

AGRITOURISM-ORGANIZATION BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Abstract: Among other activities that capitalize the potential of the village was born the idea of mixing traditional activities with those related to hospitality and recreation. There are many rural areas that have made the forms of rural tourism a way of life and additional income. The main benefit could be translated by the fact that through the forms of rural tourism are sold not only the accommodation spaces but also the household products in the form of food or even household food, as well as various handicrafts, a wide range of services. , mostly tourist, whose volume, variety and quality depends on local conditions and largely on the capacity and imagination of locals.

Key words: agritourism, tradition, way of life, modernity

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is much more than an alternative to the currently prevailing tourism model; it is also, and above all, a decisive element in the protection of rural societies, so it is a matter of a priority alternative: the one of maintaining or not the living conditions bearable by the human species.

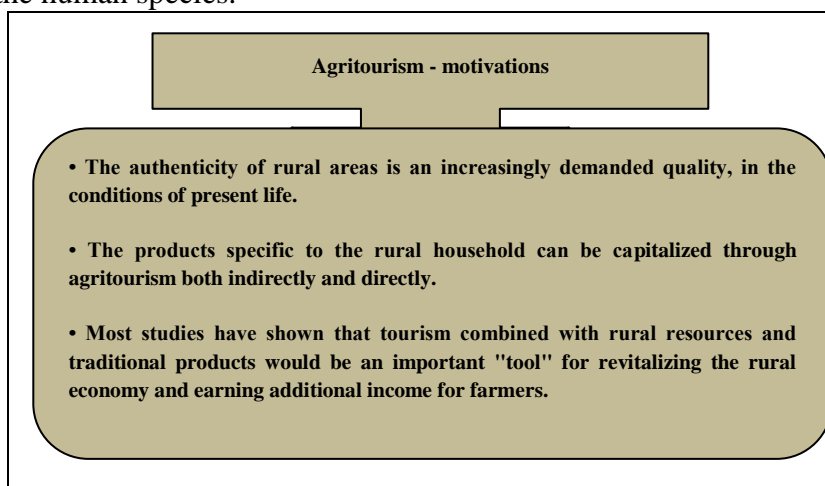


Figure 1. Motivations of agritourism activity

Source: own processing

There are many rural areas that have made from the forms of rural tourism a way of life and additional income that they are proud of, [2,15, 16,17,18] the development of tourism in rural areas leading to a sustainable economic development of rural localities. The combination of sustainable rural development and tourism facilities is a "must have", given that changes in attitudes have been parallel to preferences for returning to nature, and various local products. By capitalizing on local resources and products, and combining two activities, the agricultural as a basic activity and the tourist as a complementary activity, the profitability of agrotourism is high, being in fact a chance of alternative income for rural areas, with all the more so for areas with declining agriculture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this paper is to review the particularities of the agrotourism activity, which is really between tradition and modernity, at the base of this desideratum stands as the method of multicriteria analysis, a series of theoretical documents, and several objectives:

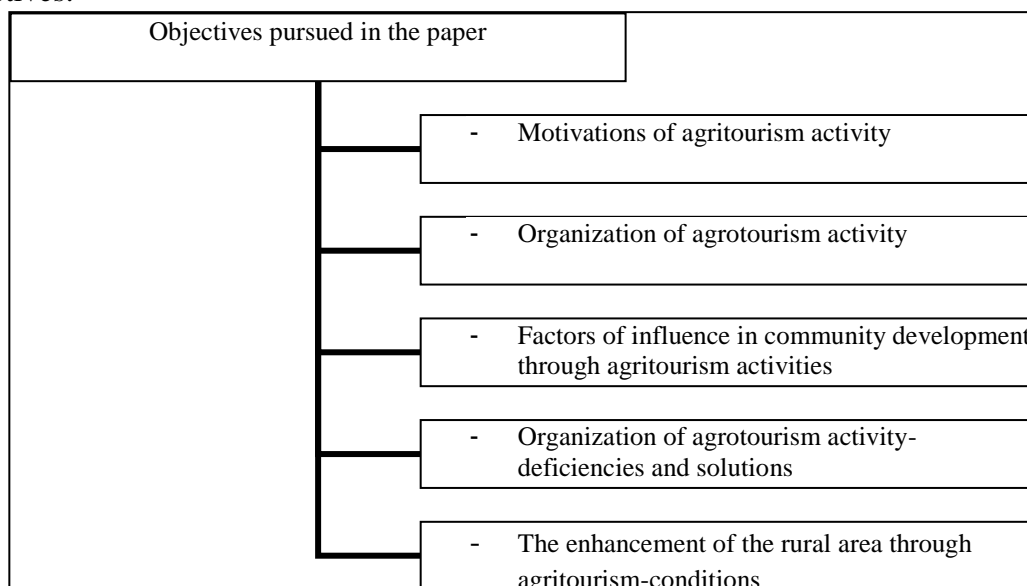


Figure 2. The objectives pursued in the paper

Source: own processing

RESEARCH RESULTS

Agrotourism is spatially placed in rural areas and is carried out by highlighting the diverse potential of this environment, [1,3,6] focusing mainly on space, the hospitality of the local population and the consumption of agricultural products. The typology of the tourist products that will be made, the perspectives of putting them on the market:

- A first attitude adopted by nature protectors: they find that the rural world is deserted and, consequently, must be transformed into a kind of garden that preserves species and also be the lung of cities.
- The second attitude consists in treating the rural territories as if they were those of the third world, meaning considering them as a support for a prefabricated tourism, which can take place anywhere because the rural environment is only a "decoration" for its development.
- The third attitude states that the existence of a tourism specific to the rural environment justifies the uniqueness of analyzes carried out in this field which aim to invent new production and management practices.

Globally, the development of agritourism must respond to the following fundamental problems:

- What is the true nature of tourism development in rural areas?
- Are there any privileged ways you could borrow?
- If so, then what are the products they lead to?
- What are their production and consumption patterns?
- Who should be the clientele?
- For which "pleasures to live" should agritourism programs and products be designed?

If we talk about the Romanian rural environment, then it can be said that it has largely preserved the ancient culture - in a world open to the future, to the achievements of

science and technology - the identity of the people has been preserved because "culture offers identity, at the same time freedom". The entire Romanian land abounds with values of popular culture, affirmed in the type of settlements, occupations, housing, port, folk art, cultural, spiritual manifestations and way of life. In addition to the elements of tradition, ethnography and folklore, the natural setting is another means of attracting tourists, especially citizens who want to escape from the urban environment, crowded and quite heavily polluted to a quiet place, clean as nature. Romania can satisfy through its natural resources the highest preferences and exigencies of the various segments of the domestic and international tourist demand. Between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, our country is considered to have the richest and most varied tourist resources that give it a great availability for tourism.

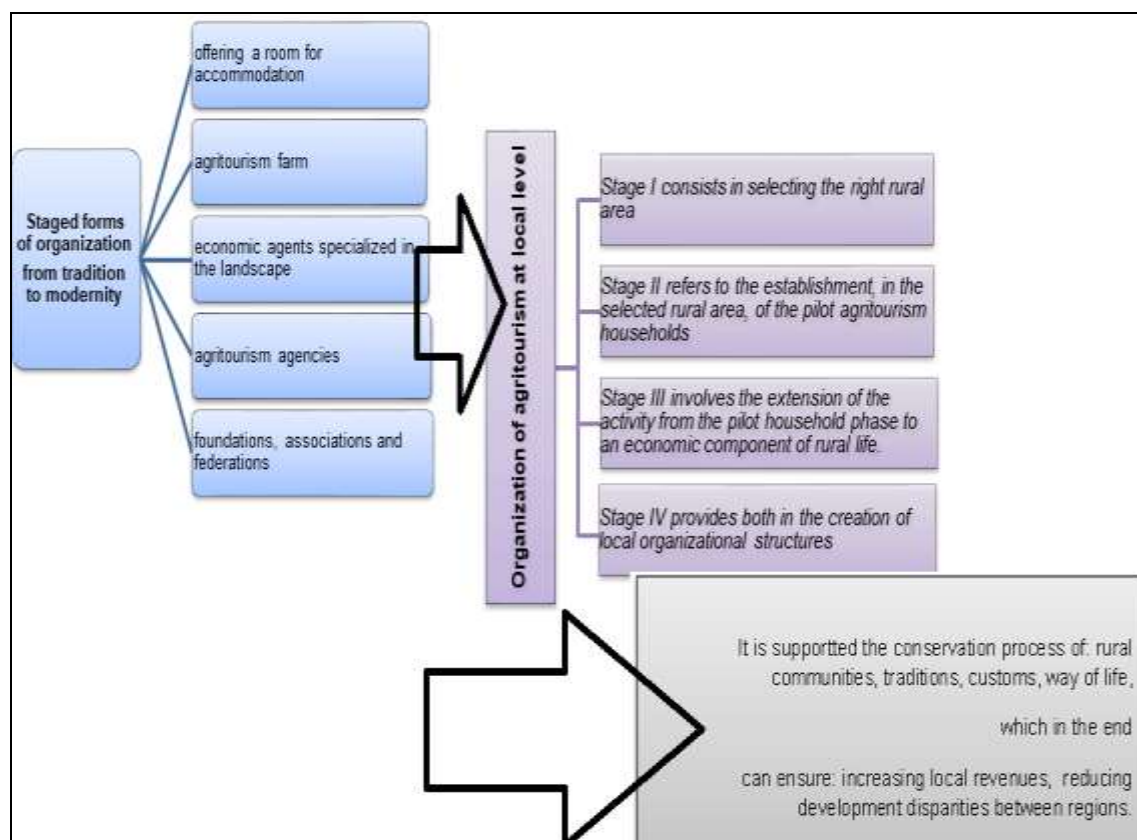


Figure 3. Organization of agrotourism activity

Source: own processing

In order to recover and develop the rural area, different directions of action can be proposed, which may involve:

- in order to make productive activities efficient, it is necessary to make the most rational use of the resources specific to the rural environment;
- the use of rural resources must be made on the principle of sustainability;
- sustaining the vitality of the traditional household, determining its transition from the form of subsistence to the productive, profitable variant.

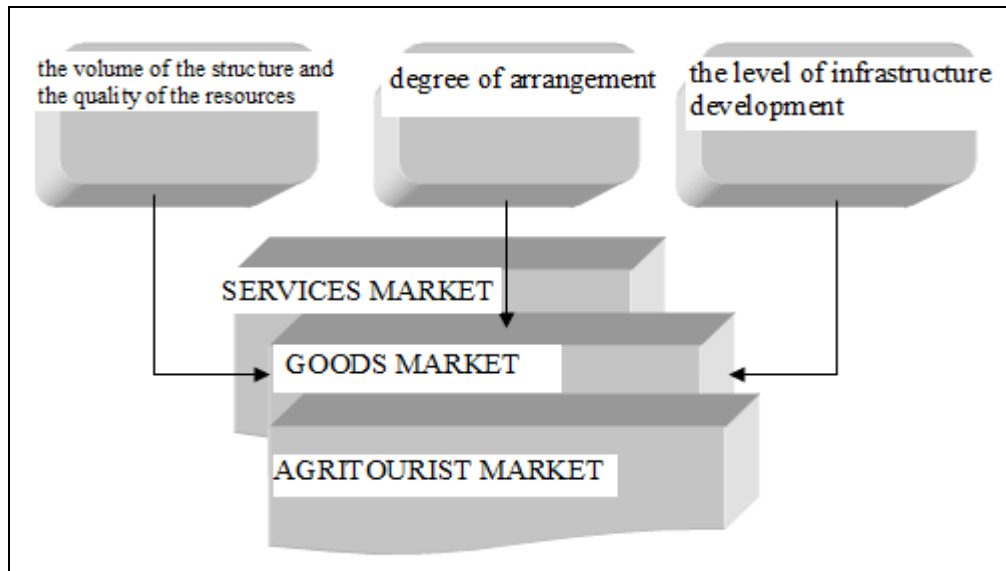


Figure 4. Factors of influence in community development through agritourism activities

Source: own processing

The development of the rural community through agritourism can be described as a process in which the community is actively involved, in order to mobilize all initiatives to capitalize on their own resources for the social and economic benefit of the community, being influenced by several categories of factors. The development of Romanian rural areas has always been strongly marked by non-agricultural activities, because they have a complementary function in the rural economy. [11,12,13] The village community could not make a living without certain services provided by some of its members, who perform basic work in the agricultural sector and thus contribute to a more decent standard of living.[10]

Currently, the painful truth is that Romania is not of much interest to foreign visitors. The foreign tourist pays for most tourist services a rate comparable to Western prices, receiving in return a product of lower quality (compared to European standards). Logically, the question arises: why would a foreign visitor come to Romania, for the same price as he could visit France, Germany or Italy, receiving in return a product of superior quality? [14]

Studying the tourism product of the rural environment in concert with the determinants of the purchasing decision in the conditions of the tourist market and collaborating with the strengths and weaknesses, it is found that minimizing weaknesses and maximizing strengths will create a profitable market niche. It starts with mountains, rivers, the beach, fishing opportunities, caves, ski slopes, historical monuments, wine bars, monasteries, castles and the countryside, then this spectrum of possibilities will narrow. The aim is to identify the characteristics that make Romania different. What does our country have to offer and does not compete directly with other tourist destinations? If you try a brief diagnosis of the motivation in choosing the holiday destination, it is found that a tourist chooses:

- France for the beach or to visit Paris;
- Germany for hiking;
- Austria for skiing;
- Greece for history;
- Spain for islands:

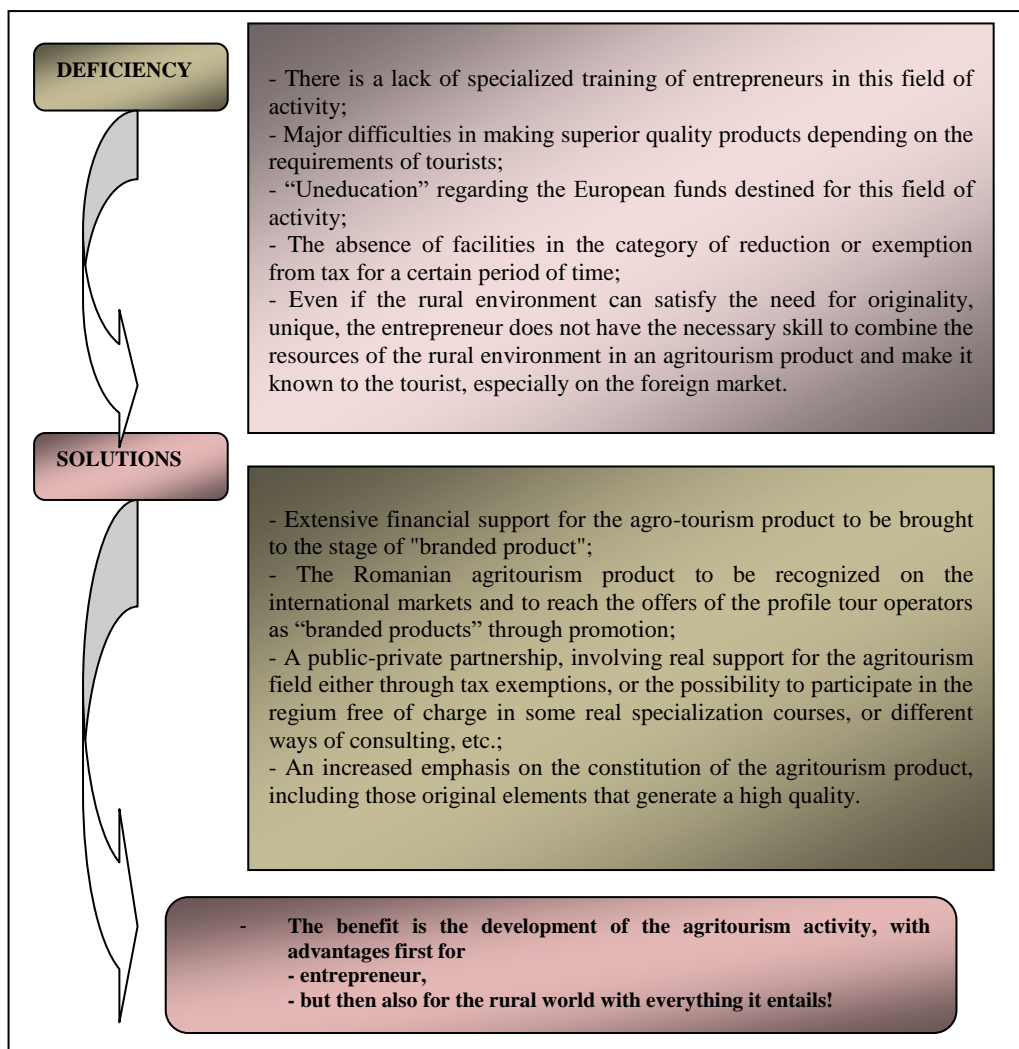


Figure 4. Organization of agrotourism activity-deficiencies and solutions

Source: own processing

Our country offers a great tourism variety, but the tourist cannot go through it entirely - as in the case of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg or the small state of Monaco - on a holiday. Logically, we discover that those unique tourist products that cannot be seen and obtained in other countries must be highlighted. Romanian agritourism must discover a niche on the market to capitalize on. The niche market can be realized from the multitude of alternatives, from one of the following variants:

- The product itself-the Romanian village with its specific way of life, traditional Romanian festivals, Romanian holidays (Easter, Christmas), fairs and fairs (Gaiina Mountain-girls' fair, pottery fairs), Romanian food-folk gastronomy, wines and brandies, painted monasteries, the myth of Dracula, peasant cities, the Danube Delta.
- Price-price concept for value (existence of a fair price/quality ratio) must be well understood: it is necessary to offer exceptional value;
- Another opportunity includes the traditional lifestyle and the existence of old villages where the tourist can experience a "time travel".

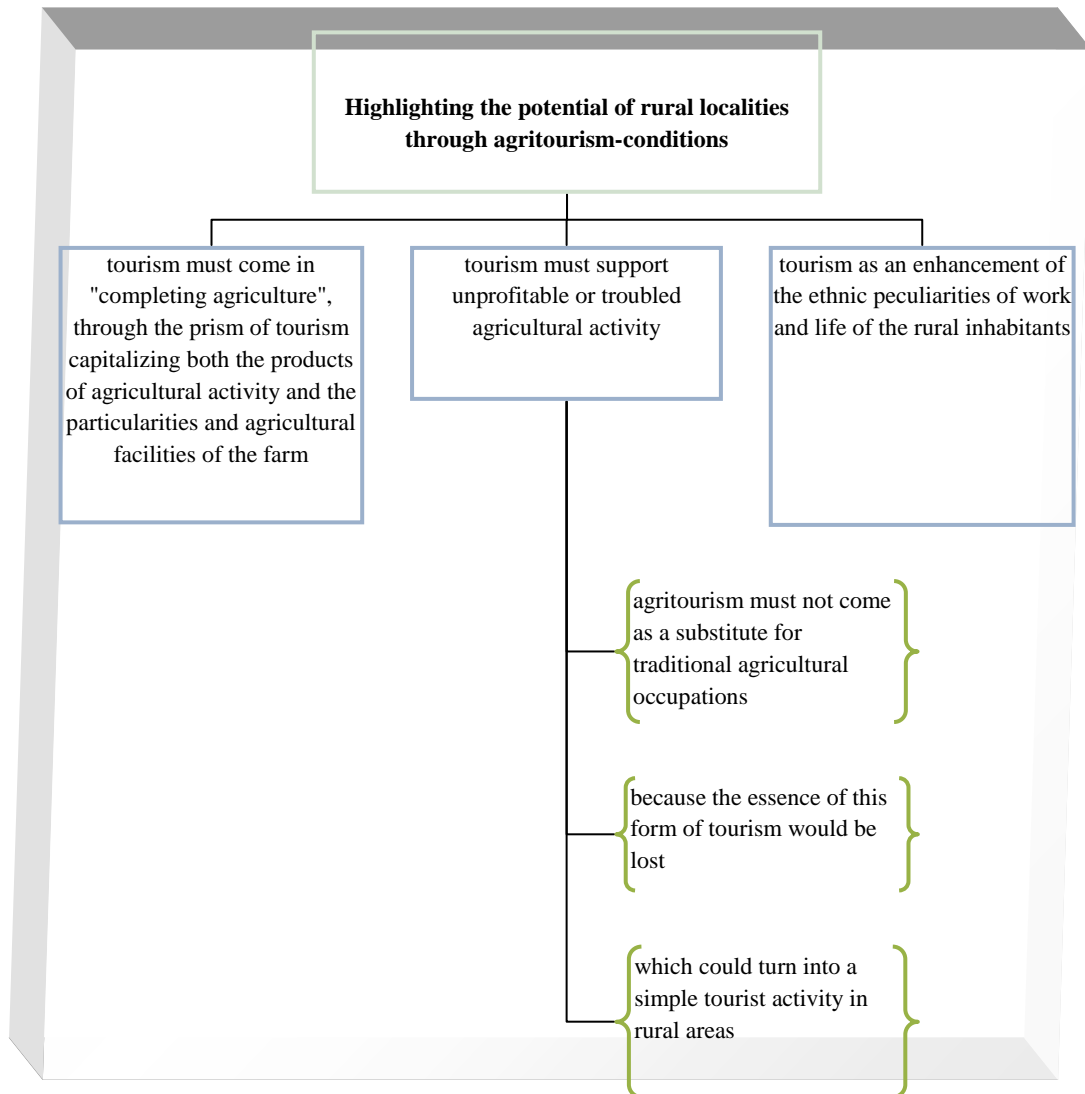


Figure 5. The enhancement of the rural area through agritourism-conditions
Source: own processing

At present, the rural environment is facing a cruel reality: it has unique, original, authentic resources, but still it faces many problems or even a severe poverty in some cases. And if that weren't enough, another paradigm emerges: once this rural environment rich in unique resources is developed, the authentic loses its originality. Thus the solution would be a special emphasis on a sustainable development of this rural environment, meaning the stake should fall on those activities that ensure the preservation of the authenticity, viability of the rural world and why not its stability. One of these sustainable activities can be agritourism, which can be a healthy alternative for many of the rural problems: [4,5,7,8,9]

a) tourism must come in "completing agriculture", through the prism of tourism capitalizing both the products of the agricultural activity and the particularities and agricultural endowments of the farm;

b) in no case should agritourism come as a substitute for traditional agricultural occupations because it would lose the essence of this form of tourism, which could turn into a simple tourist activity in rural areas.

c) tourism as an emphasis on the ethnic peculiarities of work and life of the rural inhabitants.

CONCLUSIONS

It is especially important to create a good image on the foreign market, in this sense the priorities being:

- The agritourism product can and must in the future be brought to the stage of "branded product", and achieving this goal requires a wide financial support, both from national funds and especially from supporting access to European funds;

- An amplification of the promotion activity so that the Romanian agritourism product is recognized on the international markets and reaches the offers of the profile tour operators as "branded products";

- Perhaps a good and necessary start in the field would be a public-private partnership, involving real support for the agritourism field either through tax exemptions, or the possibility of free participation in some real specialization courses, or different ways of consultancy, etc.;

- The beginning of the agritourism activity presupposes first and foremost the existence and maintenance of an adequate infrastructure, which requires efforts from the authorities and from the entrepreneurs interested in the field;

- An increased emphasis on the establishment of the agritourism product, including those original elements, which will obviously have as main consequence the increase of its quality.

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