THE PERCEPTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE REGION CRISANA

BARBU IONEL

PROFESSOR – AUREL VLAICU UNIVERSITY FROM ARAD,
e-mail: ionelbarbu@yahoo.com

Abstract

In this paper we try to show the perception of the main stakeholder on the rural tourism field, local government, on the development of this economic activity. We believe that a revision of an important part of approaches that have appeared in the literature in terms of the concept of rural tourism, in terms of methods of analysis of tourism activities and, not least, requiring the use of modern techniques for foresight indicators by which to make assessments on these activities. From the literature we can draw a number of conditions necessary for the development of rural tourism and a number of motivations for its support. Implement policies and travel plans is the responsibility of both the administration and the private sector entrepreneurs.

The public sector is responsible for policy formulation, research and planning, development of basic infrastructure, the development of certain landmarks, establishing and managing service delivery standards, establishing management measures and recovery planning and environmental protection, setting standards for training and maintaining public health and safety.

The private sector is responsible for development of accommodation services, travel agency, the specific activity of commercial enterprises with tourism development and promotion of tourist attractions through specific marketing activities, based on existing infrastructure provided by government public. In this paper we try to find the difficulties, limitations of rural tourism development in Crisana region from the perspective of local government.

Key-words: rural tourism, Crisana region, difficulties

Classification JEL: M21, R1

1. Introduction

In this paper we try to show as well the main factors of the emergence and development of rural tourism in order to establish priorities in the joint action of local people, entrepreneurs, tourists and local and national administrations. In many countries, the tourism industry fall within government priority. Tourism has been identified as one of the primary industries with potential to support local communities in developing economic diversity. Rural tourism has developed due to revenue growth (it is mostly discretionary income), due to increased leisure life and diversification motivations and desires of tourists. Tourism development is favored by improving infrastructure, historical monuments and architectural restoration and promotion of environmental conservation. Rural areas have a special attraction for tourists because of the distinct characteristics associated with mystical, cultural, historical, ethnic and geographical. For progress together with profit for those involved, it requires several components: attractions, investment, appropriate infrastructure, services and diversified hospitality promotion. To run this set of factors need to join entrepreneurs and public administrations. From the literature we can draw a number of necessary conditions for the development of rural tourism and a number of motivations for its support. The public sector is responsible for policy formulation, research and planning, development of basic infrastructure, the development of certain landmarks, establishment and management of service delivery standards, establishing management measures and recovery planning and environmental protection, setting standards for training and improve employment, maintaining public health and safety. The private sector is responsible for the development of accommodation services, travel agency operations, the activity of commercial tourist enterprises, development of landmarks and advertising through specific marketing activities, all based on existing infrastructure provided by public administration.

To show the difficulties and limitations of rural tourism development in the region Crisana we conducted a questionnaire that addresses local government.

2. Materials and methods
To conduct this research have been through several successive stages interrelated as follows:

- Defining the research topic
- Setting researched population and territory in which the investigation
- The choice of research (depending on budget)
- Presentation of the hypothesis and research objectives
- Determining the sample size and its features
- Preparation of the questionnaire and the interviewers
- Making preliminary investigation and selection of interviewers
- Data collection by the questionnaire
- Processing, analysis and interpretation of data
- Conclusions

In this research, it was also used descriptive analysis of the variables and comparative analysis using Kruskal-Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U test.

Kruskal-Wallis H test. It is nonparametric equivalent ANOVA test. The Kruskall-Wallis test aims at comparing several independent samples when, as is the case of our research, the dependent variable is ordinal. The test is based on rank and hierarchy of data analysis. Scores are ranked from lowest to highest, ignoring the groups they belong to, and then calculate the sum of ranks for each of the groups. The question refers to how much respondents considered that are due to the development of rural tourism attractions in the region Crişana. Respondents could answer one of the following: a very small extent, small extent, the average measure, largely respected very much.

Mann-Whitney U test is used for the difference between independent groups for which the dependent variable is expressed in ordinal (ranking), or when, even if quantitative, does not support a parametric test (t test, ANOVA).

3. Steps of research

a. Defining the research topic - setting limits and difficulties in the development of rural tourism in the region Crişana

b. Setting researched population and territory in which the investigation - we chose to study local government Crişana region - of the 185 municipalities in the region Crişana 150 answered the questionnaire. Answered 68 mayors from Arad county, 58 mayors from Bihor county, 14 mayors from Hunedoara and 10 mayors from Salaj county.

c. The choice of research (depending on budget) - How was the random sampling as participants use available, this option is chosen from practical considerations. At first I had meetings with representatives of most of the municipalities in the region, we collected data contacts and then we distributed the questionnaire via e-mail.

d. Presentation of the hypothesis and research objectives. Assumptions from which we started are that Crişana region shows a great tourism potential in rural areas, but this potential is not exploited well. For this we try to find out the difficulties faced by those involved, with the hope that we can deliver some solutions to better exploit this potential. For all the research we chose to question local government, entrepreneurs, residents, tourists and tourism specialists. For this paper we present only the difficulties that exist in terms of local administration.

e. Determining the sample size and its features. To determine the sample size we started that Crişana region are 185 mayors, so administrative institutions, as follows: 55 mayors in Arad county, 90 mayors in Bihor county, 23 mayors in Hunedoara county and 17 mayors in Salaj county. Sample size I set it with indications [1]. It follows that in a population of 185 administrative units, the volume of sample is 125. Having more answers will be working for a sample volume of 150 mayors, so \( s = 150 \).

f. Preparation of the questionnaire and the interviewers. The questionnaire consists of 38 questions. Questionnaire method was through e-mail and complete the questionnaire online. The questionnaire is still on the Internet [2].

Although we guarantee the confidentiality of responses and did not send identification data required for the respondents, most have left both identification data and contact information.

The questionnaire includes both open questions and closed questions. For the best possible efficiency we used simple words easy to understand, clear words, I tried to avoid the confusion and implicit alternatives, the questions do not contain negations and double negations and we avoid assumptions or estimates. I also tried to be objective questions. Some other questions were not mandatory.

Among the questions addressed are the following: What are the economic sectors present in your village? In practice rural tourism in your village or your area? What do you think would be the advantages for your village or your area to be a tourist destination? Consider that rural tourism could become one of the
economic activities in your village? Your opinion is valued appropriately tourism potential? What forms of rural tourism that you have developed better in your village? Do you have an official website for rural tourism or a link on the official website of the institution, for the presentation and promotion of rural tourism in your area? If you do not have this possibility, please, you want to use specialized web site www.rural-tourism-Crisana.com? There is a tourism development strategy of the village or local board decisions? In what ways contribute to the promotion of rural tourism in your village?

The most important questions to determine the difficulties facing rural tourism in the region Crisana were concentrated in the middle questionnaire emphasizing the development factors of economic activities.

g. Making preliminary investigation and selection of interviewers. I didn’t make a preliminary investigation and I didn’t use some operators interview. I have personally contacted the municipalities in the region and I managed all correspondence.

h. Data collection by the questionnaire. After checking the questionnaire I conducted several documentaries trips in the region. I visited many pensions and villages where I talked with the owners of those pensions and mayors of villages. I left the questionnaire and asked the e-mail them. A few days later I contacted them again and I asked to complete the questionnaire online.

i. Processing, analysis and interpretation of data. For analysis we refer to question 14. Please express your opinion on the: Status of road signs; Status roads linking to the village; The status of tourist routes; Status tourist routes; Status of access roads to tourist attractions; Status of tourist objectives; Status of signs for tourist objectives. As response alternatives we chose: Poor; Small; Acceptable; Good and Very good.

Acces to tourism attractions. For all information requested in this question we calculated the average score using the equation:

\[
S = \frac{-2N_1 + (-1)N_2 + 0N_3 + (+1)N_4 + (+2)N_5}{N}
\]

Were: N sample size, N=150;
\(N_i, i=1,\ldots, 5\) – possible variations of response, attributes aspect under questioning.

Fig. 1. Status of access roads to tourist attractions (%) 

Source: Powered by author based on data obtained from respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Which factors do you think is due to the development of rural tourism in your town? [Acces to sights]</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very small extent</td>
<td>Small extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>16,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antpreneurs</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>13,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>18,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>8,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>7,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share,%</td>
<td>12,3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the condition of access to sights, fig.1, to tourist objectives most, 31% and 32% appreciates the modest, small respectively acceptable. And the average score, -0.36 show this. Negative feedback are
influenced by characterizing access to many caves, river valleys, on the hills and on the mountaines. The generally positive are given access to churches, monasteries, etc.

One of the most important factors we consider difficulty in developing rural tourism is the condition of access to sightseeing, with the lowest average score of 2.67 and total consensus between the views of respondents.

The opinion of different categories of respondents on this issue are similar to popular belief above, with very little differences, table nr.1.

**Status of road signs (%)**. From processing datas we deduce that most of the respondents, 36%, responded that the state road signs is good and only 3% of them are poor, fig.2.

For status of road signs $S=0.25$. This shows that the condition of road signs is more acceptable than good. Analyzing actual answers from respondents we deduce that the mean score was significantly influenced, its downward responses received from communities that have not major traffic arteries, such as the european and national roads.

![Fig.2. Status of road signs (%)](source)

Regarding the state of the roads connecting the village, most, 48% answered that they are good and only 5% said they are poor, fig.3. Poor and modest marks appeared in the localities that have villages in the mountains or on the main road of circulation, but lacking roads, this no good (Spinus, Sinteu, Olari respectively Brad, Stei, Suplacu de Barcau ), and those who think roads are good are located along the main road in the region (Bors, Varadia de Mures, Savarsin ). The average score has value 0.48, so the roads are considered is between acceptable and good.

![Fig.3. Status roads connecting to the village (%)](source)

About status tourist routes, fig.4. Overwhelming share of state tourist routes, 92% of respondents characterized as acceptable to poor and only 8% is estimated that good. No respondent characterizes as very good. With an average score of -0.89 we can say that the touristic rouds are generally modest.

![Fig.4. Status tourist routes (%)](source)
As for the status indicators tourist routes, fig.5, we observe that 36% of respondents consider poor, 28% modest and only 8% and 3% is considered good or very good.

The average score of only -0.86 we deduce that the status indicators tourist routes is more modest than acceptable. This shows the need to establish new touristic routes in the Crisana region, because these responses come from the absence of tourist routes and less of the existence of paths that do not have proper signs, good indicators.

Fig.5. The status of indicator tourist routes (%)
Source : Powered by author based on data obtained from respondents

At the question 27, “Do you think it would be useful marking and other tourist routes in your area?” note that 29% believe that it would not be useful because those villages are in the plains that lends itself less to rural tourism. 27% say it would be necessary to mark new tourist routes and, surprisingly, 44% say they do not know, fig.6.

This last aspect shows disinterest of local government involvement in the development of rural tourism. Those who answered “yes”, to question 28, an open question, gave a number of examples of routes that would be good to be marked.

Fig.6. Share answers for “You think would be useful for marking and other tourist routes in your area?”
Source : Powered by author based on data obtained from respondents

Fig.7. Status of tourist objectives (%)
Source : Powered by author based on data obtained from respondents
In village Savarsin, route Savarsin - Spring Troas, route Troas – Parnesti, in village Pancota, route to the turkish fortresses, in village Valea lui Mihai, marking of routes in protected areas, in village Soimi, glades which are found from place to place on Hawk Valley, Fieghiu Valley, then to fountains from Agrije, the boundary with the county of Bihor with Arad county where if if there way acceptable, can be reached Moneasa resort in Arad county and not least to the weather station at Dumbravita de Codru, which is of course natural beauty.

Also, in question no.14 respondents were asked to express the status of tourist objectives in their area, fig.7. This time things are a little better, 35% and 37% ranked it as acceptable and good and just 9% accept that it estimated that poor. And the average score, with value 0.12, reveals that the status tourist objectives rated as acceptable to good.

In terms of status indicators for sightseeing, fig 8, we can say that the region Crisana has great deficiencies in this regard. Only 17% and 1% consider status indicators for sightseeing as good or very good. The average score, -0.64, for this indicator ranges modest status. Perhaps this chapter local government could more involved given that do not involve special financial efforts.

Of the 150 respondents, 28%, 28% and 25% respond that state of indicators of the tourist objectives are poor, small respectively acceptable. These responses show these signs actually nonexistent. Certainly many more tourists would try to spend at least a few hours at some tourist objectives rural areas, but most do not know about the existence of these objectives.

As for the involvement of local government, to question no 22, “There is a tourism development strategy of the village or local board administration decisions?” 48% say there isn’t such a tourist development strategy, while 17% say they don’t know, fig.9.

Fig.8. Status of signs for tourist objectives (%)
Fig.9. Share answers for question “There is a tourism development strategy of the village or local board administration decisions?”
As stated in the previous lines, even in arranging sightseeing indicator administration might involve, but if, by aggregating the responses, 65% of respondents say there isn’t concerns of local councils or don’t know about their existence, show there is reasons for better and it requires serious involvement of local government.

4. Conclusions

So, in recent decades tourism has developed more and became one of the main economic activities in some areas of Romania. Decisive in this development were the changes in travel consumers regarding their motivations and how to spend their holidays and vacations. Crișana region is one of the areas where rural tourism has developed more and more, even if some gaps appeared such as economic and financial crisis of 2008-2010.

In a previous paper, we studied the values of a set of six indicators for rural tourism activity in the four counties of the region Crișana. As follows:

- in Hunedoara county arrivals and overnight stays are almost zero compared with capacity of accommodation;
- in Salaj county indicators showing accommodation capacity are lower than indicators showing arrivals and overnight stays;
- low the indicators arrivals and overnight stays compared with accommodation capacity indicators in the Arad county;
- best, in terms of capacity utilization accommodation stands Bihor county where accommodation capacity indicators are lower weight indicators arrivals and overnight stays throughout the region Crișana.

We can say that analyzing the values for 2010, in any county there is a perfect correlation between the 6 indicators analyzed, so there is a harmonious accommodation so the ability to be operated efficiently. These are backed by the analysis done on the responses from local government.

Involving local government might feel much better especially in remote rural areas of the main access routes, european and national roads, those in the hills and mountains where the standard of living is much lower, but those places would be much appreciated by tourists.

5. Bibliography