in activities as a resource and as a marketing instrument (external and internal) for obtaining the competitive advantage, as well as in the case of entities (ethnic or geographical) for the strengthening of the trust, the respect for oneself or for attracting new investments or tourists (Mazilu, M., Dumitrescu, D., 2012) as we see in figure no. 2:

Figure 2 The elements of differentiation/ uniqueness for the tourist products



Source: Mazilu, M., Dumitrescu, D., 2012

Unanimous must recognize that basic services which satisfy the daily needs with small exceptions – area, national specifics, traditional - does not justify the need to move or leave the residence by tourist.

But what attracts largely determines the choice of tourist destinations or another are (Minciu R., 2000):

- natural factors: geographical location, topography, landscape, vegetation, fauna and climate;
- general factors of human existence and activity of past and present: language, attitude and hospitality, customs, folklore, culture (religion, art, science), politics, economics;
- the human element: the local population attitude towards tourists, providers, government and public policy representatives and guards etc.;
- travel gear: tourism transport, means of accommodation, catering, sport, entertainment, etc. information.

An approach to rural tourism as a sustainable alternative belongs to Sanagustín Fons M. V., Moseñe F.J.A., María Gómez y Patiño (2011) who believe that the following actions should be taken in its development:

- provide optimum use of environmental resources that are a basic element for developing tourism, preserving essential ecological processes as a contribution to care and preserve natural resources and biological diversity;
- be respectful with socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, preserving their cultural, architectural, life assets and traditional values, in order to get better understanding and inter-cultural tolerance;
- ensure long-term, viable economic activities, providing all agents with widely distributed socio-economic benefits, where new opportunities for stable employment should arise.

In the view of the foregoing we believe that Romanian rural tourism products which will be proposed once the domestic market and in addition to that the world needed to be selected and fitted with special attention to convey and the image size will be revitalized to the real universe Romanian village with everything it has valuable and long-standing. Manufacture of Romanian rural tourism will

have to be done with special responsibility for the world market, the products being tested to debut on the domestic market, and then will be examined by demanding connoisseurs of external market. In the realization and installation of Romanian rural tourism must not be omitted, even for a moment the importance of motivation in choosing a certain destinations.

We note that, in general, exchanges are carried out at the level of symbols. Among the symbols of the Romanian tourism might include: popular music and the port, the gastronomic products, crafts, dances, folk instruments, handicrafts and more.

By combining these symbols and their capitalization in tourism activity, Romanian village will be subject to economic and social effects, favorable or not favorable.

We name here only some of them (Nistoreanu, 2010):

- favorable effects: - development activities in the field of small productions and services, emergence of new jobs, young people settling and rejuvenation of villages, utilities development (improvement of the road network, water supply, sanitation, sewage, telephone systems, etc.), and others.

- unfavorable effects: landscape degradation, pollution in all its forms, changes in consumption habits etc.

Like any economic activity, tourism represents a combination of negative and positive elements to be assessed and managed in the desired direction. Knowledge and awareness of possible adverse effects will lead to the true size of the tourist phenomenon and so mutations, of any kind, can be positive and favorable. As a meeting place and redirection of many fundamental intercultural tourism remove isolation from the conditions necessary for people to realize the existence of humanity and other cultures. Awareness of differences, originality and the common points, can serve for the development of tourist products such as: learning the Romanian language, initiation into instrumental and vocal music training in crafts, (pottery, weaving, wood carving, painting on glass, etc.), learning of Romanian folk dances, Romanian introduction to gastronomy, etc.

However all these customize Romanian rural offer being only a part of the attractions which are to be incorporated into the tourist circuit and so economic recovery. Even if most of those who practice at the moment rural tourism do not relate to this task as a business in itself but rather as a complementary activity, remains a priority-as expected, agricultural activities-from contact with foreign tourists will also need hosts neglect tourists.

Primary interest is the need for communication (Stanton N., 1995), and advertising contribution for their business (Moldoveanu, 1995). Will achieve such inevitable personal relationships between very distinct and specially people and varied routes. These personal relationships will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the realities of the mindsets between guests and hosts, taking out the filming of the village.

The image of a destination is an important factor in determining its popularity with visitors and is therefore crucial to its marketing success (Greaves, Skinner, 2010).

3. Hospitality in Romanian villages - promoter of rural tourism offer

Promotion is a way for rural tourists units to communicate in an efficient manner with targeted tourists. Generally tourists could inform about a rural destination from a major variety of sources. But one picture is worth a thousand words. In the rural tourism sector, because the tourist, in his status of consumer, see the product until it has reached its destination, it is recommended to use traditional media, such as pictures of landscape, participation in traditional activities, local events (weddings, charities, Sunday's church meetings, etc.).

Term of "hospitality" might be seem outdated sometimes, currently representing a concept discussed from time to time, by the practitioners of the older rural tourism or by the former employees in tourism industry (Nistoreanu, B. G., Tanase, M. O., Nistoreanu, P., 2010).

Hospitality traditions have created different definitions of terminology corresponding to this event: guest, visitor, invited, hospitality, guest reception.

Hospitality refers to generous and cordial reception of guests in our own space, its synonyms are "to give" and "to treat".

The characteristics of the hospitality industry are (Kapiki, 2012):

- it is a truly unique and fun workplace and diverse in the scope of responsibilities that one can attain;
- it is an industry with many career options and a source for a respectful income;
- it is outstanding dimension in the orientation towards guest satisfaction at ultimate level;
- it offers intangible and perishable products;
- hospitality business make continuous efforts for maintaining a positive image along with great guest service.

The hospitality industry consists of broad categories of fields within the service industries which include: accommodation, restaurants, events, theme parks, cruise line, etc.

A specific element of rural hospitality is providing restaurant's services, with a menu of traditional dishes, made with fresh, natural ingredients, that are obtained from own production or purchased from villagers. Arrangement of the restaurant should be specific to local culture, with wooden' chairs and tables, walls decorated with traditional carpets, and is recommended that sometimes the atmosphere be maintained by folklore singers.

Food and cuisine represents a tourist vector and a cultural component. Classic food like pizza, hamburgers, typical Moroccan couscous, with the same ingredients could not rival with the charm of traditional rural cuisine. Tourist, in their capacity as people will always pay attention to what they eat. Food becomes mythology, history, traditional, sacred, religious and hospitality. Eating a pear in winter, stored in straw in the peasant basement, the tourist feel the grass smell, even if it is just a pear. Traditional food and cuisine are interpretations of a Romanian rural hospitality that tourist knows, wants and expects.

Along these traditional gourmet may remind some folklore events which keeps alive the Romanian hospitality :

- Music festivals: "Festivalul National al Canteceului si Dansului Popular Romanesc" from Targu Mures; "Festivalul Canteceului si Portului Popular Gorjenes" from Gorj County; "Cantecele Oltului" from Valcea County;
- Gastronomic festivals: "Festivalul vinului" from Oradea County, "Festivalul International al Vinului, Artei si Gastronomiei" from Iasi County;
- Festivals dedicated to the commencement of economic activities: trimming lambs.

Ethnofolklore is a form of rural tourism were tourists are allowed to enjoy the scenery, cuisine, traditions, specific routes that not everyone can do, but only those who have patience and hope that in the few days they will be available to be "integrated" in to the environment as in their own home (Nistoreanu, Dorobantu, 2012).

Regarding hospitality there are several websites appeared Romanian tourism slogans in promoting the rural hospitality. Slogans like: "For you all the best. In boarding rural house everything is good", "Wherever you go in the mountains you will find beautiful landscapes and you will be greeted with hospitality". Another website, on promoting rural environment for tourism, sustain the affirmation: "Especially in Bucovina are people, characterized by emotional warmth and hospitality, and they are renowned for gastronomic specialties which spoils its guests." The main objective for the hospitality industry for a tourist destination is to generate the satisfaction of tourists who have enjoyed a positive experience and are willing to return and tell others (Mazilu, Ispas, 2009).

Seeing tourism as a form of intercultural contraposition (Hofstede, 1991) we find that personnel of the host country is concerned about the high percentage of cultural transmission of information about one's own motherland. However what it takes from one group to another are: articles of clothing, folk art objects, and country-specific special, music, words.

Rural tourism offer must include a set of program or tourist packages where the dominant Romanian tradition rural hospitality becomes an essential vector. The product itself will remain dominant culture (mythology, history, medicine), traditional, occupational, gourmet and especially refund to nature.

Conclusions

Rural tourism focuses on recreation in rural setting, to participate or experimentation activities, events and attractions that tourists are not allowed in urban areas. Thus, rural tourism is

becoming increasingly attractive as tourists become more mobile and seek a change from city life, so that should be more widely publicized traditional events, but also to promote activities such as crafts and crafts. The relationship between rural tourism and hospitality is one major importance. We cannot speak about rural tourism if there are not preserved popular traditions and customs. The future trends in the rural hospitality industry include more green and eco-loggings: development of tourist and agro-tourist boarding houses, more personalized boutiques, intelligent tourist boarding houses with advanced technology, more emphasis on the rural activities, more pedestrian journeys.

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