

THE PARTICULARITIES OF RURAL TOURIST ACTIVITIES FROM GARANA AREA

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Abstract: *The reason for choosing Garana area as a research location derives from the multitude of resources it possesses, an extraordinary tourist potential that is not yet sufficiently exploited. On this background, making future proposals for the development of rural tourism is both opportunity and necessity. The research undertaken in this area aimed to study the particularities of the rural tourism activity from Garana area, focusing on the owners of rural tourism structures, highlighting in this way: the way of carrying out the rural tourism activity, the particularities of the accommodation structures, and at the same time the possible trend of this activity.*

Key words: *Garana area, rural tourism, trends*

INTRODUCTION

Generally activities from tourism field, known as "rural tourism activities", are considered as being:

- alternatives for supporting the agricultural field which is found in decline and it is unable to sustain the actual needs of people from rural areas; [1,6,8]

- a possible way of supporting entrepreneurial opportunities for local farmers, [9,10,12] generating the stability of young population in rural environment, by creating new jobs; [13,14,15,16]

- generating some advantages such as: the addition of vitality for rural economy, characterized by a high degree of poverty, the transfer of capital, the provision of income and employment, in a word, meaning a sustainable development on long term. [4,5,7,11] The places where rural tourism activities have developed have evolved in every way. [2,3]

Garana, the location chosen for the research, is located on a hillside at 935m altitude, in a landscape dominated by the silhouette of Semenic, it is a real holiday village with multiple possibilities for accommodation in tourist guesthouses. It stands out for its architecture typical of German mountain villages, and its special motto: "this is how we lived before, this is how we live now", which can somehow illustrate the numerous rural traditions, quite well preserved.

Garana and its surroundings present an extraordinary tourist potential that is not yet sufficiently capitalized. The generous nature, the gentle altitude, between 809 m and 1100 m, the purity of the water and the special quality of the air make Garana and its surroundings a true oasis of health, an ideal area for hiking and relaxation, perfect for the development of tourist activities. Among the local resources used through rural tourism and agritourism we mention: village architecture, traditions and customs, the traditional clothing of the area, culture, etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of the research was to study the particularities of the rural tourism activity in the Garana area, focusing on the owners of rural tourism structures, highlighting: the way of carrying out the rural tourism activity, the particularities of the accommodation structures, and at the same time the possible trend of this activities. To achieve the proposed goal, several specific objectives are pursued, and using a questionnaire with 10 questions information were collected to determine the owners of rural tourist structures from this rural mountain area interest degree for agritourism activity. The questionnaires were applied during two months, to the owners of tourist structures, from the analyzed area, considered some of the most representative for this form of tourism. Thus the main purpose followed were:

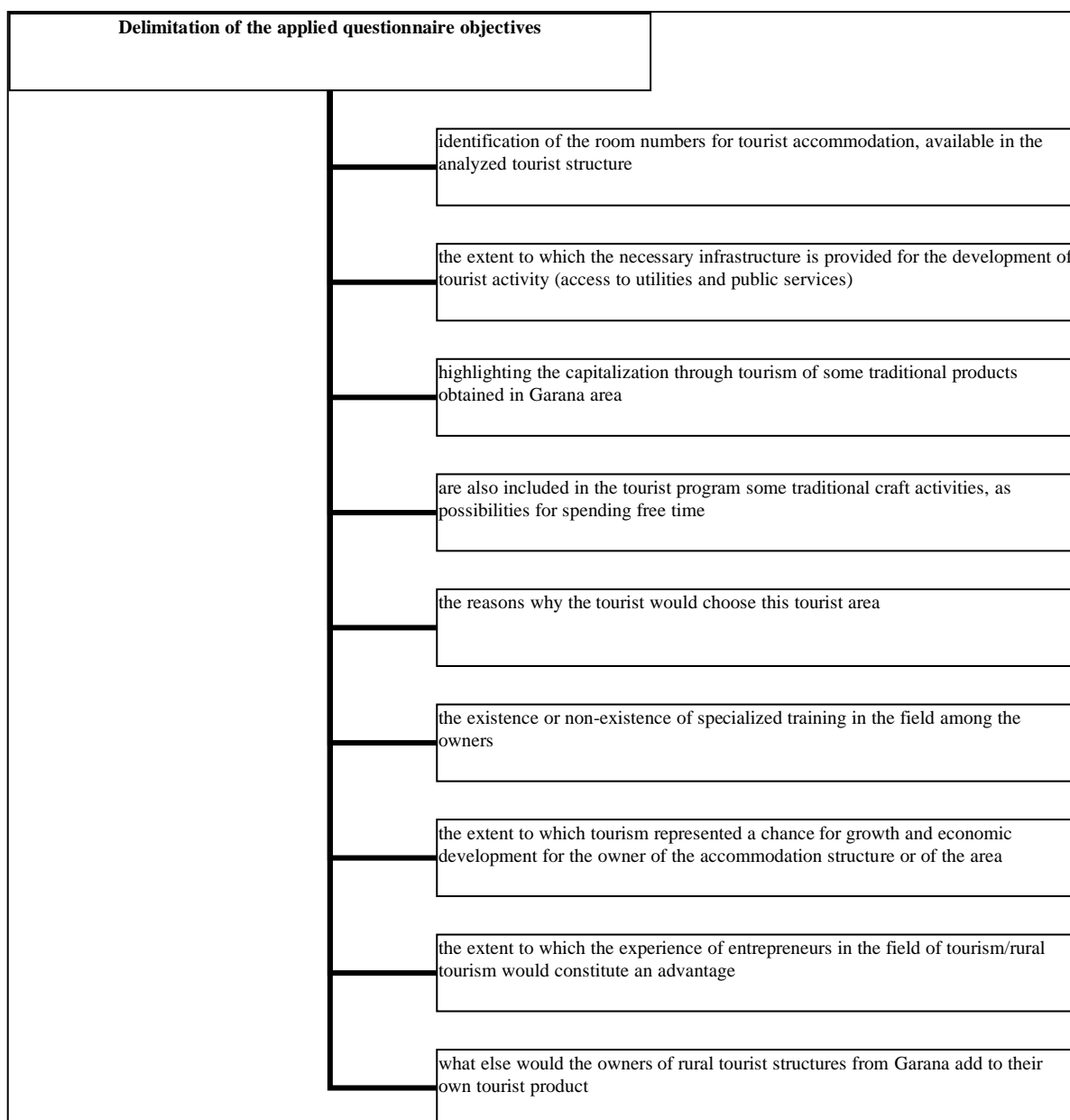


Figure 1. Delimitation of the applied questionnaire objectives

RESEARCH RESULTS

The first two questions from the questionnaire followed to collect some primary information, regarding the rural tourism structures from the area under analysis. At a first analysis of the accommodation structures, (table 1) with a rural aspect, from the analyzed area it is found that a share of 67% are classified in the 3 daisies classification category, and 44% of the existing structures are classified with 2 daisies. From the point of view of physical size, respectively the number of rooms owned, it can be noted that medium-sized ones predominate.

Table 1.
Primary information, regarding the owners of rural tourist structures in the area under analysis

Tourist structure	No. of rooms	Classification category Daisies
LA RASCRUCE INN	Over 10	2
GASTHAUS CRISTAL	3	3
RAZA DE SOARE GUEST HOUSE	6	3
HEIDI GUEST HOUSE	4	3
WOLFSBERG GUEST HOUSE	Over 10	2
SUS IN SAT GUEST HOUSE	10	3
LORA GUEST HOUSE	7	2
GOTSCHNA GUEST HOUSE	10	3
CRAIU CHALET	6	2

Question number three followed to identify if the necessary infrastructure for the development of tourist activity is ensured (access to utilities and public services). In the case of this question, with affirmative and negative answer options, all the answers were affirmative, therefore the facilities related to infrastructure and utilities do not inconvenience the agritourism activity but support it and ensure its development.

Question four involves highlighting the capitalization through tourism of some traditional products obtained in Garana area. The question was provided with two answer options, affirmative and negative, and with the possibility of exemplifying. It can be seen from figure 2 that a large part of the analyzed tourist structures, meaning 78%, capitalize through tourism specific products from this area, these products being represented by:

- livestock products;
- vegetables fruits
- pastry products.

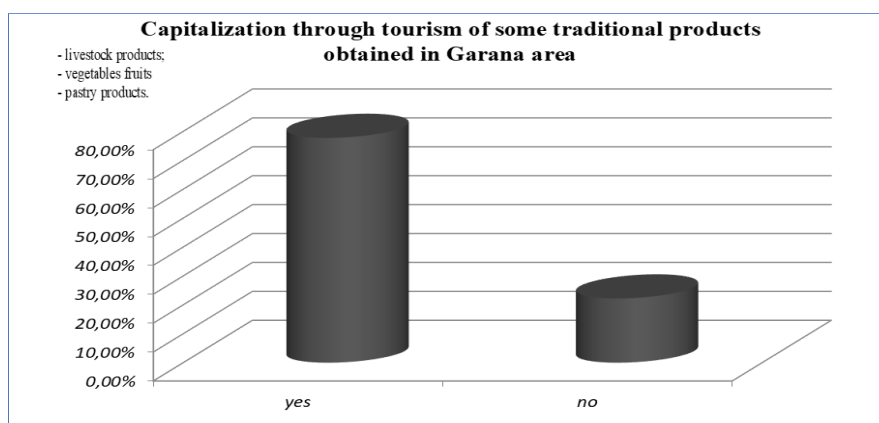


Figure 2. Capitalization through tourism of some traditional products obtained in Garana area

According to figure 3 the area have to conceive in the future some measures for the commercialization of these products in another way, not only through catering at the guest house.

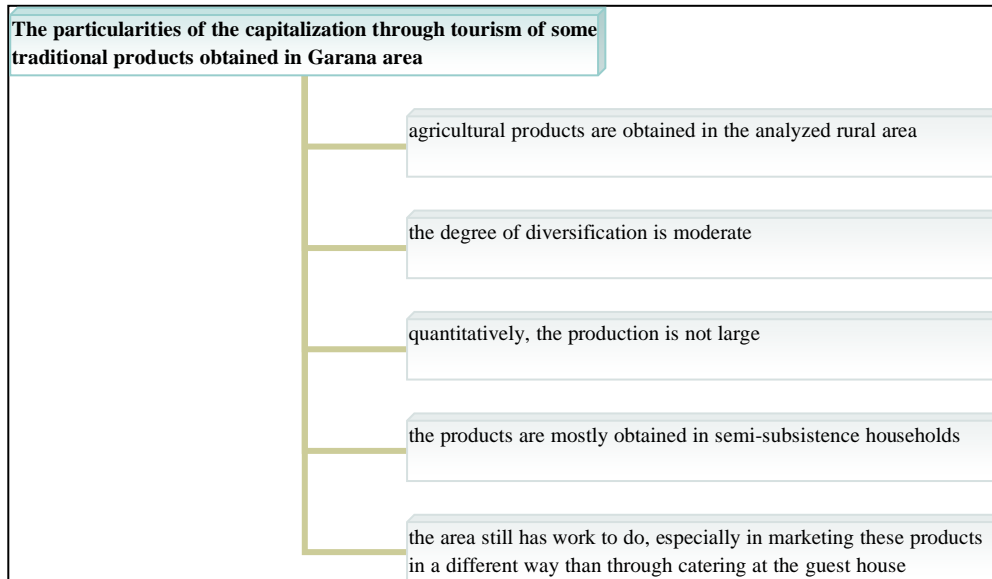


Figure 3. The particularities of the capitalization through tourism of some traditional products obtained in the Garana area

Through *question number five*, analyses whether some traditional handicraft activities are included in the tourist program, as possibilities for spending free time. The question was provided with two answer options. (figure 4) A small percentage can be found, 33.33%, meaning a number of 3 of the surveyed guesthouses capitalize through rural tourism the activities specific to Garana area, respectively "the rural environment specific way of life". Therefore, a possible proposal to be implemented to stimulate the development of the rural environment through rural tourism activities would be the "capitalization of traditional resources and products through tourism".

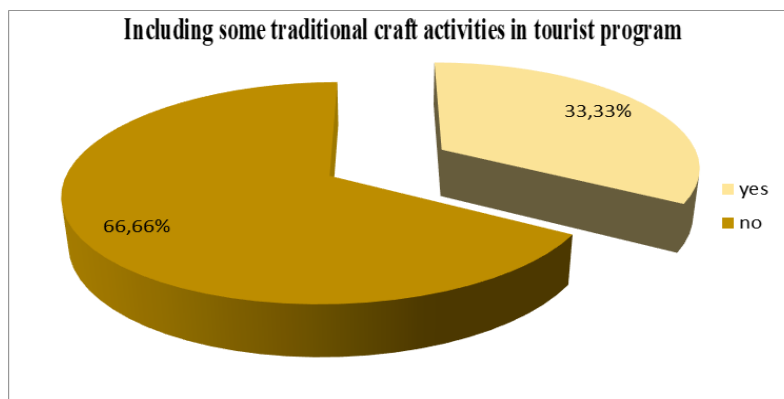


Figure 4. Including some traditional craft activities in tourist program

Regarding the *motivations for which the tourist would choose this tourist area*, this aspect was the target pursued by *question number six*. The question was not provided with answer options, the answers indicating motivations related mainly to the quality of some factors and natural resources, but also some related to tourist services: (figure 5)

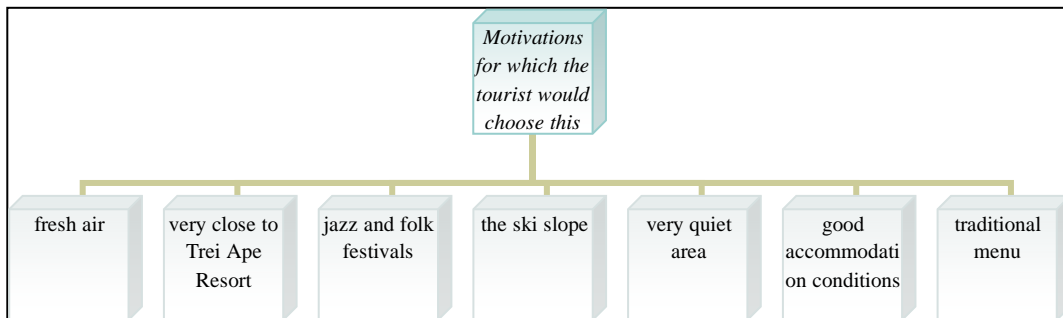


Figure 5. The reasons why the tourist would choose this tourist area

Seventh question focuses on the existence or non-existence of specialist training in the field among the owners. If a few years ago, referring to the training in the field, the number of those who had such training was small, the situation is declared to be a gratifying one at the present time, so out of the nine existing accommodation structures, eight owners declared that have specialized studies in the field of rural tourism activity, respectively a percentage of almost 89%, and only 11% of the owners of tourist accommodation structures here have no training in the field. (figure 6) However, the experience in the field is an aspect on which the owners still have a lot to work on.

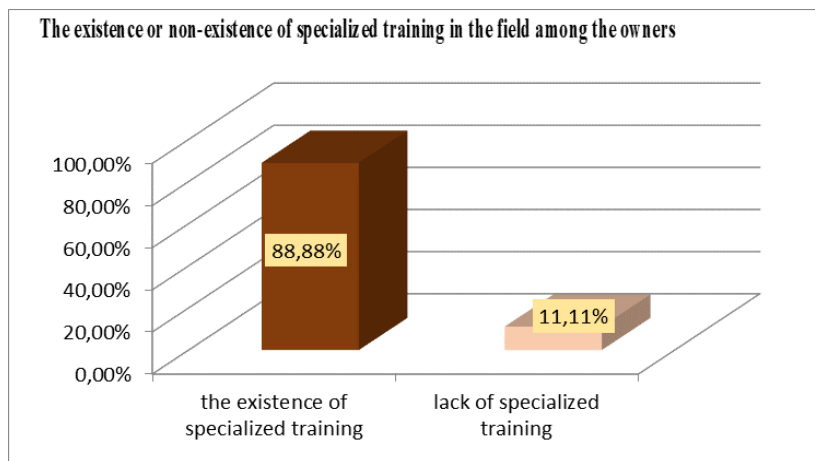


Figure 6. The existence or non-existence of specialized training in the field among the owners

Through *question eight* was attempted the determination of the extent to which tourism represented a chance for growth and economic development of accommodation structure owner or of the area. The question was provided with two answer options, affirmative and negative, the answers taken from the owners of tourist accommodation structures from this area being 100% affirmative, meaning, the owners consider, probably following a personal assessment, that the tourism activity has bring them benefits on multiple levels.

The ninth question follows the extent in which the experience of entrepreneurs outside tourism/rural tourism field would constitute an advantage for the owners of rural tourism structures from the studied area. The question was provided with two answer options, affirmative and negative, in the case of an affirmative answer, there is the possibility of exemplifying the field in which the owners would need a worthy model to follow. It can be seen from figure 7 that the predominant weight is of those who consider that the experience of the foreign rural tourist structures owners would give them an advantage, this advantage being desired by the owners on the side of promoting the tourist

product, in the majority, then on the side of capitalization, and in low weight on the part of creating the tourist product, although we believe that until the priority promotion should be the creation of a valuable tourist product, which is easy to sell.

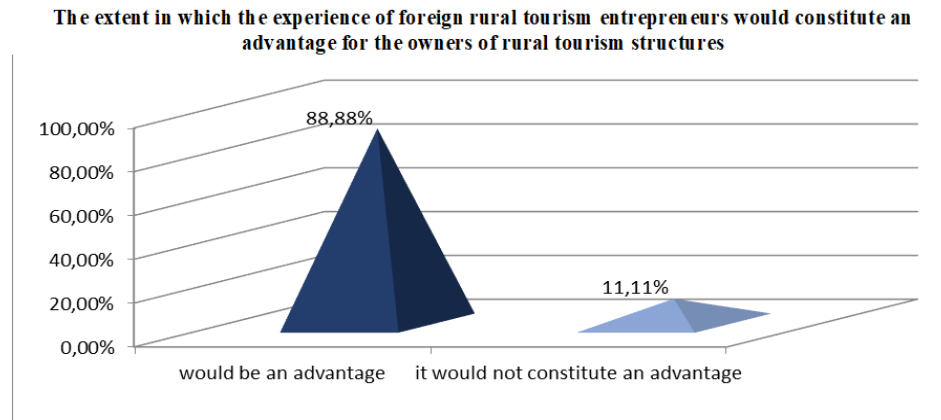


Figure 7. The extent in which the experience of foreign rural tourism entrepreneurs would constitute an advantage for the owners of rural tourism structures

The *last question* wants to highlight what the owners of rural tourist structures would add to their own tourism product. The question was not provided with answer options, the answer being a free one, at the discretion of the owners, thus also identifying the possible problems. The answers were diverse (figure 8): from promotion, improvement of conditions, a swimming pool, tourist routes, horse farm.

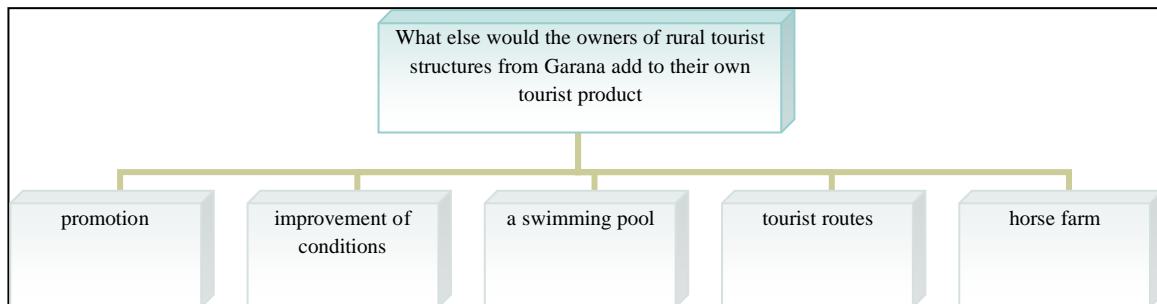


Figure 8. What would the owners of rural tourist structures from Garana add to their own tourist product

Given the fact that the purpose of this research is to study the peculiarities of the rural tourism activity from Garana area, focusing on the owners of rural tourism structures, through the questionnaire applied the proposed purpose was fulfilled.

CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of problems related to the correct exploitation from the tourist point of view of specific products from the area. The resources and products specific to the area are:

- specific mountain tourism resources;
- traditional crafts and customs;
- traditional holidays;
- local products obtained in the households from the area.

The synthesis elements that reflect the aspects related to the capitalization of agricultural production, crafts and other products specific to the area lead to the following considerations:

- there is no organized network for the processing of products specific to the area that would co-interest the producer and thus create an own network based on cooperation;
- the village does not present definite offers, able to direct the specific products towards modern processing and commercialization forms, through which to stimulate the resident producers.

Considering that a large part of the analyzed tourist structures, respectively 78% capitalize through tourism specific products from this area, these products being represented by: livestock products; vegetables fruits; pastry products, but only through catering at the guesthouse, the area having to conceive some measures for the marketing of these products in another way in the future. Therefore, possible proposals to be implemented to stimulate the development of the rural environment through rural tourism activities could be:

- The capitalization of traditional resources and products through tourism, the motivation of the proposal deriving from the fact that crafts, handicrafts and traditional food products have reduced a lot, have a small market, not supported by adequate measures. By the fact there is not a network for valorization traditional food products from the area, it is underlined the necessity of rural tourism activities, as a viable opportunity to capitalize these specific rural elements, with advantages for both locals and tourists.

- Creation of a rural tourist center in Garana through public-private partnership. The area currently has many real tourism resources, but it does not have enough financial resources or experience to start the activities of creating this rural tourist center. It is also added the fact that those who own tourist structures are not aware of the need for such a center. We believe that the realization of this rural tourist center could provide both guidance and support for those willing to develop tourist activities as well as the promotion of the area.

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