

## RURAL TOURISM, AGROTOURISM AND ECOTOURISM IN ROMANIA: CURRENT RESEARCH STATUS AND FUTURE TRENDS

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### Abstract

*This work represents a contribution to the knowledge of the state of research in the field of rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism in Romania, identifying the main trends and proposing future research lines and themes. Secondary data such as journal articles, proceeding papers reports and statistical data were analysed to obtain an image of the current stage in research with the topic rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism in Romania. A systematic bibliometric analysis was conducted on the literature retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection database using the VOS Viewer software tool. Using the specific keywords “Rural Tourism”, and “Agritourism”, and “Agritourism” and “Ecotourism”, and “Romania” 440 articles were reviewed and analysed. The results show that studies concerning these keywords and their influence on the development of rural areas in Romania represent an important and dynamic research topic in the last 10 years. Eight major research themes were identified regarding rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism in Romania. The findings made in this paper will add to the existing body of knowledge of Romanian tourism research in general and, rural tourism research in particular.*

**Key words:** rural tourism, agritourism, ecotourism, rural development, Romania

### INTRODUCTION

Promoting responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism contributes to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, tourism contributes to: job creation and income generation; stimulating sustainable agriculture and capitalizing on its results through tourist structures; development and strengthening of local communities; conservation of local biodiversity and natural and human heritage, which become the main attraction of an area. Sustainable tourism involves the adoption of responsible production and consumption [86]and meeting the demands of the contemporary consumer (experience, excitement, escape, entertainment, education and ecology) [79].

According to the World Tourism Organization, international tourism recovered

in 2022 approx. 63% of pre-pandemic levels, with Europe leading the way. Europe, recorded 585 million arrivals in 2022, i.e. approx. 80% of pre-pandemic levels (-21% from 2019) [87].

In Romania, the gross domestic product directly from tourism had a value of 31,564.6 million lei from the national gross domestic product in 2019 [32]. Statistical data show that the share of the tourism industry in Romania's gross domestic product stagnated between 2018-2020 at 5.3% [72].

Rural tourism and agritourism in Romania have a long history, although until 1990 there was no organized system at the national level. A study carried out by the Tourism Research Institute in 1972 identified 118 localities with the potential of a tourist village, of which 14 were nominated with this title, but a year later a decree prohibited the lodging of tourists at peasants. However, the villages of Sibiel and

Lerești were included in the tourist circuit on the condition that tourists cannot be accommodated by locals [16].

Romania has joined the European Federation of Rural Tourism (Rural Tour) [24] since 1995 and is represented internationally and nationally by ANTREC (National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism). Through its 16 regional branches [4] and over 2500 members during over 25 years of activity, ANTREC promoted the rural environment and had a major contribution to the implementation and development of rural tourism and agritourism in Romania. A major contribution to the development of rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism in Romania was made by a number of other non-governmental organizations, among which we mention: Operation Village Romaine, the Adept Foundation, the "Mihai Eminescu Trust" Foundation, the Romanian Ecotourism Association and the "My Transylvania" Association. They organized qualification courses, exchanges of good practices for rural entrepreneurs, gastronomic and cultural events. All events contributed to the promotion of the Romanian rural environment.

The specialized literature groups the tourist villages in Romania according to their predominant characteristics and the main activities carried out, as follows: ethnographic-folkloric, climatic and landscape, of artistic and craft creation, for practicing sports, fishing and hunting, pastoral, vineyards, and orchards [47]. Over time, the number of tourist structures with accommodation function in rural Romania has increased, and the quality of services has become better and better in close connection with the increase in popularity of holidays in rural areas [51].

Rural tourism products are a combination of resources and services and contribute to the ability of each tourist destination to offer unique experiences [77].

The concept of rural tourism and agritourism varies greatly from one country to another and depends on the approach of professionals in this field, the type of accommodation

structure and the nature of the activities carried out [80].

Rural tourism uses a wide range of types of tourist structures with an accommodation function and capitalizes through events, fairs and cultural manifestations the entire natural and human tourism potential of the countryside, with the involvement of the local population [40]. Rural tourism is defined by three main elements: people, space and products, characterized by their authenticity and traditional character [18]. Cozma et al. (2021) consider that "community-based tourism" is one of the most appropriate forms of tourism development in Romanian villages [17].

Recent studies have assessed the impact of tourism on local communities, whether positive or negative, and residents' perceptions of it [61].

Agritourism involves the diversification of farm activity to generate additional income, complementary to agricultural income, with positive implications for rural and local development [10; 75]. Chase et al (2018) propose that agritourism be framed within a conceptual framework that encompasses five types of activities closely related to active farms: direct sales, education, hospitality, recreation, and entertainment, with core and peripheral levels [8].

Ecotourism can be a model of sustainable exploitation of resources [33].

In Romania, the Romanian Ecotourism Association (AER) was established in 2003 with the aim of creating a national partnership between the process of development and promotion of ecotourism. Through all the actions taken, it promotes the concept of sustainable tourism. Eight ecotourism destinations are currently certified in Romania, and two others are at various stages in the evaluation process for certification [3]. The development of ecotourism destinations is carried out with the involvement of all local actors, who can express their vision and identify opportunities for involvement in the sustainability of the area [41].

AER is currently implementing a project called "Digital Routes of cultural heritage for

a sustainable future" together with NGOs from different countries. Within it, more than 20 digital routes are proposed for our country [81].

Different authors emphasize the need for innovation in rural tourism and agritourism and for continuous change, which will have the effect of maintaining the farm's competitiveness. To improve the tourist experience [38] innovations can cover different aspects such as products, processes, marketing, organization. They can be carried out directly by entrepreneurs or through collaboration with other entities [58]. Examples of innovations in rural tourism are presented for Romania and Poland as: thematic villages, educational farms, and the creation of tourism product networks [65].

To measure the impact of agritourism on rural development, Karampela and Kizos (2018) propose the use of a system based on variables and composite indices [36].

The motivation of the present paper is to investigate the evolution of scientific research regarding the rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism in Romania through review and analysis. To achieve such a complex objective, three research questions (RQ) are proposed:

- RQ1: What is the distribution of scientific production in this field of knowledge in the last ten years?
- RQ2: What are the main research clusters on rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism in Romania?
- RQ3: What are the core themes and research directions in this field of knowledge?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Secondary data such as journal articles, proceeding papers reports and statistical data were analysed to obtain an image of the current stage in research with the topic rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism in Romania.

The quantitative structure of the bibliometric analysis makes it ideal for this study because it maintains the authors' bias under control. Its ability to handle massive databases allows it to extract information from a large corpus. In

the current study, a review and a bibliometric analysis was performed to identify, organize, and analyse trends in the proposed research area. Selecting the right database is decisive for a well-performed evaluation. We used the Web of Science Core Collection which is a comprehensive bibliographic data source.

The methodology was applied to generate a complete search of the WOS database using the syntax: "rural tourism" OR "agrotourism" OR "agritourism" OR "ecotourism" AND "Romania" in the title, abstract and keywords of the papers. To refine the search, two filters were applied to the dataset: "language" (English) and "year of publication" (1990 – present 20 January 2023). The application of these filters resulted in 440 documents that constitute the data set to be analysed. Excel software was used for data extraction from Web of Science Core Collection and Vosviewer software for bibliometric analysis of the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ruiz-Real et al. (2020) showed that Romania is among the countries with a considerable number of studies on rural tourism [59]. In the international specialized literature on rural tourism, agritourism or ecotourism there are case studies, while comparative studies suggesting future research directions in the context of sustainable development are lacking [37].

Bibliometric research allows the creation of a systematic overview of the evolution of research in a field and is a valuable tool for stating future research directions in the respective domain [2].

### **RQ1: The distribution of scientific production in this field of knowledge in the last ten years**

#### **Descriptive analysis**

In the first stage of the descriptive analysis, the main 5 categories that registered the most publications in the analysed period from the Web of Science Core Collection were identified (Table 1). The increased interest of the authors for the sustainability tourism is noted.

Out of the total of 440 articles identified, 375 were published in the last 10 years, which shows the interest of researchers in the given topic. The trend noted is that after each year or at most two years of increase in scientific production, a slight decrease is encountered in the following year, as is the case in 2019, 2020, and 2022.

Table 1. Distribution of papers according with the first 5 Web of Science Categories

| Web of Science Categories     | Frequency  | Percentage of total sample |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Economics                     | 87         | 19.77                      |
| Agricultural Economics Policy | 73         | 16.59                      |
| Environmental Sciences        | 70         | 15.91                      |
| Business Management           | 50         | 11.36                      |
| Other                         | 36         | 8.18                       |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>440</b> | <b>100</b>                 |

Source: Developed by authors, based on WOS database.

The fluctuation could be influenced by a multitude of factors, including the number of entities involved in research on sustainable tourism, the concern of civil society on sustainable tourism, etc. (Table 2).

Table 2. Year of publication in WOS within the last 10 years

| No           | Publication Year | Frequency  | Percentage of total sample |
|--------------|------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1            | 2022             | 39         | 10.40                      |
| 2            | 2021             | 51         | 13.60                      |
| 3            | 2020             | 35         | 9.33                       |
| 4            | 2019             | 44         | 11.73                      |
| 5            | 2018             | 51         | 13.60                      |
| 6            | 2017             | 50         | 13.33                      |
| 7            | 2016             | 43         | 11.47                      |
| 8            | 2015             | 29         | 7.73                       |
| 9            | 2014             | 21         | 5.60                       |
| 10           | 2013             | 12         | 3.20                       |
| <b>Total</b> |                  | <b>375</b> | <b>100.00</b>              |

Source: Developed by authors, based on WOS database.

## RQ2: The main research clusters on rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism in Romania Science Mapping

Conceptual structure: Co-word analysis. In the first phase, the co-occurrence term analysis was performed for the analysed sample, respectively, the research published from 1990 until now. In this sense, the following restrictions were applied to the VOSviewer (Nees Jan van Eck; Ludo Waltman, 2022) program: the analysis was performed in the “Abstract” field, and the minimum number of occurrences of a term was limited to 20. The result was the network visualization map based on the text data shown in Figure 1.

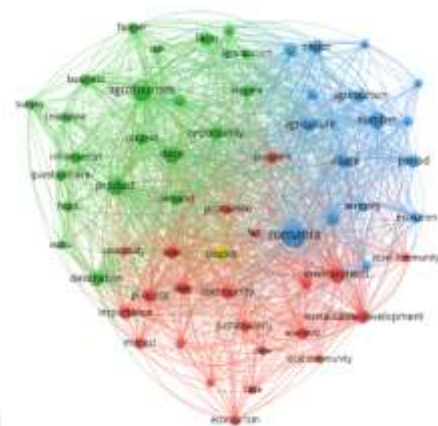


Fig. 1. Network visualization map based on text data – term co-occurrence  
 Source: Own processed data on [45].

The main findings indicate that 60 items were registered, grouped in 4 clusters, which generated 1,704 links and a total link strength of 9,704.

The terms grouped in the 4 resulting clusters are symbolized in different colours for each cluster, standing out as the main themes: ecotourism, environment, community, sustainable development, sustainable tourism (cluster 1 – red, with 22 items); agrotourism, product, data, farm, destination, tourism development (cluster 2 – green, with 21 items); Romania, agriculture, agritourism, rural development, village (cluster 3 – blue, with 16 items); county (cluster 4 – mustard with 1 term).

The co-occurrence of all keywords identified in the selected articles (minimum 5 co-occurrence) was determined. (Figure 2).

As expected, out of the total of 1383 keywords identified, 63 have an occurrence of at least 5. These are grouped into 6 clusters. Table 3 shows the main keywords identified and their occurrence.

It is noted that the authors with the largest number of articles on this topic are Călina A. and Călina J., with 12 articles published, respectively, and 51 citations of them, respectively, total link strength 40.

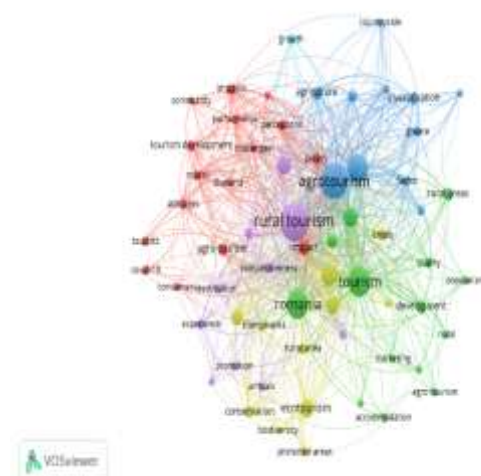


Fig. 2. Key words occurrence in analysed papers  
 Source: Own processed data on [45].

Table 3. All key words occurrence and their total link strength in the identified papers

| Key words               | Occurrences | Total link strength |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Rural tourism           | 99          | 253                 |
| Agrotourism             | 89          | 221                 |
| Agritourism             | 53          | 173                 |
| Tourism                 | 61          | 146                 |
| Sustainability          | 27          | 103                 |
| Management              | 22          | 88                  |
| Sustainable development | 35          | 85                  |
| Impact                  | 17          | 66                  |
| Typology                | 10          | 54                  |
| Agriculture             | 12          | 53                  |
| Rural development       | 27          | 52                  |
| Sustainable development | 27          | 52                  |

Source: VOSviewer, version 1.6.18

### RQ3: The core themes and research directions in this field of knowledge

#### *Rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism – as possible means of sustainable development of the rural area*

Tourism is the engine of diversification of economic activities in rural areas and is a component of local development models [73]. Agritourism is perceived as "smart chances" for the mountain area, if there is the support of

the entire local rural community [11]. It plays an important role in the sustainable development of rural tourism, the reduction of poverty and the revitalization of rural areas [35]. Agrotourism, like ecotourism, represents complementary activities to agricultural ones [39; 63] contributes to the increase of agricultural incomes in the context of the valorisation of natural, cultural and social resources [27] and to the preservation and promotion of traditional agricultural practices [46; 60].

There are studies that show that oenological tourism [49; 76] and the gastronomic sector are closely related to rural areas and contribute to their sustainable development. Closely related to sustainable tourism, gastronomic tourism is often associated with local products and gastronomic products registered on various national or international quality schemes [67]. Approximately 90% of the agritourism guesthouses in the villages of Mărginimea Sibiului offer tourists traditional products [71]. Local gastronomy creates links between agriculture and tourism [70].

Ecotourism involves the integration of various activities in nature, in close connection with local culture and contributes to the sustainable use of local tourism resources [69].

#### *Accessing financial support from the European Union for diversifying the activity and developing the pluriactivity of farms through agritourism*

Galluzzo N. emphasized that the access to European funds for agritourism determined the diversification of resources and the activity of farms and the reduction of socio-economic marginalization in the Romanian countryside. There is a positive correlation between the development of agritourism and the low population density in the locality. The development of agritourism in Romania was closely related to the natural and human resources of the rural environment [29].

In a study carried out in the farms that cultivate lavender in Romania, it is shown that the diversification of their activity through tourist activities (the organization of festivals, brunches, picnics in the plantation or photo sessions), increases the profitability of the business and the satisfaction of the farmers. In

those rural areas that are already known as tourist destinations, the tourist offer could be diversified by offering walks in the plantations, observing the beauty of the landscape and aromatherapy or selling lavender-based products [84]. Rural areas already known as tourist destinations that introduced lavender fields in their portfolio could benefit from diversifying their tourist offer with products such as breakfast or tours in lavender gardens, observing the landscapes of lavender-scented villages, combined with unique nature walks, photo sessions, as well as the sale of lavender-based products (essential oil, perfumed water, honey, soap, jam, etc.).

A study conducted among agricultural producers, tourism service providers and tourists in the Braşov area shows that permaculture can also be successfully integrated into the rural tourism product, contributing to the development of the rural area [23].

#### ***The challenges faced by rural tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery measures***

The restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, the desire for personal security and the imposed distancing have determined the increase in domestic tourist flow [48]. Most tourists chose to spend their vacation in the countryside, preferring small accommodation units and as many activities as possible in nature, in small groups [56]. For Romania, the development of domestic tourism during the pandemic was also stimulated by the granting of incentives for public sector employees.

Mitrică and collaborators investigated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the rural area of the Subcarpathian area of Buzau, showing that rural tourism is more resistant to the crisis [42].

For the training of future specialists in rural tourism and agritourism, a web page type application was created that was used starting from the period of restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic [12].

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes in the profile and behaviour of tourists who are increasingly better informed and more concerned about their health and well-being.

In this context, during the pandemic period, habits in choosing tourist destinations have also changed, with rural tourism becoming the most preferred choice [54].

As measures to recover tourism during the pandemic period and in the next one, specialized literature proposes the diversification of offers, personalized packages, raising the quality standard of services and better promotion through social networks [55].

#### ***The use of modern technologies to expand the productive capacity of agritourism guesthouses and their promotion***

Călina et al. [6] have shown that modern technologies such as geographic information system (GIS), photogrammetry and UAV flights can be used for the sustainable development of agritourism guesthouses. They are effective tools for management and control of the quality and efficiency of works specific to agricultural production.

Voda et al. (2022) show that smartphone applications used for tourism will lead to the transformation of rural areas into proactive and creative tourism destinations [85].

Velea et al. (2021) propose the use for information and in the tourism marketing mix of the WECTOU platform created by Meteo Romania. This provides information on the number of days with good/bad weather for outdoor activities; snow cover and vegetation cover index [83]. The same author and his collaborators propose the use of the "Holiday Climate Index" for the exploitation of natural resources, including the climate, for tourism purposes [82].

For the young generation, the Internet is the main source of information. During nature hikes, digital maps or software are starting to be used to allow the recognition of spontaneous flora [69].

The use of new technologies in tourism determines the improvement of economic, social and ecological performances [21].

To promote these forms of alternative tourism in Romania, it is recommended [49, 50]: the application of new communication models based on social-media networks; e-marketing; using virtual reality experience for memorable and immersive experiences. Onu R. (2018)

shows that those companies that promote themselves through Social Media platforms, donot only do online marketing but build relationships [50].

#### ***Analysis of accommodation capacity and its use in different rural/agritourism destinations***

In 2021, 9,146 tourist structures with accommodation functions were operating in Romania, of which 3,460 were agro-tourism guesthouses, representing 37.7% of the total. There was a 23.5% increase in their number compared to 2019. Agritourism pensions are preferred by tourists for lower prices, the possibility of renting in small groups and quality food services [56].

A recently published study shows that the top three rural tourism/agritourism destinations in Romania are the Braşov area, the Maramureş area and the Sibiu area. According to the authors, in the year 2021 (August) the number of tourist structures and the index of net use of the registered accommodation capacity in the three areas was: 387 and 31.4% (Braşov); 264 and 26.4% (Maramureş); 146 and 35.6 % (Sibiu)[1]. In all three rural tourism/agritourism destinations there are picturesque landscapes, nationally renowned local events, well-preserved and valued local customs and crafts, culture, traditional agriculture, local gastronomy and numerous possibilities for spending free time in nature. Various thematic routes have been created in Maramureş and Sibiu, and the cultural authenticity and local gastronomy attract many tourists [5; 7; 68].

Numerous authors highlighted the increase in the number of agro-tourism guesthouses in Romania from 500 units in 2000 to over 2,500 units, 44,499 beds, respectively, 1,004,400 tourist arrivals and 1,928,485 overnight stays in 2017 [15; 25; 26; 28; 30; 34; 35; 64].

Other authors have highlighted the territorial differences regarding the quality of services offered by agritourism guesthouses. These can be attributed to factors such as: the lack of a strategic management system at the national level; the lack of a national strategy for the development of agritourism; different natural and anthropogenic tourism resources, etc. [62].

Agrotourism is a useful tool for the sustainable development of the rural environment [43] inthe sense of reducing socio-economic marginalization [28] and increasing farmers' incomes.

#### ***Analysis of consumer preferences regarding rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism***

Rural tourism ranks among the top preferences of tourists concerned about the sustainability of tourist destinations and knowing the lifestyle of the Romanian peasant [66].

Following the investigation of the opinion of 758 people regarding the preferences related to the forms of accommodation in the countryside, approx. 37% of them prefer accommodation in agritourism guesthouses. Tourists over 46 years old choose this option in proportion to over 50%. The main aspects followed by tourists in choosing a tourist structure are the quality of services, cleanliness, hygiene and price [9]. During the years 2016-2018 approx. 90% of the tourists who stayed in agritourism guesthouses were Romanian [43].

Among the expectations of tourists during holidays spent in the countryside are: the desire to explore the environment by hiking; practicing various activities related to adventure tourism; the possibility to benefit from different entertainment options under conditions where safety and security prevail [57].

Another study on the quality of agritourism services in Romania shows that for tourists the beauty of the landscape is particularly important, along with the need for safety, hospitality of the hosts and the possibility of practicing activities for recreation and relaxation [78].

Different authors have tried to create the profile of the tourist who spends his vacation in rural tourism/agritourism or ecotourism destinations.

The ecotourist is perceived as a person with a high level of training, with an above-average income, willing to spend a "content vacation" [19] and benefit from unique experiences in direct contact with nature and the local community [14].

Among the benefits that the practice of these forms of alternative tourism bring are the stimulation of the economy of rural areas, the possibility of capitalizing on surplus products, the enhancement of traditional gastronomy, the protection of the environment and the preservation of traditions [74].

Young people know well the main ecotourism destinations in Romania, which they choose according to the uniqueness [31] and beauty of the landscape, the multitude of outdoor activities and the hospitality of the hosts [69]. Constantin et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of accessibility in ecotourism destinations, the need for intelligent development of transport and communications. Also important is the direct relationship between the profile of the ecotourist, the level of satisfaction and the intention to revisit an ecotourism destination [13]. Dumitras et al. (2017) state that ecotourists who spend a stay in the national parks prefer to travel between 150-300 km from their home to them, and the average duration of the stay is approx. 3 days [22].

#### ***Analysis of the perception of local residents regarding the quality of rural tourist destinations***

A group of authors proposes the use of "QUALITEST", a working tool that offers the possibility to explore the characteristics of the area and to analyze the perception of the local community about the quality of the tourist destination [44]. In rural tourist destinations, the most important attributes associated with their success and attractiveness are: hospitality and the quality of local gastronomy. Long-term sustainability can only be achieved with the involvement of the local community.

#### ***Analysis of the development potential of rural tourism in the counties of Romania***

The development potential of rural tourism at county level can be determined based on a composite index. Such an index determined in 2016 highlighted that the main development poles are in Suceava, Harghita, Braşov, Argeş, Mureş and Sibiu counties, four of which are located in the Center development region [20]. Such indicators allow the assessment of rural tourism performance and development

potential. The authors highlighted the link between rural tourism and the sustainable development of rural areas.

At the national level, it is noted that the most developed areas in terms of rural tourism are the Center, North-East and North-West of the country. In 2016, these three regions held approx. 71% of all existing tourist structures at national level [53]. The determination of the Herfindhal-Hirschman Index (HHI), Gini-Struck Coefficient (GSC) and Concentration Coefficient (CC) allowed the conclusion that at the national level in 2016 there was a moderate concentration of agritourism.

Popescu A. (2018) points out that even if the development of rural tourism is dynamic, the future evolution depends on investments in infrastructure, the hospitality of the locals, the improvement of the professional skills of tourism entrepreneurs, the quality/price ratio, the promotion of tourist products, etc. [52].

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The main research themes identified in the literature on rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism in Romania refer to:

- The role of these forms of tourism in the sustainable development of the rural area;
- Accessing financial support from the European Union for diversifying the activity and developing the pluriactivity of farms through agritourism;
- Challenges faced by rural tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery measures;
- The use of modern technologies and the Internet to expand the productive capacity of agritourism guesthouses and their promotion;
- Analysis of the dynamics of accommodation capacity and its use in different rural tourism/agritourism destinations;
- Analysis of consumer preferences regarding rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism;
- Analysis of the perception of local residents regarding the quality of rural tourist destinations;
- Analysis of the development potential of rural tourism;

The development of rural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism contributes to changing the image of the rural environment and brings a



series of benefits for the rural community, among which we mention: the preservation and enhancement of the natural and anthropogenic tourist heritage; creating jobs and improving the professional and digital skills of people involved in services; the generation of incomes complementary to agricultural ones; improving the general appearance of localities; conservation of biodiversity; promoting local gastronomy; the direct exploitation of local products or those registered on different national or community quality schemes, supporting the local economy and creating short food supply chains.

There is a growing demand for sustainability and uniqueness of vacations.

The promotion of rural tourism and agritourism in Romania must be done starting from the use of technologies and the Internet and by organizing local events. Within them, traditions, gastronomy and local products must be in the first place. Romanian villages in general and tourist villages in particular, require a digital transformation.

Future research directions related to rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism must assess the level of management and marketing knowledge of the owners of rural tourism structures.

There are no studies related to the assessment of the quality of life, health, safety and security of the owners of tourist structures in the rural environment. They must be adapted to an increasingly saturated, competitive and digital market. Due to their multiactivity, the pressure they are subjected to can affect their physical and mental health.

There are no studies that show which are the main booking platforms with which the owners of guesthouses in the rural area collaborate to make their services known and for their marketing.

There is a correlation between the multitude of agreement possibilities and the duration of the stay. Studies are needed to identify and quantify the share of additional services offered by rural guesthouses and the income from these activities.

In the context of digitization and the use of innovative technologies in the rural

environment, studies are needed to assess whether tourist villages can be perceived as "smart villages".

Studies related to the consumption behavior of tourists in the post-pandemic period in general and of the young generation in particular are needed.

Some studies could identify how many of the tourist/agritourism guesthouses in an area organize camps for children, what kind of activities are offered to them and who are the people who manage the leisure activities. It would thus be determined that guesthouse owners call on the services of animators for holiday centers.

Another possible direction of research is related to the identification of the measures that the administrators of rural guesthouses take to protect water and energy resources used for tourism purposes or to reduce food waste. Such studies could thus make the connection with the sustainable development goals established in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

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