



3rd GLOBAL CONFERENCE on BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT and TOURISM,
26-28 November 2015, Rome, Italy

The Rural Educational Tourism at the Farm

Cornelia Petroman^a, Amelia Mirea^a, Ana Lozici^a, Elena Claudia Constantin^{b*}, Diana Marin^a, Iuliana Merce^a

^aBanat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Faculty of Agricultural Management, 119 Calea Aradului, 300645, Timisoara, Romania

^bUniversity Politehnica Timisoara, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Department of Communication and Foreign Languages, 2 Petre Ramneantu Street, 300596 Timisoara, Romania

Abstract

The consumer of rural and farm tourism has evolved in the direction of being associated with types of fun and educational leisure activities. Tourism consumers search for new types of tourism, such as: farming entertainment. The aim of an educational trip in the rural areas is: to know the life and activity of the farmers, to create a positive image of the agriculture in the eyes of the next generations/ urban resident consumers. The educational rural tourism has various activities, i.e.: basic classes/ full courses/ short term workshops on the school farms. The educational activities for children include: floral arrangements, cooking classes on the farm, preparing natural herbal remedies, demonstrations of traditional ways of obtaining beer and wine, experience historical reconstruction of the traditional villages, etc. The recreational rural tourism includes: art of the plants, agricultural labyrinths, wine tasting tourism, vegetable picking, identification of spontaneous plant and wildlife species, etc. The authors present the steps have to be followed in order to develop new brand tourism products that meet the requirements for consumer's education.

© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of BEMTUR- 2015

Keywords: educative rural tourism; recreational rural tourism; fun; farm; brand.

1. Introduction

Understanding the reasons for which consumers behave the way they do, i.e.: the factors that influence their behaviour – helps us determine their purchasing and consumption behaviour function to their education.

* Elena Claudia Constantin Tel.: +40 770 150 823
E-mail address: elclconst@gmail.com

Traditionally, it is believed that the factors that influence consumers' behaviour are the following: environment, education level (culture) and psychological profile (Parsons et al: 2009; Pender and Sharpley, 2005; Robert and Hall, 2001; Momir et al, 2014; Petroman et al. 2014).

Everything around us determines everything we do, including the purchases we make and the way in which we do these shopping: we buy or consume the same things as our favourite people, in the desire to identify ourselves with them, even if it is in this way only. We always buy and consume a product because it satisfied us, it is a family tradition, the product has an affordable price, as far as quality price ratio is concerned or simply because someone recommended it.

Nowadays, "in the globalization age, interculturality has undeniably become a political, educative, social and geographical issue (Constantin & Lungu Badea, 2013, p.3548). The culture (education) is what defines a specific group of people in a particular moment in time and in a particular place. Culture is the total sum of knowledge, values and beliefs that people irrespective of the age have in common, and therefore is in a constant state of evolution and change. It is a fact that: "The rational tendencies, immanent to values and culture norms too, vary function to the country category, its mentality" (Constantin & Lungu Badea, 2013, p.3549) and that each country has its own culture and subcultures, ethnic cultures; the demographic and social cultures have a significant impact on what we are, on what we believe in and how we act or react. That is why "Cultural irrationality (E. T. Hall) or cultural unawareness (Jung), manifested by belonging to a certain culture, always limits the way we perceive and see realities (Constantin & Lungu Badea, 2013, p.3549). Education influences directly the consumer's behaviour and we cannot deny that "culture can be an extremely powerful force, which can support or, on the contrary, undermine a certain endeavour and therefore any specific problem has to be extremely carefully analysed to avoid any communication breaks (Constantin, 2012a, p.12).

We are aware that the tourism industry is facing a serious problem, i.e.: products and services that do not last too long. That is why we should cultivate the interest for any form of rural tourism in an unpolluted environment and make the tourists with certain levels of education visit these areas.

The psychological profile - attitudes, personality, and psychographic profile - interests and opinions, in fact the lifestyle of the individual determines the consumption of certain tourist products and services in general; making the educational rural tourism, a form of cultural tourism (Petroman et al, 2006). For these reasons the tourism consumers can be divided into eight categories, as consumers of tourism services and touristic products: innovative, experienced, successful fighters, religious, active people, thinkers, survivors. The category of consumers of services and products is determined by the ratio between their needs and their desires, and the touristic brands and the products and any kind of attempt to satisfy the different need levels.

The classification of the tourism market can be made according to:

- the leaders of opinion; the idols of the show-business who contribute to the consume of certain new tourist brands;
- the geographic, demographic or psychological subcultures;
- the social –classes.

Each group has its own preferences function to various demographic criteria; thus, the older people are more conservative and less willing to experiment, women spend more than men, but not on rural educative tourism forms of education, young people are eager for adventure tourism, and middle-income families with one or two children prefer the rural tourism with all its forms (Baggio, Triscau et al. 2009).

2. Material and methods

The purpose of this scientific approach is to address some aspects related to the process of developing certain hybrid rural tourism programs that can contribute to the modernization of the structures with tourist traits, by developing some activity models special for the rural tourism; all these in order to increase the number of visitors and to better use of the capacity of the existing accommodation facilities. The implementation of the rural tourism and of its variants, i.e.: the educative rural tourism and the recreational tourism can only be done by shifting the focus from the local tourists onto the foreign tourist, by shifting the focus from the adult tourist onto the school age

tourist up to the high school age, with the possibility to extend the age so as to include the higher education students, i.e.: young people with a certain level of education.

For this purpose, we have developed the educative rural tourism, i.e.: a brand, a term, a symbol that can be identified with the type of the rural tourism proposed, however differentiating it from the products and services on the market.

3. Results and discussions

There is a difference between a product and a brand, i.e.: the product is created through work and can be sold, while a brand is created when the product is associated with a particular name, a logo or any other form of identification that distinguishes it from the products of other tour operators. A brand is worth more than a product and even if the brands are created by the products, not every product can inspire a brand, as the progress of a brand never stops; there are always new markets to be found, new groups of consumers and new opportunities to develop the brand.

The trend in tourism in general and the recreational-educational rural tourism especially is to sell brands adapted to different categories of consumers with a certain level of culture, education, but also function to the consumers' needs in a given period of time, or to be more precise, the introduction of a new touristic product (e.g.: the pizza type farm, decorative art, the historical reconstruction of the village) under the name of a famous brand, the rural tourism to which it is added an educational or entertaining characteristic, as an extension to the parent brand.

The positioning of the newly created brand refers to the consumer's memory, the one to whom the brand addresses and which is the one that can determine its position on the market. The market specialists having the responsibility to find new solutions to achieve the product goals and to be requested by consumer category for which it was created. A positioning slogan will indicate the place the product has in the consumer's mind; for example: pick with your own hand, or learn to make traditional cheese in fir bark, etc.

The contact with the brand, function to the degree of education, is made once the holiday is bought. There are customers loyal to a brand, especially if they have used it before and they are aware of its existence. The importance of the brand for the rural touristic farm that is specialized in tourism is overwhelming, as a similar product can be bought elsewhere.

That is why the newly created brands for the recreational-educational rural tourism have to be centered on the following: consumers, the traditional technologies for the production and processing of raw materials in the farm, the opening of a competition or even the rebranding of certain well-known brands in other parts of the world, as in the case of the pizza type farm, or the corn labyrinth.

No matter what the new products or brands we want to promote, the following stages have to be followed: to create a new product or brand, the managers have to have consultations with the managers and advertising consultants, test the new product or brand, test the degree in which the product or the brand responds to the educational level of the potential customers, evaluate the customers' opinions after testing the brand, test the market, the introduction of the new product or brand on the rural touristic market as a brand dedicated to the fun-educational rural tourism.

The purpose of the educative rural tourism "differs from other types of learning material and, therefore, the existing materials should be adapted so as to create a holistic educational experience, to promote active, effective learning[...] and to allow assessment of effectiveness". The assessment of effectiveness is of particular importance since in assessing lies the "main differences (no teacher, no marking work) between traditional" and new learning methods (Petroman & Petroman, 2013, p. 296). We think that "young people should be more informed on matters that can influence their lives" (Constantin, 2012b, p.4134).

The educative rural tourism can have several categories function to several factors: age, level of education of the young or adult people, level of income, willingness to experience this kind of tourism, etc.

Therefore, we recommend the school farm type for children as they will have the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom. These are some of the activities they can do: earth compostation, make dried flower arrangements, taste cow cheese products, identify the colostrum of the fruit trees, plant flowers, prepare must, etc. To these we can add activities related to certain subjects taught at school, such as:

- fine arts: sketches, drawings, collages;

- communication; write essays about: life at the countryside, farm animals, plants grown, etc.
- life sciences: water in nature, the cycles of the sun;
- Social sciences: history of the village, history of the farm, the farm environmental practices, use of fertilizers, etc.

The floral arrangements courses for children must begin with the explanation of the methods to maintain flowers, explain propagation and then proceed to the phase in which they are taught to cut flowers, choose and prepare a flower vase, learn to make a bouquet and learn all the technology required to keep the flowers fresh.

As for the cooking courses at the farm, they begin with a visit to the local market or farmer's vegetable garden to learn about the vegetables that are to be used for a particular food, familiarize themselves with the utensils used for the technological processing of the products, the place where the materials are to be processed and the traditional processing technology.

A characteristic feature of the Romanian cuisine is that a generic term can include different types of food; e.g.: broth includes a variety of soups soured with bors, unripe fruit, sour cabbage liquid, etc. More than this it can be of a great variety, such as: tripe soup, vegetable soup, meat soup, fish soup, etc.

For the educational rural tourism, we can identify in the Romanian culinary heritage the following:

- emblematic food that can be identified with the local community (polenta with potatoes);
- class marked food which shows the lifestyle of a community (fish soup);
- communication sign food used to send meaningful information mucenicii (the martyrs);
- symbolic food, such as prescura (holy wafer).

The special courses on learning how to prepare natural herbal remedies out of medicinal flowers consist in the identification of the spontaneous flora, collecting flowers and primary processing. The processing having an educational role is adequate for a wide range of people: children, high school graduates, students and adults. There are a variety of methods, such as: boiling, soaking, spraying, extracting the juice, pulp preparation, bolus preparation. The choice of the methods is given by the level of education of the young people and by the opportunity to use the product; for internal administration (fir syrup), for external administration (marigold extract), for the efficiency and potency of the preparation (blueberry syrup).

The applicative demonstrations have always fascinated the young people who learn how to make beer or wine in the traditional way. The popular techniques also attract those who want to find out: how the mills powered by water grind grain to obtain wheat flour, how bread is made in a special device called the test, how one can dye wool with nut leaves or alder bark, or dye eggs at Easter holidays with onion skin.

The pizza type farm is in fact a re-branding of a known brand which offers the young people and the adults, interested in the educational rural tourism, the opportunity to know the ingredients that this food contains, i.e.: cereals, meat, and variety of meat specialties from different animal species, industrial plants; all these components can be placed so as to mimic the shape of the product/ facility, including animal enclosures.

The historic reconstruction of the village offers the visitors the opportunity to train themselves as far as the occupations of the local community are concerned throughout history, namely: the use of coal iron, spinning with various distaffs, lighting with oil lamps, machines for different household activities, butter making, extracting oil by cold pressing. In this way, an entire era can be reconstructed, an era that can teach, those eager for knowledge, a way of life forgotten in time.

For the fun rural touristic farms which develop touristic activities, we suggest the following types of activities: recreational agriculture, plant art, agricultural labyrinth, wine and other distillate products tasting, picking fruit and vegetables, identifying plants from the spontaneous flora, identifying wild within the farm area; all these activities are appropriate for students and adults.

The term of recreational agriculture is practiced in areas where there are rural farms, or where there have been founded theme rural parks that attract a large number of rural tourists which are eager to know more and to learn activities that take place in rural areas. As attractions we can mention: barns with hay, riding in hay wagon pulled by pack animals.

The plant art can be the work of an artist or that of some young people visiting the farm and who can turn a cultivated agricultural land into a flower garden, a pumpkins field, sunflower field, by creating the most varied paintings. Likewise, they can carve pumpkins or melons giving them different shapes or they can build out of straw bale various objects that can become local attractions.

The agricultural labyrinth is a construction made in the sunflower field or in the corn field made of hay bales in order to spend the free time in the nature, in an unpolluted environment away from urban noise; it is meant for children, young people and adults.

As far as the rural tourism for wine tasting this is widespread, but even in this case a few main requirements have to be met, i.e.: tourists' expectations to have the opportunity to taste and purchase products, offer opportunities to have fun; create a good impression as far as the wine cellar is concerned, create a good impression during the wine cellar visit, show that the winery is successful.

Picking fruits and vegetables for canning preparation can be a fun recreational activity for those who want fresh products, picked from the farm and even prepared there. Another important event is harvesting, and in order to make tourists feel attracted by this perspective, the invitation to participate in the harvest activity must be presented as attractive as possible and aggressively promoted.

The success of this type of fun recreational farm is likely to happen if the location of the farm is nearer to large urban agglomerations and does not record production fluctuations from one year to another. Therefore, the farmer must take into account the preferences of those eager for this type of tourism or for those interested in a particular assortment of fruits or vegetables.

Walking in nature to identify plant species of spontaneous flora or to recognize the wild animals in their natural habitat is another form of fun-educational rural tourism and a visit to a farm is an act of culture and a recreational activity. Thus, it can be identified crops, plants of spontaneous flora therapeutic properties or real natural monuments, such as: mountain peony, yellow crocus, variegated tulip, wild rose or in the wild animal category: wild fox, marten, badger, deer, wild boar, etc. All the flora and fauna elements which constitute is an ideal place for relaxation, an escape from the crowded city and return to a clean, quiet, rural life environment.

We would like to stress the importance of "grasping one's own cultural standards first [...] as it is commonly agreed that culture is "learned and forgotten" and [...] generally, people are unconscious of its influence on the manner in which they perceive the world and interact within it" (Constantin, 2009, p.26).

4. Conclusions

For a tourist consumer in a constant evolution, a consumer not content to simply run away from the crowdedness of the big cities and just sit in a quiet place in the rural area, the introduction of this type of recreational-educational rural tourism represents at the same time a cultural act, relaxation and last but not least, an income source for the farmer.

The consumer of rural and farm tourism has evolved towards the association of these two types of tourisms with other educational and fun activities to spend his/her free time in a harmonious way. Thus, there came out those hybrid forms of rural tourisms combined with recreational- educational farming.

Nevertheless, all these forms of rural tourism have one main objective, namely: to ensure a sustainable rural farm and sustainable rural areas by providing alternative ways to spend the free time far away from the bustle of the large urban communities.

For these reasons the recreational-educational rural tourism, as hybrid form of rural tourism, fulfills these principles: it is a small business, it is promoted through direct marketing, is an agricultural event, it promotes rural farms and the culture of working the land, as well as the traditional occupation of raising animals and the occupations of the a rural population.

Acknowledgements

This paper was published under the frame of European Social Fund, Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013, project no. POSDRU/159/1.5/S/132765.

References

Baggio, R.,(n.d), The strategic role of knowledge in the management of tourism destination organizations.WTO- Themis Foundation, University of Catalunya

- Constantin, E.C. (2009), Recognizing Culture in the World of Business, *Professional Communication And Translation Studies*, 2 (1-2) / 2009, pp. 25-28.
- Constantin, E.C. (2012), Gaining the young generation's attention, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46 (2012), Elsevier, pp. 4130 – 4135.
- Constantin, E.C. (2012), Unity and Diversity in European Culture, *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, Vol 5 (1/2), Editura Politehnica, Timisoara, pp.10-16.
- Constantin, E.C., Lungu Badea, G, (2013), Interculturality in Banat, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116 (2014), Elsevier, .pp. 3548-3552.
- Momir B., Petroman I., Lile, R., Iancu, T., Merce, I., Petroman, C., Marin, D., Dumitrescu, C., (2014), Human Resources Management in Romanian Agrotourism, *Journal of Biotechnology*, vol. 185, Supplement.
- Parsons, E., MacLaran, P., (2009), Contemporary marketing and consumer behaviour issues in Amsterdam,; Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Pender, L. Sharpley, 2005, The management of tourism, London: SAGE: Publications.
- Petroman, C., Petroman I., Orbei, D.,Popescu, G., (2005), Activities generating new jobs in the rural area,The second international scientific conference, "Rural Development" Kaunas Lituania, Vol II, Book I, pag. 219-221.
- Petroman, C., Petroman, I., (2013), Improving the development of learning materials for open and distance learning, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 83, Elsevier, 295 – 299.
- Petroman, I. (2005), Introducere în turism. Timisoara, Editura Mirton.
- Petroman I.M., Csoz, I., Petroman I., Marin, D., Momir, B., Bejan, C. (2014), Rural tourism products from the Banat area demanded by European Tourists, Scientific Papers *Animal Science and Biotechnology*, Vol. 47 (1), Faculty of Animal Science and Biotechnology, Timisoara.
- Petroman, I. Petroman, P., (2006), *Cultural tourism* , Ed. Eurostampa Timisoara.
- Roberts, L., Hall, D., (2001), *Rural tourism and recreation.Principles to practice*. Oxord-New York: Cabi Publishing.
- Triscau, I.,Petroman, I., Balan, I. Marin, D., (2009), Entertainment and recreational tourism in Timiș County, Management of durable rural development, Seria I, Vol.XI(4), Timișoara