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AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROUMANIAN RURAL TOURISTIC PHENOMENON

Theoretical
article

Keywords

Tourism
Rural tourism
Sustainable development
Touristic supply
Economic index

JEL Classification

Q56

Abstract

The paper addresses the main aspects and tendencies of the tourism in the context of sustainable development, of the place and importance of rural tourism, the usefulness of using an index system in touristy and rural tourism activity, of measuring the rural tourism activity on a country level and the need to develop it, considering its possible integration into the European touristic market. Furthermore, a new index system, to be applied in the rural tourism is set up, as well as an original structure concerning data processing and analyzing for the data acquired by sampling. These elements are only useful if applied by I.C.T (Touristy Research Institute), by other government- and non-government institutions, or even by companies interested in developing business in rural tourism, or make research work on certain aspects of the rural tourism activity, on the tourists' behaviour in the context of this type of tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the tourism in all its shapes crossed a significant process of development and diversification. The phenomenon is mainly explicable by the continuous change due to a permanent adjustment of the touristy to the worldwide economic needs of globalization and sustainable development in the services' area (Boi & Constantin, 2010). The need to know and analyze the rural tourism arises from the movement of the demand towards a new kind of practicing tourism in the middle of the nature, far from the pollution and from the stressing rhythms of city life. The touristic activity may be studied also from the statistic point of view as far as it is seen as a system carrying two kinds of interdependent components (Minciuc, 2000):

The qualitative component, describing the state of facts, like: motivations of the tourists, their socio-professional position, nationality, etc.

The elaboration and putting into practice of a coherent index system, meant to describe the touristic activity remains further on a challenge.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The statistics referring to the tourism are still applied in every country on a national level, according to their local tourism development level and conditions. The classification of the index system used in the tourism according to the EUROSTAT requirements, as well as the specific character of the rural tourism-related activities lead to an index system, with certain characteristics to be highlighted along with the presentation of their components. The index system used in studying the activities related to the rural tourism should meet the following general principles (Cosmescu, 1998):

an unique concept concerning their contents, calculation methodology and means of aggregation;
comparability to be made sure;
extension and enlargement of the system

by new indexes. Starting point for determining the measuring indexes describing the activities of rural tourism is to observe and collect statistical information; this being part of a system of elements organized as follows (Constantin & Costescu, 2000):

Quantitative elements: aiming at describing the intensity of each feature of the system (number of tourists arrivals, number of employees, turnover etc.);

Qualitative elements: describing the state of facts (nationality of the tourists, their socio-professional status, motivations, structure of their expenses, satisfaction level etc.)

The indexes measuring the activities carried on by practicing rural tourism can be expressed in natural units, connected units, value units (lei, other currencies) and can be determined as well as absolute indexes as subsequent indexes; they are components of the system.

Indexes of the global demand in rural tourism are:

Indexes of the demand on means of transportation for rural tourism purposes, including:

- Number of tourists who prefer using a certain mean of transportation;
- Number of the tourists who prefer using two or more kinds of transportation means;
- Number of tourists without preferences concerning transportation means.

These indexes help us identify the preferences of the tourists for each means of transportation used for rural tourism purposes.

The indexes of the seasonality in rural tourism. Studying the seasonality in the rural tourist demand leads to the following indexes, in the following shapes:
- Monthly traffic index: is the ratio between the number of tourists in the month with the maximum of traffic (LM) and the number of tourists in the month with the minimum of tourists (lm) (Popescu, 2011):

$$CI = \frac{LM}{lm} \quad (1)$$

- Quarterly traffic index, calculated in a similar way with the previous one, but based on the tourists' number in the maximum quarter (TM) related to the number of tourists in the minimum quarter (tm):

$$C_t = \frac{TM}{tm} \quad (2)$$

The minimal value of these indexes is 1 and a higher value expresses a higher degree on seasonality.

- The monthly concentration index, calculated as the ratio between the numbers of tourists in the month with the highest values (LM) related to the total number of tourists per year (At):

$$C_c = \frac{LM}{At} \quad (3)$$

Theoretically, the value of the Cc index should be between 0.083 and 1, in order to depict a low seasonality. All these indexes described above give an image of the specific weight of rural tourism demand along the whole year, according to the geographic area of the rural touristy activities, to the types of rural tourism units, as well as to the types of transportation means used.

Indexes of the demand distribution depending on the types of trip organizing. These indexes include the two distinct types of tourism demand by utilizing or not the tourism agencies in order to organize their trip.

- the first component represents the rural tourism demand using tourism agencies CUAT;

- the second component representing the rural tourism demand not using tourism agencies CNUAT.

These are the starting points in establishing some elements of structure and of variation in time of the rural tourism demand.

Distribution indexes of the demand according to the trip motivation. These indexes describe the demand on rural tourism for more categories of tourists depending on the types of

motivations for practicing the activities specific to this type of tourism.

- number of tourists who prefer rural tourism for rest, recreation, leisure, to maintain health;

- number of tourists who prefer rural tourism for sightseeing, to contemplate the unpolluted nature in the rural tourism areas; - number of tourists who prefer rural tourism for practicing wandering, other sports related to the rural area; - number of tourists who prefer practicing rural tourism in order to take part to specific leisure activities organized in the rural tourism areas;

- number of tourists who prefer rural tourism for other reasons of leisure offered by the rural tourism areas.

These are fundamental for determining the specific weight or importance of each motivation in the whole of the demand, its evolution in time, as well as in different geographic pools.

Fulfillment indexes of the rural tourism demand.

These indexes are used especially in order to get information about the degree on satisfaction of the touristic demand. According to the purpose of the trip, they may be calculated for each category of touristic demand, stratified according to different geographical categories.

In this context, the demand on rural tourism is measured by the index of the persons satisfied in their motivation (CMS);

The index of fidelity towards the rural tourism demand.

These indicators are used especially in order to highlight the tourists who come back to a certain touristic destination. It is based on knowing the number of tourists who come back to a certain destination (Rd) or intend to come back in the future

$$(Id). \quad F = \frac{Rd + Id}{CtTR} \quad (4)$$

By comparing the fidelity index in two different periods, the outcome is a variation index in time of the tourist fidelity for a specified destination.

Elasticity indexes of the rural tourism demand.

Elasticity of a phenomenon means the variation of an effect phenomenon according to the variation of the cause phenomenon. In the rural tourism it means establishing the elasticity of this kind of tourism. The index (coefficient) of demand on rural tourism related to the variation of incomes from the rural tourism is used to estimate the potential tourism demand that should be turned into real demand, according to an increase on incomes, but also according to a number of other variables that influence and determine a certain level of rural tourism demand. The mathematic expression of this correlation is:

$$ETR = \frac{\Delta CTR}{CTR} + \frac{\Delta VTR}{VTR} \quad (5)$$

where:

TR C = the absolute variation of the rural touristic demand;

CTR = the amount of rural tourism demand;

VTR = the amount of incomes resulted from rural tourism;

TR V = the absolute variation of the incomes resulted from rural tourism;

ETR = elasticity of the rural tourism demand.

Traffic indexes of the rural tourism. Their measurement includes the following indicators:

- total tourists' number (t) who arrived into the areas of rural tourism: this is an absolute index calculated as a sum.

- total number of tourist-days (zt) of rural tourism: it results from the total number of tourists (t) multiplied by the number of stay days (z). The maximum time span to be considered will be of one year. This index can be analyzed using an aggregated index system, describing as well the relative variations as the absolute variations of the phenomenon in quests

- average tourists' number who arrive in the rural tourism area (t): this will be calculated as the average number of

arrivals per day, dividing the total number of tourist-days (zt) by the total number of days (z) considered:

$$t = \frac{\sum zt}{\sum z} \quad (6)$$

The index expresses the average tourist traffic during a certain time span and estimates the intensity of the tourist traffic in certain time spans (calendar days or touristic season).

The average tourists' number can be also studied and analyzed in its dynamics, by means of some indexes calculated as ratios between two averages with variable structure, with constant structure and that of the structure variations.

- the average duration of the stay (S) in the rural tourism: will be calculated as the ratio between the total number of tourist-days (zt) and the total number of tourists (t):

$$S = \frac{\sum zt}{\sum t} \quad (7)$$

This is an average-type index and its calculation offers much more complete information about the development of the rural tourism. This can be statistically measured by means of some indexes representing the ratio between two averages. Furthermore, these indexes offer information about the absolute and relative variations that describe the analyzed tourism phenomenon.

- the density of rural tourist traffic (dt): is a relative dimension of intensity, calculated in a thorough correlation with the residents of the target country; it is expressed as the ratio between the number of tourists who visit a certain country, area or resort in order to practice rural tourism or the total number of tourist-days and the number of residents of the country, area or resort in question

$$(P) \quad dt = \frac{\sum t}{\sum P} \quad \text{or} \quad dt = \frac{\sum zt}{\sum P} \quad (8)$$

- the relative preference of the rural tourists – it will be calculated as the ratio

between the total tourists' number from a country A who practice rural tourism at the B destination and the total resident population of the country A:

$$Pr = \frac{\sum t}{\sum P} \quad (9)$$

This index highlights the intensity of the rural tourist traffic and can be expressed by absolute indexes and by structure indexes and describes the tendencies of the rural tourist streams.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the upper issues, the analysis of the indexes used in describing the rural tourism leads us to the following conclusions:

- the approach of the aspects concerning the pre-requisites of arising and development of the rural tourism starts with its basic components, represented as a whole by an original image, continues with the factors of development of this type of tourism, and finally highlights the conditions of tourism and of the rural tourism development.

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