

ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM. RESPECTIVELY THE ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES AND THEIR IMPACT REVIEW ARTICLE

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most important resources that Romania can use, being a country rich in natural resources and cultural experiences. There is an upward trend, amplified in the last two years and by the pandemic, of spending your holidays in the countryside, in nature in an environment as clean as possible and away from congestion. Tourists aim to have as rich an experience as possible in terms of activities and as safe as possible in terms of their health. Taking into account the market demand and the benefits that tourism services bring, we need to analyze the pros and cons of the elements that make up the tourism experience. This paper focuses on the presentation of the concepts of rural tourism and agritourism, presenting the general idea that agritourism is a more detailed area of rural tourism as a broader concept, the target group being identified as a dynamic person who loves to spend time in nature, guesthouse, and agri-pension as types of accommodation, and opportunities for the development of rural communities. This study summarizes works in the field and highlights the expansion in recent years in Romania of rural tourism and agrotourism, highlights the similarities and differences between pension and agro-pension, and emphasizes the importance of both concepts and types of accommodation for the economy and development of the rural community. In addition to Romania's unique potential in developing the concepts mentioned above, it is important to understand that the tourist infrastructure must be created, renewed, or permanently improved according to the needs of the area and to encourage and support both traditional pensions and agro-pensions. At the moment, the most important aspect of rural tourism is from our point of view the accommodation structure and the integration in the community, this paper wants to clarify the concepts and move attention to the development of businesses focused on the needs of the community and the environment.

Keywords: guesthouse, agri-pension, touristic experience, rural development, entrepreneur.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of rural tourism and agritourism, even if they are considered synonymous and have certain elements of common identification is different, agrotourism being included in rural tourism. In principle, agrotourism must meet several strict criteria such as accommodation to be made on a farm, consuming mainly products obtained by the family, and tourists will be involved as much as possible in household activities. This is reflected in the literature: for example, the term "agritourism" is used interchangeably with "rural tourism" (Barbieri C. et al., 2008; Di Domenico

M. et al., 2019; Roberts L et al., 2001; Sznajder M. et al., 2006). However, it should be made clear that agrotourism is not synonymous with rural tourism. Instead, it is a more detailed area of rural tourism as a broader concept.

In the Lexicon of tourist terms from 2002 (Stanciulescu et al., 2002) rural tourism is defined as a form of tourism focused on rural destinations, which has functional structures accommodation, and other heterogeneous services, and the World Tourism Organization defines rural tourism as a form of tourism that includes any tourist activity organized and conducted in rural areas by the inhabitants of that space and that enhance tourism resources and facilities, structures including guest houses and agritourism farms.

Agrotourism has appeared as a solution to increase the incomes of rural households, by capitalizing on their economic potential, the main activity remaining agriculture. The services offered to tourists are remarkably diverse and can cover many needs such as therapeutic cures, rest, leisure, satisfying passions, initiation into traditional craft arts, and others. It takes different forms depending on the natural conditions, the stage of development of tourism, and other aspects (Phillip S et al. 2010; Zoto S. et al., 2013).

According to the provisions contained in Order no. 65/2013, there are the following definitions of the notion of tourist or agrotourism pension:

Tourist pension is a tourist reception structure, with a capacity of accommodation of up to 15 rooms, totaling a maximum of 40 places, operating in citizens' homes or in independent buildings, which ensures in specially designed spaces the accommodation of tourists and conditions of preparation and service. the table.

A tourist guest house found in a rural area must have a plot of land of at least 1,000 sqm (built area and land area around the building).

Agritourism pension is a tourist reception structure, with an accommodation capacity of up to 8 rooms, operating in citizens' homes or in independent buildings, which ensures in specially designed spaces the accommodation of tourists and the conditions of preparation and serving meals, as well as the possibility of participation, for household or craft activities.

The agritourism guest houses conduct at least one activity related to agriculture, animal husbandry, cultivation of diverse types of plants, orchards of fruit trees, or craft activity, with a workshop, which results in various handicrafts. The activities in question must be conducted continuously or, depending on their specificity and seasonality, be repeatable.

Areas intended for agricultural, or craft activities may be in another location other than the location of the agritourism boarding house, provided that this area is within the administrative-territorial area of the same locality.

The beneficiaries of an agritourism pension can be individuals and legal entities, Romanian tourists living in urban areas, or foreign tourists interested in seeing something other than what they have in their country such as customs, household, and craft activities, cultural or leisure, interested in relationships interhuman.

Increasingly Romanian and foreign tourists prefer the tranquility and the rustic atmosphere of an agrotourism pension.

Rural tourism is addressed primarily to dynamic people, those who love nature and ecological tourism, those who take every opportunity to walk, admire nature, practice mountain hiking, cycling, mountaineering, sports and adventure lovers, hunters, and fishermen, as well as those who consider that a vacation spent in the middle of nature is a real source of energy and health.

To attract tourists, it is recommended that the business owner have a storyline that includes certain specific elements and benefits that will convince the potential client to buy accommodation from the respective boarding house.

Rural tourism is a form of tourism accessible to a large category of customers due to low prices.

General advantages regarding the development of tourism business in rural areas: development of areas where tourism activities take place, due to the popularization of the environment; emphasize and highlight community or area resources; business development, which implies lead to job creation and consolidation of family businesses; increases the local economy, developing activities adjacent to tourism such as processing raw materials from own production; modernization of local infrastructure; increasing the level of culture and education among the inhabitants; conservation and protection of the rural environment, and shortly raising living standards in rural areas.

Particular advantages of agritourism and rural tourism: after Romania accedes to the European Union, activities such as rural tourism or agrotourism, especially those that determine the conservation and promotion of national heritage, are supported by the allocation of money from European funds; The market is constantly growing, the number of tourists who prefer to stay in boarding houses in both rural and urban areas and who, after a holiday spent here, want to return or visit other boarding houses is growing. Research also shows that foreign tourists who come to Romania want to stay in places other than hotels; the possibility to sell to customers products obtained in their household is provided by law.

There is also the opportunity to provide additional services; the opportunity to work with the whole family.

Disadvantages of this type of tourism: lack of communities and partnerships between pensions and agri-pensions (such as the wine road); the seasonal character that in general the field of tourism has and the challenge to remain relevant or to have activities outside the season; it is a continuous work and an effort to provide a quality service; overvaluation of profit; superficial analysis of competition; low activities and low potential area; neglect of guests due to lack of experience, overwhelm or other reasons.

Rural tourism is based on 3 coordinates: people, space, and products. The landscape and the richness of local resources, which are recreational features and ensure cultural, spiritual, and ecological growth, attract tourists (Baldacchino, G., 2015).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The first phase represented - the article is based on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand the concept of rural tourism and agrotourism, in short, it used a qualitative research method.

The main aim of the research was to show the distinct aspects of rural tourism and agritourism concept, in special the accommodation structures.

The choice of the appropriate type of structure is made according to the types of resources available to the entrepreneur, for example, if he wants to develop a business that focuses only on tourism and related services it would be recommended to build a pension; if it has resources and of an agricultural or handicraft nature, it would be ideal to develop an agri-pension.

At the same time, it was considered necessary to define the target group and the advantages and disadvantages of this type of housing.

The research consisted of a literature review to find the information needed for creating the article.

Information has been collected from Romanian articles from the field and by the extrapolation from international sources.

The second phase consisted of collecting information from the National Institute of Statistics for the period 2013 to 2021, to observe the time evolution in the total of tourist reception structures. Statistical information comes in support of specialized articles.

The table shows (Fig. 1.) the total number of pensions and agropensions, regardless of the classification category (5,4,3,2,1, not classified by stars) and the equivalent for agritourism pensions, the classification by flowers was assimilated with the classification by stars.

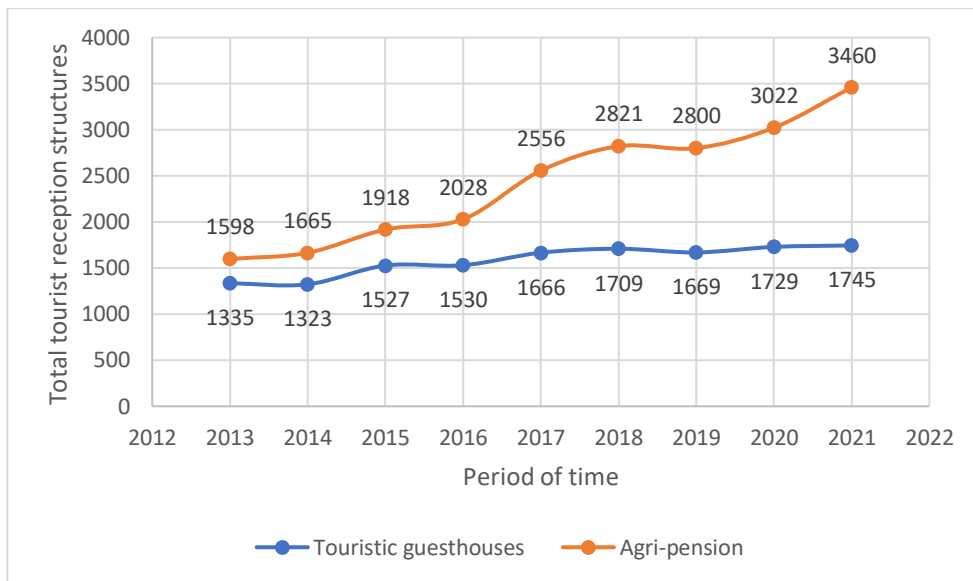


Fig. 1. The evolution of rural guesthouses vs. agri-pensions for the last 10 years

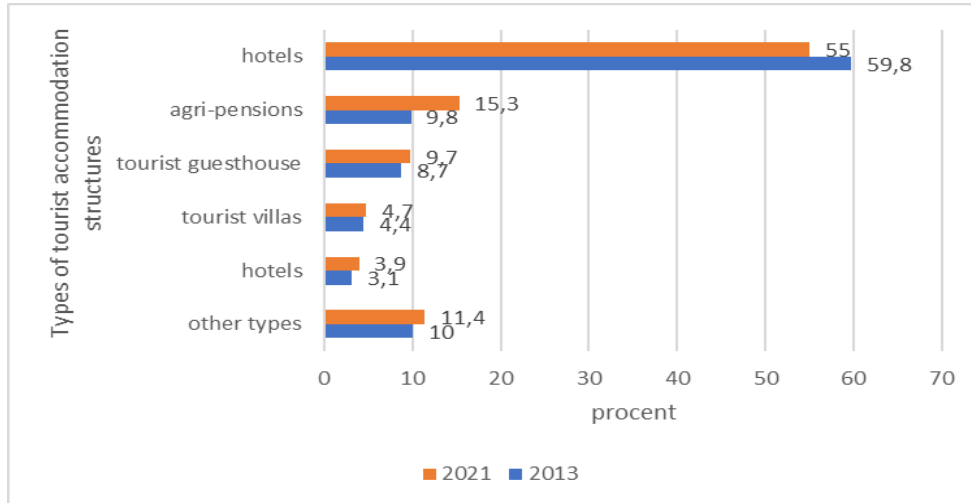


Fig. 2. Structure of tourist accommodation places by types of tourist reception structures, with tourist accommodation functions, existing on July 31, 2021 (%)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rural tourism and agritourism are two different concepts based on the researchers. The concept of rural tourism and agrotourism, even if they are considered synonymous and have certain elements of common identification is different, agrotourism being included in rural tourism. It should be made clear that agritourism is not synonymous with rural tourism. Instead, agritourism is a more detailed area of rural tourism as a broader concept. (Barbieri C. et al., 2008; Di Domenico M. et al., 2019; Roberts L et al., 2001; Sznajder M. et al., 2006)

Accommodations structures are distinguished by the ability of people they can welcome at the same time. The agri-pension is a secondary service to agriculture, through which farmers could round off their income. (According to the provisions contained in Order no. 65/2013 - for the approval of the methodological norms regarding the issuance of the classification certificates of the tourist reception structures with accommodation and catering functions, of the tourism licenses and patents)

The focus group is composed of dynamic people, those who love nature, those who take every opportunity to explore their roots or in the case of the foreigner tourist, to learn about others' roots.

Advantages and disadvantages of agritourism and rural tourism are exactly as the focus group, dynamic, all the time is important to be on guard and to intensify it if is in the benefit of the community or diminish it.

Based on the information from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) it can be observed an ascending trend for both types of accommodation structures, a constant one for the guesthouse and an accelerated rate for the agri-pension. One of the reasons for the accelerated rate of developing agri-pension may be the existence of funds from the Romanian state and the European Union, and the entrepreneurs are already part of the conex business as agriculture, animal husbandry, and/or handcrafts and could expend in tourism. Based on the articles another reason could be the opportunity it offers you to be an entrepreneur and work in the family.

It can be seen that the number of agri-pensions has doubled in the last 10 years, and the pensions have increased in number, adding 410 accommodation structures. The answer may be in the type of the services that the accommodation structures offer, in the last years the trend is to go back to the roots, to be closer to the nature and to have activities that usually in daily life you do not have time for it. Agri-pensions have the advantage of providing fresh and traditional food and products and reconnecting you with the childhood memories of those who have been raised by

grandparents or the urban people (foreigners or not) who are craving for learning about these experiences.

After 2009, the number of tourist and agritourism pensions increased by 7% compared to the previous year, the crisis slowed down the growth, to only 1% in 2010 and, 2011 their number has even started to decrease.

In the following years, starting with 2014, tourism will recover and new accommodation units will start to develop, both pension type and agro-pension. On average, the tourist accommodation capacity increased by 1.8% every year, but the most significant year in their development is the year 2017, when on July 31, when the study was carried out, there was an increase of 4.5% compared to the same period last year.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper concludes that both types of accommodation structures are important and must be capitalized. Romania has the resources and the necessary story to be on the tourist map of the world, but for that, businesses must be developed that have a positive impact on the community and the landscape. The integration in the landscape and community of the tourism structures is a critical aspect.

Further research implications may transcend developing or evaluating the method for launching touristic products/services or landscape integration, methods for evaluating a tourist product, estimating the degree of integration of the business in the community, and a comparative analysis of different countries in the world regarding rural tourism and agritourism accommodation structures. The following studies must be conducted according to the living labs' concept, to develop a project as anchored as possible in the need of the rural environment. Involving knowledge institutes, public actors, private actors, and the users for creating a real-life context.

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