

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TOURISM AND AGRI-BUSINESS IN ROMANIA (CASE STUDY VÂRTOP ARIEȘENI "APUSENI MOUNTAINS)

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ABSTRACT - Opportunities for improvement of tourism and agri-business in romania (case study vârtop arieșeni "apuseni mountains)

Today we cannot talk about one agricultural household economy, which are based just on agriculture. The diversification process and integration of more economic branch give essential change in agricultural household economy structure in the life of the rural and the habitants of this. Among a lot of activities that are presented now in mountain region of Romania one important role and with expansion tendency are represented by Agri-tourism activity. The initiation of agro tourism activity at one pension implied assimilation of new knowledge regarding a new domain, the family accumulation, during the process, professional experience in other areas than agriculture or leather manufacture (already known and exploited). In order to make it diverse and efficient, the agrotourism activity at the level of studied farms should respect the following:

- Elaboration, at the locality level (Vârtop Arieșeni "Apuseni Mountains) of a small touristic guide (at the tourists disposal), which should contain: the presentation of the area, the map of the area, possibilities of hiking, museums, marks, beauty spots, springs etc., which must give the tourists complete information about the offer, as well as about the way in which they can integrate;
- Improvement of personal touristic folder, by its printing in more languages of international use;
- Hoping that the agrotourism will develop, more and more, at the analysed farm, we suggest the organization of information and proposals of diversification in the agrotourism activity of the farm, things which should be given to tourism agencies through different tourism intermediaries in the whole country.

Analysing the current situation, we can assert that agrotourism is developing in satisfying conditions in Vârtop Arieșeni "Apuseni Mountains.

Key words: pension, agrotouristic activity, management, traditional.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is striking tendency for people to spend their free time traveling, searching or by visiting towns and villages in the home country or other countries to know people and places or to seek treatment. How the influence of distance-time factor was reduced significantly by the modernization of transportation and tourism - as a way to spend enjoyable leisure time - has seen a boom unprecedented as one of the most remarkable features of the modern era (FLORINE BRAN, 2008).

Agri-tourism can be a feasible solution for creating additional jobs in all peasant households in rural areas (plains, hills and mountains), generating significant additional revenue. Travel services firm, offered traditional hospitality with a touch of the peasant and professional competence achieved through a special training can be combined with

agricultural activities in the most efficient way within the individual farm, creating a new type rural economy, "Agrotourism economy" (BETEILLER, R., 1996., M. BOYER, 1982). Vârtop-Arieșeni area is located in northwestern Romania, the counties interference Bihar to Alba, near the center of the Apuseni Mountains is a beautiful area with scenery exception, which makes it sought after by tourists in recent years and accounts for a large development. But to characterize this area as being beautiful is too little, as the painter said Stephen Luchian in 1909 "beauty is a mere word which says nothing of the dull landscape splendor." Although it has a historic and tourist potential and exceptional realities show that the area is too little Arieșeni Vârtop-monetized, there are important resources for the revitalization of tourism development and tourism for the benefit of the complex.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The case study was done in the Apuseni Mountains Vârtop-Arieșeni and consisted of designing a public opinion survey, which aimed to analyze opportunities for improving tourism and rural tourism in the area studied.

Each question in the survey represents an indicator. Selection was based on the existence of questions or assumptions of a theory of social phenomena studied. Special attention was given to building responses involving both scales can Bishops-tion, as well as the measurement of attitudes, taking into account the views that we started to get to attitudes. In developing the questionnaire, were observed several rules that have sought to provide answers to questions and a consistent form, allowing their correct capitalization: the questions refer to the opinions and not facts, the question must be to the point, short and placed in an appropriate language to be accessible, the question should provide all possible answers, and investigator in the field should not favor any of the answers tone or hue, the questions should be made with tact and a certain bias towards the subject for not etc.-and cause unwanted reactions.

The questionnaire included 23 questions developed and administered on a sample of 30 owners of guesthouses and hotels in the area studied.

RESULTS

By analyzing the responses of subjects, have revealed the following:

Regarding the category of accommodation establishments were interviewed 39 owners of guesthouses in categories I, II and III and an owner of hotel, three star category (*fig.1*).

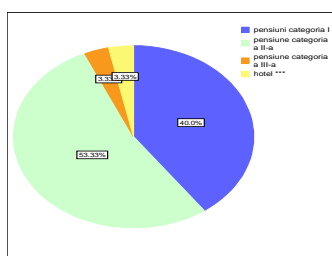


Figure 1. Structure of interviewed persons according to the guesthouses or hotel categories

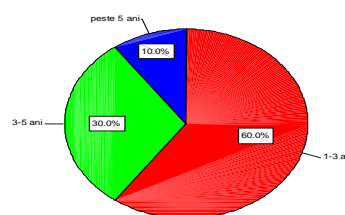


Figure 2. The age of the accommodation touristic units on the market

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

Regarding additional services offered by the accommodation of persons- they interviewed the following emerged: 6.6% Children provides surveillance, 56.6% provide extra bed for children - 76.6% have children's play statues and 70% are equipped with playground for children , 96.6% have room TV for tourists, 93.3% were equipped smoking room, 3.3% are equipped with a library with books and magazines and 10% for parties of books furnished room, all hostels have private parking analyzed and and 60% have parking for coaches, 43.0% have the restaurant, 30.0% have arranged space for conferences, 23.0% have fishing opportunities for leisure, standing near the watershed (Big Aries 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 (or space gazebo with loungers), 16.6% did not provide additional services.

Regarding the granting of discounts offered by companies to accommodation, the situation is as follows: all of the accommodation granted discounts for children, 33, 3% of the guest gives a student discount study, 60.0% of the hostels offer discount for groups, 33 3% of the hostels offer discount for pensioners.

To the question "What is your unit program of the tourist?, All respondents replied that their facilities are open all year round accommodation. Also, all accommodation establishments in the area is considered rural, mountainous.

When asked "How old is your company in the field, on the market?", The answers show the following structure (*figure 2*):

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

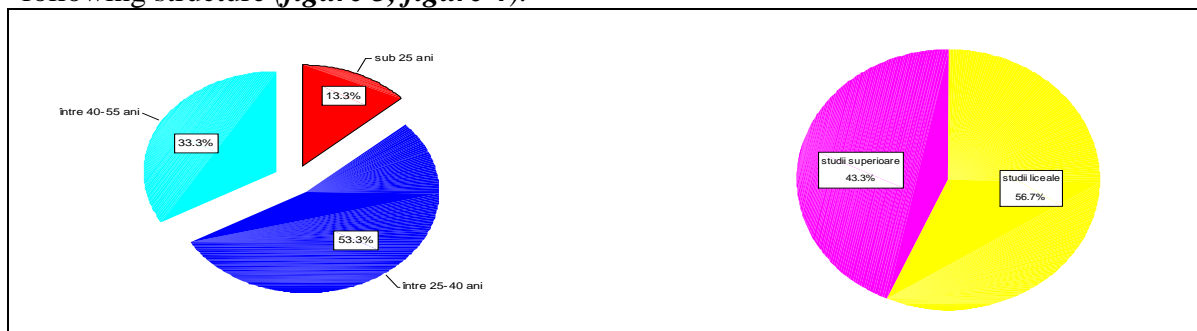


Figure 3. Structure of employees number, on age categories

Figure 4. Structure of employees number, based on the background

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, hence the apparent conclusion that organized groups are particularly preferred, due to the shortage a tourist guesthouse / hotel.

Regarding the degree of *some cases influence the activity of the pen owners siuni turistice/hoteluri intervievați*, cum ar fi: lack of qualified personnel in the Vârtop-Arieșeni, lack of or poor development of markets, burdensome legislation, institutional bureaucracy in dealing with state institutions, lack of financial resources and difficult relationship with banks, inadequate arrangements for the promotion, including promotion of the authorities' websites local, central agencies and tour operators, infrastructure in the area and supply

road from the responses received that some cases very much affect tourism activity undertaken in the area studied (Figure 5 - Figure 10).

All people interviewed said they use their distribution channels through the con-
 Towing / negotiating with clients and 23.3% use distribution channels and agencies

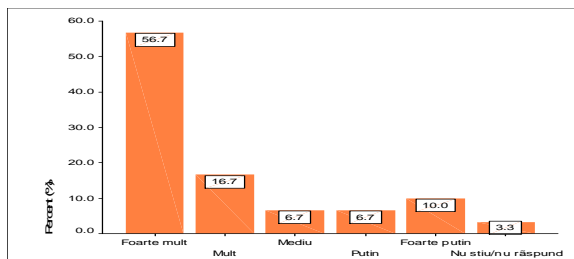


Figure 5. Influence of the lack of qualified employees in the area,

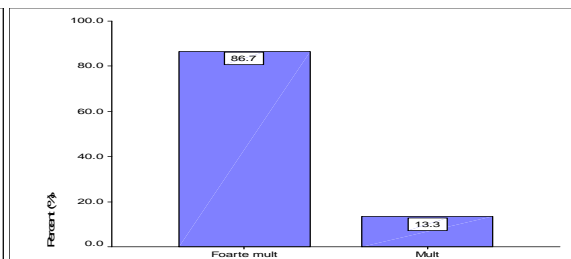


Figure 6 – Influence of the lack or poor market development, on current activities of the accommodation units

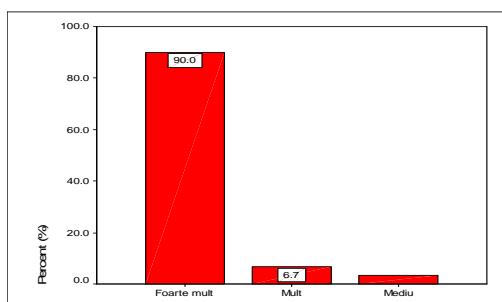


Figure 7. Influence of the cumbersome

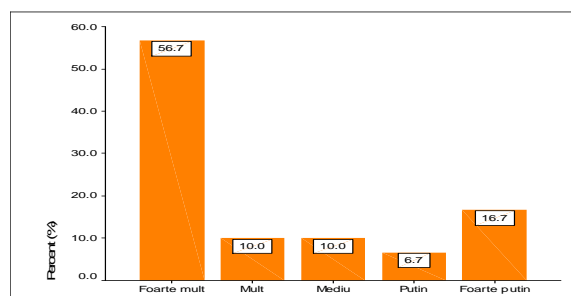


Figure 8. – Influence of the lack of financial resources, on current activities of the accommodation units

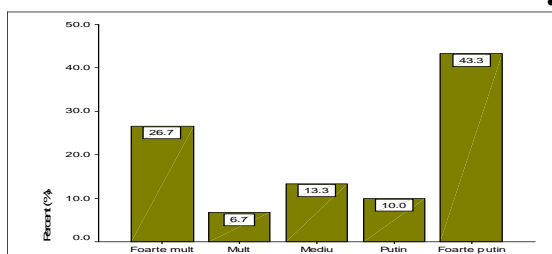


Figure 9. Influence of the insufficiency of vertising tools, on current activities of the accommodation units

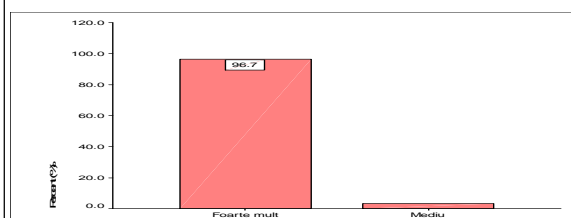


Figure 10. Influence of the infrastructure state and utilities supply in the area, on current activities of the accommodation units

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

The same responses (96.6% - 0.4% and very high importance - high importance) and they gave respondents the question "How important do you think has higher quality local products and services to develop the region?".

When asked "How important do you think has increased professional and management skills through courses, training and other forms of training to develop the region?", respondents said they have a very high importance (93.3%) or high (6, 7%) (Figure 11).

When asked "How important do you think is working with tour operators to promote

products, to develop the region?", respondents said they have a very high importance (86.7%), large and medium (fig.12).

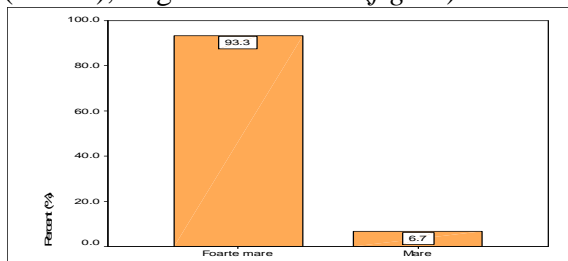


Figure 11 –Importance of increasing professional and managerial skills through attending courses, workshops and other programmes of professional the development of the region

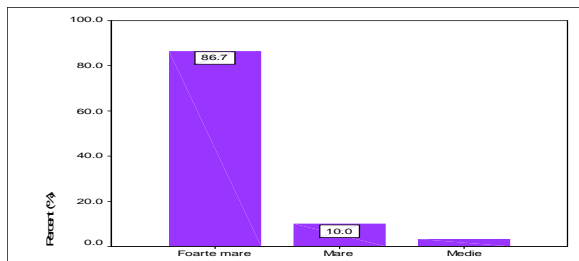


Figure 12. –Importance of the collaboration with tour operators in view to promote products, for the training, for the development of the region

When asked "How do you identify the tourist?", Most respondents (93.3%) responded that in the light of the views expressed by tourists verbal or through questionnaires, and 6.7% of respondents consider that offer traditional products and does not change, so do not take account largely to the tourist (fig.13.).

Regarding the promotion of services, respondents used several ways of promotion. Thus, all use by outside advertising signs, banners, posters, distributing flyers, and 13.3% use those recommendations in the area, 96.7% achieved this through customers (customer-client recommendations), only 3.3% 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.

When asked "How do you acquire the necessary materials and services your business?", 46.7% of respondents replied that the area of specialized companies, 40% - on the Community market or imported, 6.7% - from small farms, individual producers and 6.7% said they also produce their own raw materials necessary for carrying (figure 14).

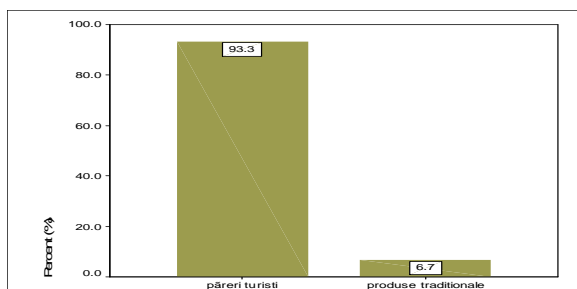


Figure 13. Ways of identification of the tourists' preferences

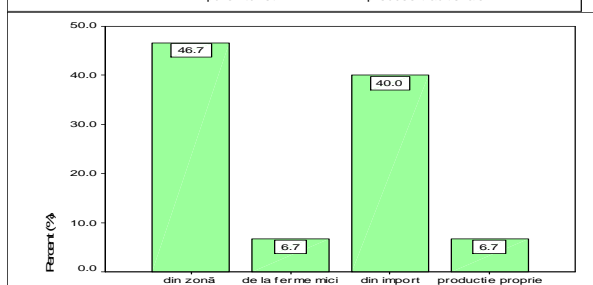


Figure 14. Purchasing necessary goods and services for the activities of the touristic unit

When asked "What are your sources of funding?", 96.7% said they use their own funds and only one respondent replied that the European funds. Only two owners (6.7%) have

resorted to consulting services to obtain internal or external sources of funding, while 40% intend to use in the future.

Unfortunately, the landlord is not a member of a professional.

The question as to whether collaborating with tourism 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% do not think appropriate to such collaborations (*Figure 15*). In that regards participation in information sessions or training in the industry or related sectors of the responses showed that 86.7% of respondents participated, with examples ANTREC promoter.

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.

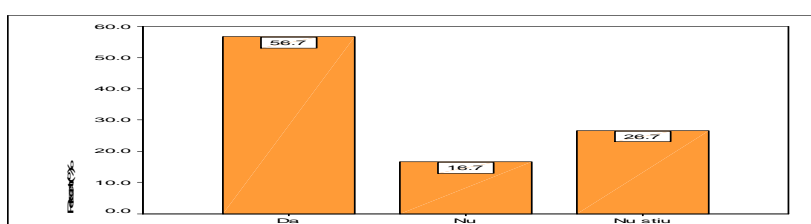


Figure 15. Opportunity of collaboration with the tour operators from the region

CONCLUSIONS

In the Vârtop-Arieșeni most hostels have been built from its own funds in the last 3-5 years, which indicates that it is a resort for young and growing.

Of the 30 owners interviewed, none is a member of a professional.

29 of the 30 respondents, said that infrastructure in the area and provision of facilities greatly affect their work.

Over 50% of the owners of hostels have only secondary education (high school).

All subjects surveyed believe that support for investors with funds, increasing the quality of local products and services, increase professional skills, working with tour operators are very important issues for tourism development and tourism in the area studied. All respondents felt that they need to promote training of tourism and attracting tourists.

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