

CASE STUDY ON OPPORTUNITIES OF IMPROVEMENT OF THE TOURISM AND AGROTURISM IN VÂRTOP- ARIEȘENI AREA FROM APUSENI MOUNTAINS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the possibilities for improvement of tourism and agrotourism in the Vârtop-Arieșeni area from Apuseni mountains.

To achieve this, we prepared a questionnaire, which was applied to 30 people, owners of guesthouses and hotels in the investigated area.

Following the evaluation questionnaires, we concluded that tourism and agrotourism in Vârtop-Arieșeni area has developed over the last five years, that there are multiple possibilities for improvement of tourism and agrotourism in this area, but at the same time, there are many weaknesses in the system.

Keywords: questionnaire, potential tourism, infrastructure, respondent

INTRODUCTION

On the road leading from Oradea to Câmpeni, in the center of the Apuseni Mountains, about 120 km from Oradea and 40 km from Câmpeni we find a settlement called Arieșeni. In the vicinity, is the holiday village Vârtop, which is in the administration of Nucet city from Bihor county.

Situated in the valley of Aries, at 800-1200 m altitude, Vârtop-Arieșeni area is an outstanding beauty, with marvelous scenery, reason for which is appreciated by tourists, in recent years knowing a large development. However to characterize this area as being beautiful is too little, as the painter Stephen Luchian said in 1909 "beauty is a mere word which says nothing of the dull landscape splendor."

Although it has an exceptional tourist and agrotourist potential, the existing realities show that the Vârtop- Arieșeni area is too little turned to advantage, existing important resources for revitalizing tourism and agrotourism in the benefit of the overall development of the area.

The touristic offer of the area is composed of natural and human tourism potential, "production" equipment of tourist services, material goods for tourist consumption, human resources, tourism infrastructure and marketing conditions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The case study conducted in the Vârtop-Arieșeni area from Apuseni Mountains consisted in designing of a opinion questionnaire. It has began with the specification of the research problem, respectively the possibilities for improvement of tourism and agrotourism in the area studied.

Social problems generally have a high degree of complexity that requires their decomposition on several dimensions. These dimensions were transformed into indicators, i.e. in modalities to establish the presence or absence of a characteristic, its intensity.

Each question in the questionnaire is an indicator. Selecting the questions that were included in the questionnaire presuppose the existence of some assumptions or even of a theory concerning the social phenomena to be studied.

The elaborate questionnaire was applied to a sample of 30 persons, owners of guesthouses and hotels in the area studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By analyzing the responses, the following issues emerged:

Regarding the category of accommodation establishments were interviewed 30 owners of guesthouses in categories I, II and III and an owner of hotel, three star category (Fig. 1).

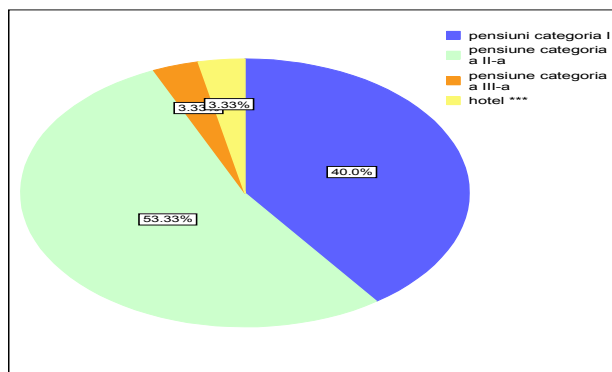


Fig. 1. – Structure of interviewed persons, according to the guesthouses or hotel categories

Of the total respondents, 40% have accommodation category I, 53.3% have accommodation category II, 3.3% category III and 3.3% had a hotel ***.

Regarding additional services offered by the accommodation of persons interviewed, the following issues emerged:

- 6.6% provides children oversight;
- 56.6% provide extra bed for child;
- 76.6% have children's playground;
- 70% are equipped with playground for children;
- 96.6% have TV room for tourists;
- 93.3% have smoking room furnished;
- 10% have arranged room for cards games;
- all analyzed hostels have private parking and 60% hold also parking for coaches;
- 43.0% have restaurant;
- 30.0% have arranged space for conferences;
- 23.0% have fishing opportunities for leisure, standing near the streams (Arieșul Mare or its tributaries);
- 13.3% rents scooters, bikes and skis for tourists;
- 36.3% own garden or park or have arranged a special place of rest (turret or space with loungers);
- 16.6% do not offer additional services.

The main target groups of owners of boarding houses surveyed are: business people, participants in conferences, organized groups, organized groups of students, youth, seniors, families, whence emerges the conclusion that organized groups are particularly preferred, due to the large degree of ocupancy of the tourist guesthouse / hotel.

Regarding the degree in which some causes influences the activity of guesthouses / hotels owners surveyed, such as: lack of qualified personnel in the Vârtop-Arieșeni area, lack of or poor development of markets, burdensome legislation, institutional bureaucracy in dealing with institutions state, lack of financial resources and difficult relationship with banks, insufficient promotion modalities, including promotion on the websites of local central authorities, agencies and tour operators, infrastructure in the area and supply with utilities, from the responses received result that some causes influences very much tourism activity undertaken in the area studied.

All people interviewed said they use their distribution channels through the contracting / negotiating with clients, and 23.3% use also distribution channels through travel agencies.

At the question "How important do you think is helping investors with governmental and European funds /facilities for the regional development?", 29 respondents said that is of "very high" importance and one responded that it has "high" importance, confirming the need and usefulness implementation of this measure.

The same answers (96.6% - very high importance and 0.4% - high importance) gave the respondents at the question "What importance do you think has the increase of quality local products and services, for the development of the region?".

At the question "What importance do you think has the increase of professional and management skills through courses, training and other forms of training for the development of the region?", respondents answered that it has a very high importance (93.3%) or high (6, 7%).

At the question "What importance do you think has the collaboration with tour operators to promote products, for the development of the region?", respondents answered that it has a very high importance (86.7%), high (10%) or moderate (3, 3%).

At the question "Which are the most popular products on the local market?", most people interviewed mentioned products and traditional crafts.

At the question "How old is your company in the field, on the market?", the received answers show the following structure (Fig. 2).

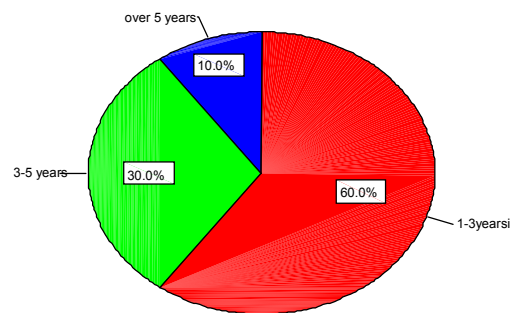


Fig. 2. –The age of the accommodation touristic units on the market

Regarding the number of employees, respectively their structure by age and level of training, all accommodation owners surveyed said they have between one and nine employees, with the following structure (Fig. 3, Fig. 4):

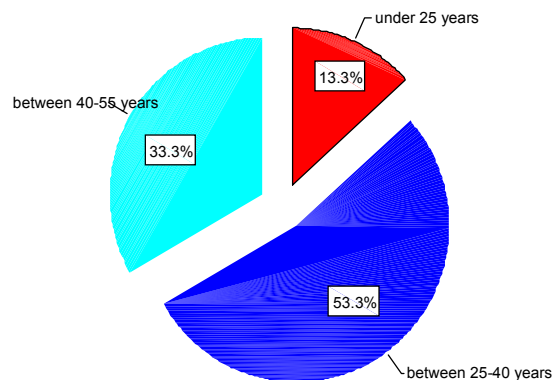


Fig. 3. –Structure of employees number, on age categories

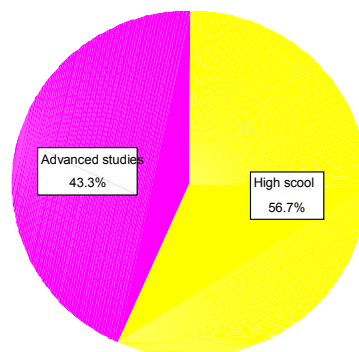


Fig. 4. –Structure of employees number, based on the background

Regarding the promotion of services, respondents use several ways of promotion. Thus, all use outside advertising by signs, banners, posters, distributing flyers, and 13,3% use also the recommendations of those in the area, 96,7% achieve this through customers (customer-client recommendations), only 3,,% use audio and video advertising, 90% are present on the websites of local authorities, and 6,7% promotes its services through travel agencies and professional associations.

At the question "What are your sources of funding?", 96.7% said they use their own funds and only one respondent replied that he accessed the European funds. Unfortunately, none of the guesthouse's owner is a member of a professional association.

At the question regarding the opportunity of collaboration with tour operators and other operators in the region, 56,7% consider this cooperation as appropriate, a sufficiently large part of respondents (26,7%) are undecided, while 16,7% don't consider appropriate such a cooperation.

Concerning the participation in information sessions or training in the industry or related sectors, from answers emerge that 86,7% of respondents participated, with the exemplification of ANTREC as promoter.

At the last question on the usefulness of participation in courses for owners of hostels and staff, all respondents considered absolutely necessary courses of tourism promotion and attraction of tourists and of course to support young people in order to start business in this field.

CONCLUSIONS

After the evaluation questionnaires the following conclusions came off:

- in the Vârtop-Arieșeni area there are two 3-star hotels, 4 guesthouses of four stars, 10 guesthouses of 3 daisies, 16 guesthouses of two daisies, and a boarding a daisy, the rest of the guesthouses being unclassified.
- most hostels have been built in the last 3-5 years, which indicates that it is the case of a young and growing station;
- most of the guesthouses were build from own funds;
- from those of the 30 owners questioned, none is a member of professional associations;
- 29 of the 30 respondents, specified that infrastructure in the area and supply of facilities greatly influence their work;
- over 50% of guesthouses owners have only high school;
- about 100% of those surveyed believe that support for investors with funds, increasing the quality of local products and services, increasing professional skills, collaborating with tour operators are very important aspects for the development of the area studied;
- all respondents consider that they needed training to promote tourism services and to attract tourists.

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