

Ecotourism services quality Assessment methods and strategies for its improvement in Salaj County

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Specialists in the field of tourism, both in the country and abroad, approach ecotourism field with great interest. This form of green tourism practiced properly, contribute to the economic and social well-being of local communities.

Studies carried out in this thesis, "Ecotourism services quality. Assessment methods and strategies for its improvement in Salaj County ", aim to bring added value to Salaj Countys' ecotourism services. The thesis is structured in five chapters.

The first part of the paper outlines the approaches of specialists in tourism regarding the ecotourism concept and its relationship with responsible tourism, both national and international level. The ecotourism role and functions, concepts debated in the first chapter, are matters of great interest in the specialized literature. Ecotourism understanding and its applicability, both by ecotourists and by companies working in the field, are necessary conditions for the proper conduct of an activity as ecotourism. The first chapter ends with the presentation of the main trends in the evolution of ecotourism worldwide.

In the second chapter, the work focuses on the distinctive characteristics of ecotourism service quality. Starting from the ecotourism services quality, concept studied in the thesis, there are presented a series of services quality characteristics found in the specialized literature. An increased attention was paid to the impact of ecotourism services quality on the local communities.

In the third chapter, it is presented The European Management System regarding The Ecotourism Quality Assurance. In this chapter are studied the criteria for determining the quality of ecotourism in European countries.

The fourth and fifth chapters are addressed to the quality evaluation of ecotourism services, through a set of methods for the direct and indirect quantification of their quality level.

The research found in the fourth chapter is based on both qualitative and quantitative applied research methods. The first qualitative study, conducted using Focus Group aimed at assessing the quality level of the romanian ecotourism services, and the second one, the quantitative study, used survey (selective investigation) and pursued their quality level assessment directly by the main beneficiaries. Also, the study of the tourist movement indicators development in Romania, compared to European countries and at the county level, allowed the indirectly quantification of Salaj County's ecotourism services quality. Using econometric instruments, it was applied a linear regression model in Salaj Countys' ecotourism, the two variables (total average monthly income per person and the number of overnight stays) tested in direct connection.

In the last chapter, it was carried out The S.W.O.T. Analysis of Salaj Countys' ecotourism services, starting from the study of the romanian tourism, both macro and microenvironment effect. Through this analysis, there was identified, both the weaknesses and the strengths of Salaj County's ecotourism. The study is completed by highlighting the opportunities and threats to which it is subjected the ecotourism activity in Salaj County. Also, in this chapter are studied the strategies of improving the quality of ecotourism services implemented in European countries and there are established a series of strategic directions for improving the quality of Salaj County's ecotourism services.

Approaching the ecotourism field, the thesis "Quality of ecotourism services. Assessment methods and strategies for its improvement in Salaj County " is an important contribution, in order to deepen research in this area of great interest.