

STUDY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AGRITOURISM PENSIONS PROMOTION IN THE APUSENI MOUNTAINS AREA

Andora Evelina SIMINA, Valentină Constanța TUDOR,
Raluca Alexandra NECULA (RĂDOI)

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest of Bucharest, 59 Mărăști Boulevard, District 1, 011464, Bucharest, Romania, Phone: +40213182564, Fax:+40213182888, Mobile:+40787654891, Email: evelinasimina@yahoo.com, valentina_tudor@yahoo.com, raluca_nec@yahoo.com

Corresponding author: evelinasimina@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present paper aimed to identify the methods of promoting agritourism pensions, especially in the field of agritourism pensions in the area of the Apuseni Mountains. Aspects regarding the structure of the promoting way of the agritourism pension are systematically presented according to the development region, the gender and the age of the pension owner. At the same time, the paper evaluates the connection between the promotion on the Internet according to the development region and the classification category of the agritourism pension. It was also necessary to evaluate the link between promotion by participating in tourism fairs organized at regional, national level and the development region. The main research tool, that was the basis for this study, was the questionnaire applied to 110 managers of agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area. The data presented in the paper fully represent the answers given by the managers of the agritourism pensions mentioned above. Following the analysis, it was found that the most used and useful method of promotion, agreed by most managers is promotion with the help of the Internet.

Key words: questionnaire, management, Apuseni Mountains, agritourism pension, promotion, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Promotion, an important factor of the marketing mix, with a decisive role in achieving objectives, [15] is the set of actions related to attracting potential customers, by informing them and satisfying their desires by increasing the economic efficiency of the marketing act [3]. As stated by Prof. A Morrison, as well as Prof. O. Snak, the marketing mix for the hospitality industry is composed of 11 elements, the "11 Ps", where the promotion is also found (Fig. 1).

In the tourism field, promotion means how to attract new, potential clients, as well as retaining old clients, both directly and through reservation networks or travel agencies, addressing the general public, or just a well-defined niche. The promotion of the agritourism pension is a process of communicating a real and quality image to the potential client [5] and aims to inform him about the offer of products and services from the tourist reception unit[12] influencing the

customer in accepting the tourist services, so the buying behavior [3]. The objectives of tourism promotion are to consolidate, create and change attitudes and behaviour of tourists [14].

Professor Philip Kotler in his paper Marketing Management, 1997, presents the communication and promotion tools that can be used successfully by any entrepreneur in the tourism field [3, 7] (Table 1).

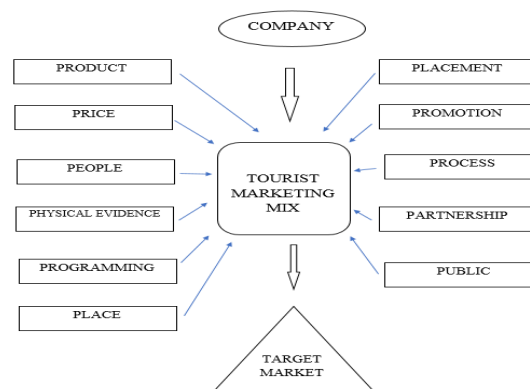


Fig. 1. Structure of the tourist marketing mix
Source: [3].

Table 1. Communication and promotion tools

ADVERTISING	SALES PROMOTION	PUBLIC RELATIONS	PERSONAL SALES	DIRECT ADVERTISING
RECOMMENDED				
Advertisements printed or broadcast on radio or TV The outside of the packaging Movies Brochures and leaflets Posters and flyers Phone books Print ads Panels Display of logos Posters displayed in sale points Symbols and logos	Games, contests, raffles, lotteries Gifts Free samples Fairs and trade events Exhibitions Demonstrations Coupons Discounts Entertainment Commercial stamps Group sales	Press conferences Speeches Seminars Yearbooks Charitable activities SPONSORSHIP Publications Community relations Influencing political decisions Own means of information Company magazine Special events	Commercial presentations Business meetings Simulation programs Samples Trade fairs and exhibitions	Catalogs Materials sent by post Online shopping Shopping on TV
EXISTENT				
Brochures and leaflets Street signs	Fairs and trade events Exhibitions	Community relations Own means of information Special local cultural and artistic events	Trade fairs and exhibitions	Catalogs Online package shopping on booking sites

Source: Processed after Cojocariu *et al* (2004) [3].

The specific information influencing the decision to buy the tourist service by tourists refers to the use of the AIDA principle [2] based on attracting attention, creating interest, stimulating desire and leading to triggering the purchase action [10]. The promotion strategy is part of the company's management strategy and is a complex process, which must take into account the economic and social environment, competition, market, promotional tools [3]. Regardless of the instrument for promoting the agritourism pension, the objectives of the promotion must be established, which are found in the managerial objectives. The promotion mix in the tourism field involves, among other things, the establishment of a promotion policy, a strategy for presenting tourist services but at the same time attracting as many tourists as possible to increase the efficiency of tourism.

The setting of a strategy for promoting the agritourism pension must take into account the questions: „Whom are the tourist products or services offered to?"; „Who are the customers targeted to receive the products and services offered?"; „Where are these customers?"; „What do customers want?"; „What expectations of the clients must the

tourist products / services satisfy?"; „What promotional activities are carried out to attract customers?"; „How do you want tourist products or services to be perceived by those for whom they are intended?"; „Where do customers expect to find them?"; „When is the right time to be offered to them?"; „How much will this cost?" [12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this study was to identify methods of promoting agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area and the relationships that are established taking into consideration the characteristics of the agritourism pension owner, the classification category of agritourism pension, the development region which the tourist accommodation structure is part of.

In order to carry out this work we used as a means of collecting information the questionnaire that was applied to a number of 110 managers of agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area, counties that are part of the following development regions: Central Region - Alba county, North-West Region - Bihor, Cluj, Sălaj counties, West Region - Arad, Hunedoara counties.

Taking into account the bibliographic sources regarding the promotion tools, the promotion policy within the marketing mix, the existing promotion methods at the agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area were highlighted. In the paper, the information provided following the application of the questionnaire was processed, using the statistical indicators Chi square and the Pearson coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For a good presentation of the tourist services, the owners of agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains area [13] tried by several means to make their presence known in the tourist field (Table 1). Thus, a number of 51 respondents made web pages on the Internet, 46 respondents made brochures, leaflets, business cards, they installed billboards with the pension in visible places, on the road (Photos below).

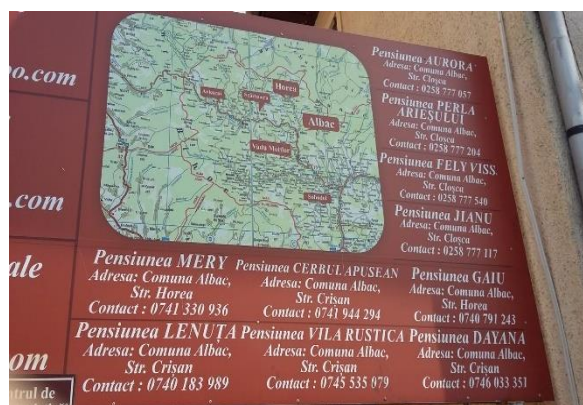


Photo 1. Advertising panel with the accommodation units from Albac commune, Alba county
 Source: Own archive.



Photo 2. Advertising panel Casa Florela agritourism pension, Căpușu Mic village, Cluj county
 Source: Own archive.



Photo 3. Advertising panel Saranis Agritourism Pension, Beliș commune, Cluj county
 Source: Own archive.

84 respondents stated that they used booking and promotion sites for both domestic and international tourism market, especially Hungarian, among which we can mention: www.portalturism.com, www.LaPensiuni.ro, www.Travelminit.ro, www.Carta.ro, www.TurismInfo.ro, www.HotelGuru.hu, www.CautPensiuni.ro, www.Booking.com, www.DirectBooking.com, www.TripAdvisor, www.Travlocals.com, or they advertised on facebook.

A number of 21 respondents participated in local, regional or national activities or fairs: ex Albac National Rural Tourism Fair (i.e. Daiana Pension, Albac commune, Alba county), (Photo 4) at the Fair Bucharest International Tourism Board (eg Pension from Vața to Brad in Vața de Jos commune, Hunedoara county or Casa Pera Pension in Basarabasa village, Vața de Jos commune, Hunedoara county).



Photo 4. Promotion of Daiana Pension at the National Rural Tourism Fair 2018 in Albac, Alba County
 Source: Own archive.

A small number of agritourism pensions are ANTREC members with the help of which they are promoted in the pages of specialized magazines (i.e. Dorel Codoban, Agritourism

Pension - Roşia, Bihor County), or through local, national, international promotion organizations with which they are in partnership (eg Traditional House Experience - Roşia, Bihor county, is in partnership with numerous national and international bodies with which it attracts its target group. eg Apuseni Experience, AlpinExpe, Romanian Ecotourism Association, Bihor Center for Protected Areas and Sustainable Development, Eco-Jur, Romanian Speleology Federation, Technical Solutions Camp.)

A successful promotion is also through the pensions' clients, which is a gratifying thing, something affirmed by 75 respondents. A number of 52 respondents stated that they used the promotion services of travel agencies, with which they have concluded collaboration contracts. As examples of travel agencies we can mention Porolisum Tour from Zalău, Travelminit from Cluj, Hello Romania. The Davincze Tours travel agency from Sâncraiu commune has been successfully promoting, for more than 10 years, the agritourism pensions in the area, attracting tourists from both Romania and Hungary [4]. The quality of tourist services within the agritourism pension, the way of treating each tourist are just a few elements that meet the requirements of any person staying at the pension, which is the best messenger of promoting tourism, taking into account that the most important means of marketing is the word-of-mouth system [6].

This was also found in the case of tourism from agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area, where 68% of respondents said that former customers recommended the accommodation where they were accommodated to other people (relatives, friends). Regardless of the development region in which the agritourism pensions are located, the promotion is done through several means in order to inform the tourists about the tourist services offered. It is found that there is no significant relationship between the development region and the mode of promotion. Thus, it is found that 65% of respondents in the Central development region mentioned that promotion through customers is the most useful means, and 60%

of respondents make known their agritourism business through the website. 68% of the owners of agritourism pensions in the North-West development region focus on promotion through clients, and 56% mentioned that travel agencies are reliable business partners in the tourism field. And 80% of the owners of agritourism pensions in the West development region put the promotion through customers in the first place, followed by 70% of the respondents with the business in the West region studied, on the promotion through brochures, leaflets, business cards. (Fig. 2, Table 2).

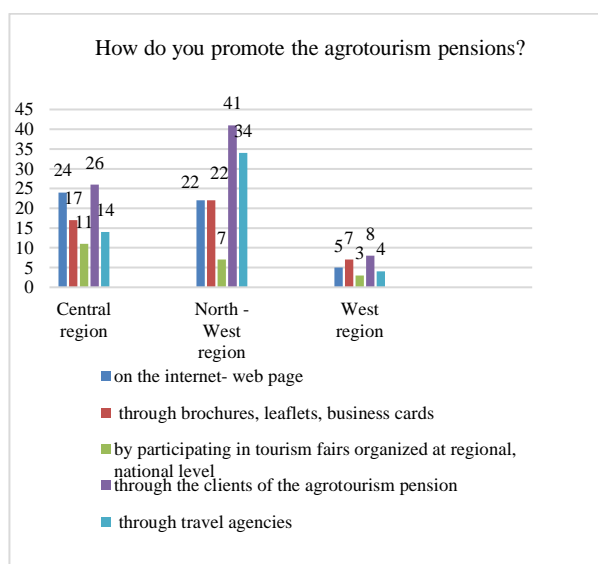


Fig. 2. Structure of the way of achieving the agritourism pension promotion according to development region

Source: Own design and calculation.

Given the link between the pension owner's gender and how to promote the structure of the tourist reception, it is found that there is a significant normal relationship between these criteria, both men and women try to make pensions known through several ways of promotion. We can mention the fact that 67.65% of the gentlemen' answers and 68.42% of the ladies' answers of the agritourism pensions owners refer to the promotion through the clients of the agritourism pension. The least emphasis is put on promotion by participating in local, national, international trade fairs. Only 7 men, representing 20.59% and 14 women, representing 18.42% specified the fact that

they participated in tourism fairs organized in order to promote the pension they ran (Table 2). The statistical analysis on the evaluation of web promotion via the website by development region shows that there is a significant link, which means that there are major differences between respondents' answers by development region. The majority

of respondents who specified that they promote the agritourism pension through the Internet using the website of the tourist reception unit, that is 24, are located in the Central development region, followed by 22 respondents in the North-West region, and the least in number, that is 5, are located in the West development region (Table 3).

Table 2. Structure of the promotion method of the agritourism pension by development region and pension owner's gender

Development region. owner's gender		UM	How do you promote the agritourism pension?				
			On the internet - web page	Through brochures. leaflets. business cards	By participating in tourism fairs organized at regional. national level	Through the clients of the agritourism pension	Through travel agencies
Region	Central region	no	24	17	11	26	14
		%	60.00	42.50	27.50	65.00	35.00
	North-West region	no	22	22	7	41	34
		%	36.67	36.67	11.67	68.33	56.67
	West region	no	5	7	3	8	4
		%	50.00	70.00	30.00	80.00	40.00
Gender	masculine	no	18	13	7	23	14
		%	52.94	38.24	20.59	67.65	41.18
	feminine	no	33	33	14	52	38
		%	43.42	43.42	18.42	68.42	50.00
Grand total		no	51	46	21	75	52
		%	46.36	41.82	19.09	68.18	47.27

Source: Simina F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains

Table 3. Assessment of the connection between internet promotion - web page by development region

Development region	UM	On the internet - web page		Total		
		yes	no	no	%	
CENTRAL REGION	no	24	16	40	36.36	
NORTH-WEST REGION	no	22	38	60	54.55	
WEST REGION	no	5	5	10	9.09	
Total	no	51	59	110	100	
	%	46.36	53.64	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0702					
Degrees of freedom	2					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	3.22	4.61	5.99	9.21	13.82
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	5.31		*			
Pearson coefficient	0.215					

Source: Simina, F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains.

Table 4. Assessment of the connection between internet promotion - web page and the classification category of agritourism pension

Classification category	UM	On the internet - web page		Total		
		Yes	no	no	%	
2 daisies	no	11	33	44	40.00	
3 daisies	no	36	25	61	55.45	
4 daisies	no	4	1	5	4.55	
Total	no	51	59	110	100	
	%	46.36	53.64	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0008					
Degrees of freedom	2					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	3.22	4.61	5.99	9.21	13.82
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	14.28					***
Pearson coefficient	0.339					

Source: Simina, F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountain.

The evaluation of the link between the promotion on the internet - the website and the classification category of the pension shows that there is a very significant link, which means that there are major differences between respondents' answers by classification category, so that 4 pensions out of 5 classified with 4 daisies are promoted through the web page, 36 units of 3 daisies and 11 pensions of 2 daisies have web page (Table 4). The statistical analysis on highlighting the significance between the

development region and the participation in tourism fairs of representatives of agritourism in the Apuseni Mountains area shows the fact that there is a strong link, which means that there are significant differences between the answers given by the development region. The majority of those who participated in tourism fairs are from the Central development region, 11 in number, and the fewest are from the West region, only a number of 3 owners of agritourism pensions (Table 5).

Table 5. Assessment of the connection between promotion by participating in regional and national tourism fairs and development region

Development region	UM	By participating in tourism fairs organized at regional. national level		Total		
		yes	no	nr	%	
CENTRAL REGION	no	11	29	40	36.36	
NORTH-WEST REGION	no	7	53	60	54.55	
WEST REGION	no	3	7	10	9.09	
Total	no	21	89	110	100	
	%	19.09	80.91	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0934					
Degrees of freedom	2					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	3.22	4.61	5.99	9.21	13.82
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	4.74		*			
Pearson coefficient	0.203					

Source: Simina, F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains.

Table 6. Assessment of the connection between promotion through travel agencies and development region

Development region	UM	Through travel agencies		Total		
		Yes	no	no	%	
CENTRAL REGION	no	14	26	40	36.36	
NORTH-WEST REGION	no	34	26	60	54.55	
WEST REGION	no	4	6	10	9.09	
Total	no	52	58	110	100	
	%	47.27	52.73	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0929					
Degrees of freedom	2					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	3.22	4.61	5.99	9.21	13.82
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	4.75		*			
Pearson coefficient	0.204					

Source: Simina F. Andora – Evelina, 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains

The statistical analysis on the assessment of the link between promotion through travel agencies depending on the development region where the agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains are located shows that we have a major correlation, which means that there are significant differences between responses by development region, most of the owners who promote their agritourism pension are from the North-West region, 34 in number, followed by 14 respondents from the

Central region and 4 respondents from the West region (Table 6). The evaluation between the correlation between the respondents' age and the way of promoting agritourism pensions through travel agencies shows that we have a distinctly significant link, which means that there are major differences between respondents by age of respondents. Most respondents who concluded contracts with agencies of tourism in order to promote agritourism services are aged up to

40 years, numbering 16. Only 9 respondents aged between 41 and 50 answered that they promoted their agritourism pension through travel agencies. Over 47.27% of the

respondents out of the 110 respondents specified that travel agencies in the country or abroad promote agritourism in the Apuseni Mountains area (Table 7).

Table 7. Assessment of the connection between promotion through travel agencies and the age of the agritourism pension owner

Age	UM	Through travel agencies		Total		
		yes	No	no	%	
<40	no	16	14	30	27.27	
41-50	no	9	27	36	32.73	
51-60	no	12	9	21	19.09	
>60	no	15	8	23	20.91	
Total	no	52	58	110	100	
	%	47.27	52.73	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0098					
Degrees of freedom	3					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	4.64	6.25	7.81	11.34	16.27
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	11.40				**	
Pearson coefficient	0.306					

Source: Simina, F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains

Table 8. Assessment of the connection between promotion through brochures, leaflets, business cards and the classification category of the agritourism pension

Classification category	UM	Through brochures, leaflets, business cards		Total		
		yes	No	no	%	
2 daisies	no	12	32	44	40.00	
3 daisies	no	33	28	61	55.45	
4 daisies	no	1	4	5	4.55	
Total	no	46	64	110	100	
	%	41.82	58.18	100	*	
Indicators	χ^2 Test	Significance threshold				
	\leq	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.01	0.001
CHITEST (Sig value)	0.0137					
Degrees of freedom	2					
CHIINV (theoretical Chi)	\geq	3.22	4.61	5.99	9.21	13.82
CHIINV (calculated Chi)	8.59				*	
Pearson coefficient	0.269					

Source: Simina, F. A.-E., 2020, Questionnaire agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains.

The statistical analysis on the link between promotion through brochures, leaflets, business cards according to the classification category of the agritourism pension shows that we have a significant link between these criteria, which means that there are significant differences between the answers given by respondents taking into account the classification category of agritourism pensions. Most of the answers regarding the promotion of agritourism services through brochures, leaflets, business cards were given by 33 owners of agritourism pensions classified with 3 daisies and the least only by

one respondent, owner of an agritourism pension classified with 4 daisies (Table 8). The effort made by the managers of agritourism pensions together with the local community. authorities. entrepreneurs. national tourism associations for promotion lead to the development of tourism activities in rural areas [11] a place where several types of tourism can be successfully developed. including adventure tourism [9] cultural tourism. leisure and recreation tourism and more recently “slow tourism” [8]. The full use of natural. economic and human resources to an area with a rich tourism potential can be

achieved by involving local communities in the tourism sector by supporting the initiative groups for the development and promotion of local tourist offer. in order to protect the environment and cultural assets [1].

CONCLUSIONS

The promotion policy is an important element in the tourist marketing mix. It is rightly said among people that "advertising is the soul of trade." a statement that must be considered by managers of agritourism pensions. From the answers given by the 110 agritourism pension managers from the Apuseni Mountains area from the 6 counties studied (Alba, Arad, Bihor, Cluj, Hunedoara, Sălaj) we identified the most used promotion techniques. informing potential tourists about the services offered by the accommodation units such as agritourism pensions. It can be seen that the use of the Internet in promoting agritourism has gained ground in front of the classic means that is advertising on paper through brochures. leaflets. business cards. catalogues. We can conclude that 51 respondents promote their agritourism activity using a website. over 80 of agritourism pensions owners use the specialized sites for national and international promotion and reservation on the Internet or have Facebook. The clients are among the best promoters of the services of the agritourism pension. this fact being confirmed by 75 owners of agritourism pensions from the Apuseni Mountains area. The travel agencies also brilliantly promote the agritourism activity. which was also stated by 52 respondents. The promotion strategy used by agritourism pension managers must take into account the clear information of potential tourists about the available tourist offer. In order to attract new tourists in perspective. it is recommended that the managers of agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area should be more and more actively involved in the projects of the communities they belong to and together with them they should make an interactive map on the internet with the tourist units from this area.

REFERENCES

- [1]Albu, O.T., Draghici, M., Necula, R., 2016, The tourism and agritourism potential of Bistrița-Năsăud County-Romania in the North West Development Region. Scientific Papers Series Management. Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development. Vol. 16(1): pp. 25-30.
- [2]Burke, F.F., Resnick, B.P., 1991, Marketing and Selling the Travel Product. Cincinnati. Ohio.
- [3]Cojocariu, S., Ene, C., Lăscuț, R., Mihail, A., Stănciulescu, D., Tincă-Niță, C., 2004, Hotel manager's manual. THR-CG Publishing House. Bucharest. pp. 203 – 233.
- [4]Davincze Tours Travel Agency <https://www.kalotaszeg-davincze.ro/ro/home-ro/>, Accessed on 04.07.2020.
- [5]Fintineru, G., Smedescu, D., 2020, Tourism Economics. Ex Terra Aurum Publishing House. Bucharest. pp. 128.
- [6]Knight, P., 2005, Effective marketing plan. A verified method for companies of any size (translation by Sibinescu Monica). Bic All Publishing House. Bucharest. p.50.
- [7]Kotler, P., 1997, Marketing Management. Teora Publishing House. Bucharest.
- [8]Mărcuță, A., Mărcuță, L., Popescu, A., Tindecu, C., Tudor, V., Smedescu, D., 2020, Possibilities of development of the slow tourism concept in Romania. Scientific Papers Series Management. Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 20. Issue 4. pp. 331 – 338;
- [9]Mărcuță, L., Mărcuță, A., Popescu, A., Tindecu, C., Tudor, V., Smedescu, D., 2020, Study on the development of adventure tourism in Romania. Scientific Papers Series Management. Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 20(4): 339-345.
- [10]Merce, E., Dincă, C., Jipa, M., Matei, R., Neagu, D., Popa V., Seviciu, M., Spălățelu, F., Verdeș, Ș., 2004, Tourism marketing. Curricular assistant for the 12th grade. Oscar Print Publishing House. Bucharest. pp. 25-44.
- [11]Popescu, A., 2016, The position of tourist and agrotourist guesthouses in Romania's accommodation structures. Scientific Papers Series Management. Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 16(1):417-424.
- [12]Romanian Pension Association, <https://asociatiapensiunilorindinromania.wordpress.com/>, Accessed on 04.07.2020.
- [13]Simina, A. E., 2021, Study on the establishment of agritourism pensions in the Apuseni Mountains area. Scientific Papers Series Management. Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 21(1): 693 - 698.
- [14]Stăncioiu, A.-F., 2004, Marketing strategies in tourism. Economic Publishing House. Bucharest. p.149.
- [15]Zaharia, V., 2016, Tourist marketing. Course notes. University Publishing House. Bucharest. pp. 66-79.