

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL TOURISM

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Abstract: *The problems of rural tourism development represent a specific feature of local tourism development and of the programs of the marketing's management, due to the fact that in rural areas, the development of historical cultural tourism but also the development of rural tourism is intertwined. Rural tourism can be identified with any form of tourism from rural area, which it includes as subcategories, farm tourism, country tourism and agritourism.*

Key words: *rural tourism, characteristics, development*

INTRODUCTION

Because at European level culture represents the main instrument of urban marketing, we consider that in some areas from rural area where there can be seen tourist vocation at national level, where socio-economic changes, such as population's migration but also the loss of agricultural land in favor of other uses of its, to stimulate the development of rural cultural tourism [3,7,9,13]. Thus, it may be suggested, to carry out impact studies, but also to develop marketing strategies that will be broader, including cultural, rural tourism, sports tourism and other forms of niche tourism in a certain area, having as purpose the provision of a greater variety of tourist services and products/brands, which will lead to a larger and more diverse market [1,4,8,14].

The problems of rural tourism development in general are a characteristic feature of tourism development at the local level but also of the marketing management programs, because in rural areas, the development of historical cultural tourism and the development of rural tourism are intertwined very well [2,5,10,12]. Some researchers from the field consider that rural tourism is similar to agritourism because it incorporates a number of specific activities such as (figure 1) [6,11,15]:

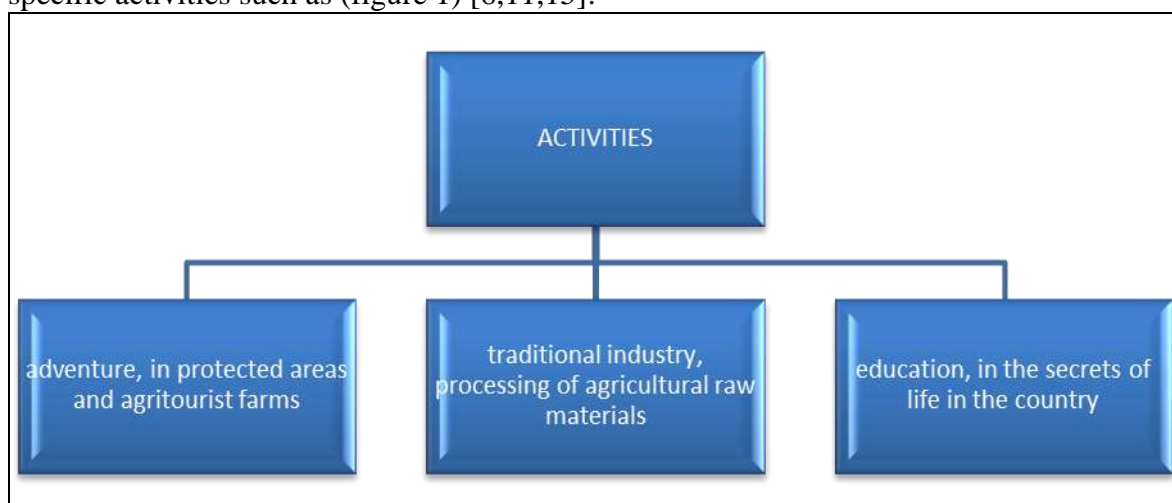


Figure 1. Activities specific to rural tourism and agritourism

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For the preparation of this scientific paper we undertook studies, based also on the specialized literature of both Romanian and foreign authors, and also presented my own perceptions regarding this field of tourism in general and of rural tourism in particular.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Regarding our country, one of the most practicable forms of tourism can be considered rural tourism with its subcategories.

The activities classified as being specific to the field of agritourism and rural tourism, it is imperative to fulfill some criteria (figure 2):



Figure 2. Criteria specific to rural tourism and agritourism

We consider that the activities specific to the field that is the subject of this scientific work, can be classified into activities by:

1. marketing or retail table:
 - pick with your hand;
 - organizing events;
 - market at the door of agritourist farm;
 - picnic.
2. agrifun:
 - activities for students, school otherwise;
 - horseback riding, hitchhiking,
 - care of the preferred animal;
 - agricultural festival, harvested of grapes, pumpkins, red grapes;
3. agrieducation:
 - agricultural exhibitions;
 - agricultural museum with old, traditional equipment;
 - identification of crops and breeds of animals, species;
 - identification of flowers from spontaneous flora.
4. agriaccommodation:
 - bed & breakfast;

- camping;



Figure 3. Classification of rural activities

Rural tourism, at national level, differs from agritourism, because the activities:

- is not carried out on the agricultural, zootechnical, horticultural farm;
- the activities do not generate alternative benefits for the farm, they are basic activities.

Through rural tourism it can be understood any form of rural tourism, which it includes as subcategories (farm tourism, country tourism and agritourism), so that farm tourism can be considered as being a travel in order to practice a form of agriculture or of the fun-educational agriculture, appearing in the specialized literature as being identified with agritourism and rural tourism, being associated most often with village tourism, country tourism, being considered as a subset of cultural tourism, through which non-specialists can observe and learn the secrets of agriculture with its various forms.

Agritourism, as a subset of rural tourism, is somewhat difficult to define, as the other types related to tourism practiced in the rural area, namely: agricultural, country, village, farm, rural, being defined as activity for visiting a farm, for contemplation, pleasure, fun, education with involvement in farm activities. It can be identified with agrarian, agricultural tourism, and farm tourism, with the rural tourism that encompasses it. The most frequent activities, besides the farm ones are the non-profit tours, spending of leisure time, the fun agriculture. American specialists, whose opinion we share, consider as agritourism activities the following ones (Figure 4):

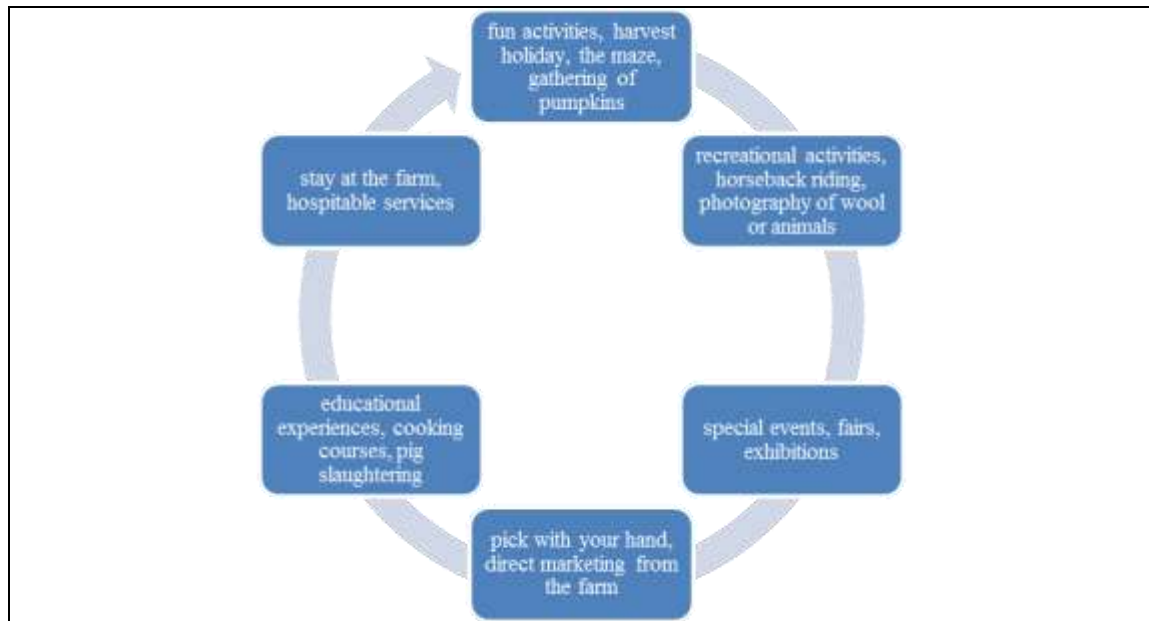


Figure 4. The main agritourism activities

Regarding Romania, in addition to the established forms of rural tourism, agritourism and farm tourism, other forms of tourism can be mentioned, as well: agrarian tourism which involves visiting some farms or lodging, this form found in literature as agrarian tourism, can be identified with country tourism or agritourism, being considered a form of alternative educational tourism; agricultural tourism, which involves an activity managed by the family of the farmer, which guides the visitors, named in literature as agricultural tourism and identified with the attractions for spending their free time in nature, but also with the agritourism on the farm, being considered as an alternative source of income in the small rural communities, which apply the principles of sustainable tourism; village tourism, in tourism literature, can be associated with country tourism, has become very well known in the Romanian area, but also in foreign literature, country tourism, being identified with agrarian tourism and rural tourism, but associated with farm tourism, being opposed to urban tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

Rural tourism is most often associated with country tourism, village tourism and agritourism, forms associated with the requirements of sustainable development of the rural area. It can be considered part of historical and site cultural tourism but also of ecotourism, but it includes agritourism too.

In addition to the recognized forms of tourism practiced in the rural area, namely rural tourism, agritourism and/or farm tourism, there are some forms of tourism that have begun to attract the attention of tourists coming to these areas, namely agrarian tourism, agricultural tourism, village tourism, or country tourism.

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