

**RESEARCH REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARGINA
COMMUNE THROUGH AGRITOURISM. IDENTIFYING
INTEREST FROM TOURISTS**

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***Abstract:** In recent years, interest in spending free time in rural areas has increased in our country. These trends align with the European ones to spend holidays in the middle of nature with the diversity of local products. Such an area is the Margina area. The reason why the Margina area was chosen for research is that the area proposed for the study is a good preserver of traditions and customs to which are added the products and natural resources of the area. The research undertaken aims to identify the interest shown for this area.*

***Key words:** development, agritourism, Margina, tourist interest*

INTRODUCTION

From the analyzes of the activities carried out in this sector, in the countries with experience in rural tourism, [3,6,11,13] it was noted that rural tourism exerts a strong influence on trade and small industry through the development of the artisanal industry, specific to the areas: wood, textiles, metals, leather, ceramics. [4,5,10] The development of villages and rural tourist areas must bring direct income to the peasants and all citizens of the locality, and the local public administration must directly use the local budget for the creation of new facilities and a higher standard of living for the community. [1,2,7,8] We emphasize that through the current declared organizational forms of tourism, through the current conception of marketing and management in this field, it will not be possible to achieve the level of the international standard in rural tourism. [9,12,14,15]

Margina is documentary certificate from 1365, and has a total area of 132 square km. The villages of the Margina commune are mostly agricultural villages, some of the scattered-dissociated type, they are among the oldest from our country inhabited by Romanians with houses located on irregularly intersecting streets - Margina, Breazova, Sintesti, Costeiu de Sus. In the villages of the Margina commune, people try to preserve the most valuable aspects of life, in an authentic way, the customs and traditions of their ancestors and want to share the customs, crafts, traditions and gastronomy of the Banat area with those interested.

Sintesti is located about 1 km away to the west, between Margina and Faget, it has an area of 4.5 square km -and as features, agricultural lands and forests. Breazova is documented in 1379, it has no roads and communication paths, only paved roads, which for agritourism can be an advantage and at the same time a disadvantage. Costeiu de Sus is surrounded by hills, leaving an outlet towards the west, towards Margina, along the Icu stream, which forms in the bottom of the hills and the shadow of the forests of the streams: Dimofti and Malaeti. Grosi is surrounded by hills, giving the impression that it is located in a beautiful depression. Zorani is documentary certificate later than Margina and the other villages in the area (1597), at the beginning of its existence it was a suburb of Margina, having the same administration and rule. Bulza is documented in 1366. It is understandable that it is quite old, the paradox being that from an economic and cultural point of view it had no significance. Its location, quite far from the main communication routes and other settlements along some valleys, but for agritourism this aspect can represent "a godsend".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main objective of the research is to know the interest of tourists for the Margina area, and in order to achieve this purpose, a questionnaire with 10 questions was designed. Thus, a number of 50 questionnaires were applied, aiming to collect the following information:

- identification data about the respondents;
- the favorability of the area for agritourism activities, based on a series of motivations;
- the desire of the tourist to carry out the agritourism activity in Margina area;
- the quality of the infrastructure of Margina area for agritourism activities;
- what are the elements considered by the tourist related to a good agritourism product;
- expectations vis-à-vis the "Margina agritourism product";
- which of the elements of the agritourism product are considered by the tourist to be more important: accommodation, food, leisure;
- what is the emphasis on when purchasing an agritourist circuit-type product in the tourist's opinion;
- which of the villages of Margina commune has the "highest potential" to be able to create a successful future "branded Margina agritourism product";
- actions/measures that the tourist would take if he were co-opted into a "local committee for agritourism".

RESEARCH RESULTS

The information collected as a result of the research carried out is presented in the following.

The first aspect from the study was to collect some information related to tourists/respondents. Thus, the predominant share of tourists in the area is represented by the female sex. At the age category, tourists between the ages of 35-50 predominate, and in the education category it is found that more than half of the tourists who practice agritourism in Margina have education superior. (figure 1)

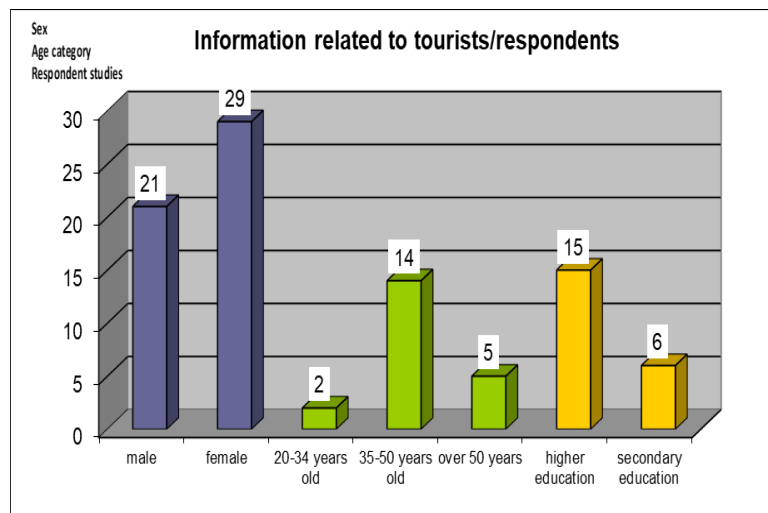


Figure 1. Information related to tourists/respondents

The second aspect pursued was detecting the favorability of the area for agritourism activities, based on a series of motivations. The question was provided with two answer options, affirmative and negative, but without options regarding motivations. From those surveyed, 68% consider the area to be favorable for agritourism activity, justifying the answer with motivations such as:

- beautiful landscapes, clean air, easy access to highway facilities;
- wooded areas with the accessibility of tourist routes;
- hospitable people;
- the possibility of sport fishing;
- varied possibilities to spend free time;

- quiet area suitable for relaxation;
- equestrian excursions, mountain biking;
- outdoor walks;
- connections with all the villages of the area.

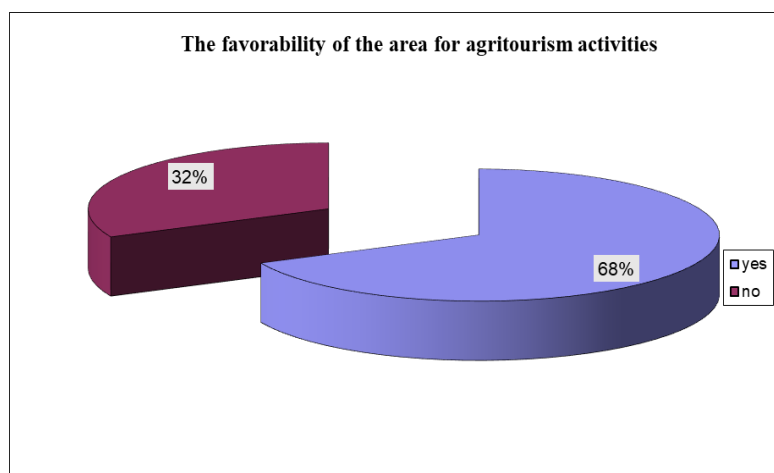


Figure 2. The favorability of the area for agritourism activities

The third direction pursued refers to the identification of the tourist's desire to carry out agritourism activity in Margina area and assumed five response options graded from 1 to 5, (1 being the minimum, 5 being the maximum). From the centralization of the answers, it can be seen that there is a desire to practice agritourism activity in the area we have chosen for the study.

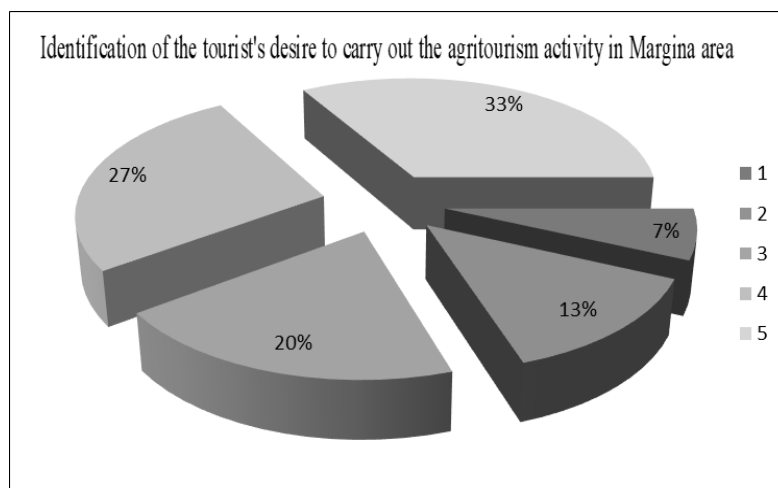


Figure 3. Identification of the tourist's desire to carry out agritourism activity in Margina area

Question number four from the questionnaire follows the quality of the infrastructure from Margina area for agritourism activities, which in the eyes of tourists is a good one (in a large proportion 72%).

Table 1.

The quality of the infrastructure from Margina area for agritourism activities

Centralization of answers			
Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
8%	72%	18%	2%

Question five is focused on highlighting the elements considered by the tourist to be the components of a good agritourism product. The question was provided with the following answer options: the landscape; the customs; hospitality; crafts; local gastronomic

elements; accommodation/facilities. The findings emphasize that the landscape, followed by hospitality and traditions, attracts tourists in the largest proportion.

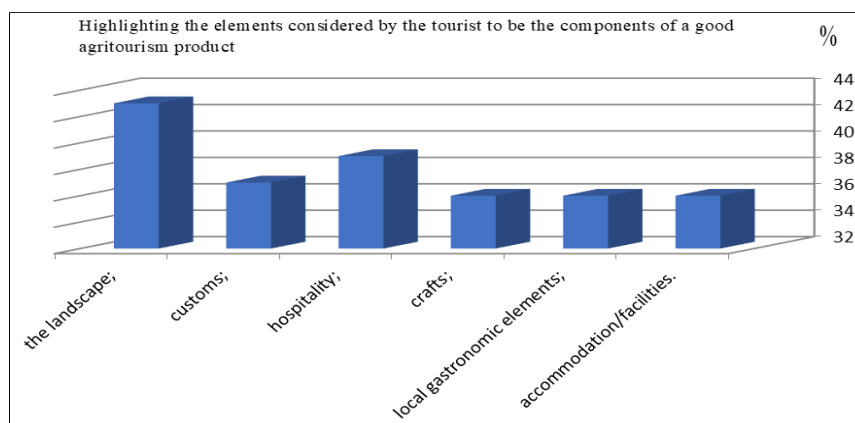


Figure 4. Highlighting the elements considered by the tourist to be the components of a good agritourism product

The sixth question, regarding the expectations of tourists about "Margina agritourism product", was provided with a free answer, and highlighted the fact that tourists who practice agritourism in Margina "expect" from the agritourism product: hospitality, beautiful landscapes, nature trails, traditional food, leisure possibilities, decent accommodation, the promotion of traditions and gastronomy.

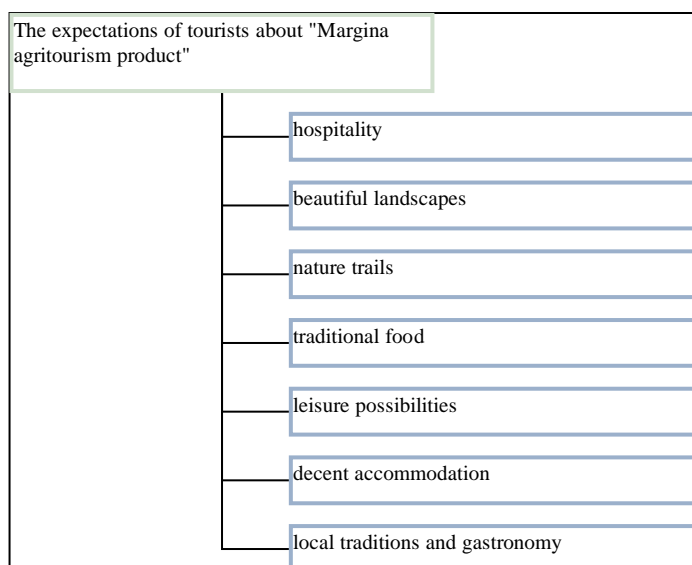


Figure 5. The expectations of tourists about "Margina agritourism product"

Question number seven assumed the highlighting of agritourism product elements, considered by the tourist to be more important: accommodation, food, leisure. It can be observed that the leisure part occupies the priority place in the eyes of tourists, following the assessments of specialists, that leisure is the one that makes the difference between a good/sold tourist product and one less demanded on the market.

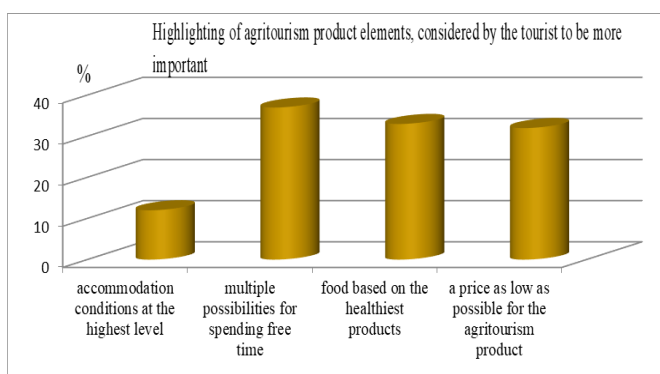


Figure 6. Highlighting of agritourism product elements, considered by the tourist to be more important

The eighth question from the questionnaire looks on what the emphasis falls on when purchasing an agritourist circuit type product in the tourist's opinion. The question was provided with several answer options: quality/price ratio; the opinions of other tourists; the activities proposed to be carried out; the proposed location. Following the centralization of the information from the respondents, it is observed that tourists are sensitive to the quality/price ratio, in particular, then they take into account the opinions of other tourists, the location and lastly the activities proposed to be carried out, when purchasing a product tourist circuit type.

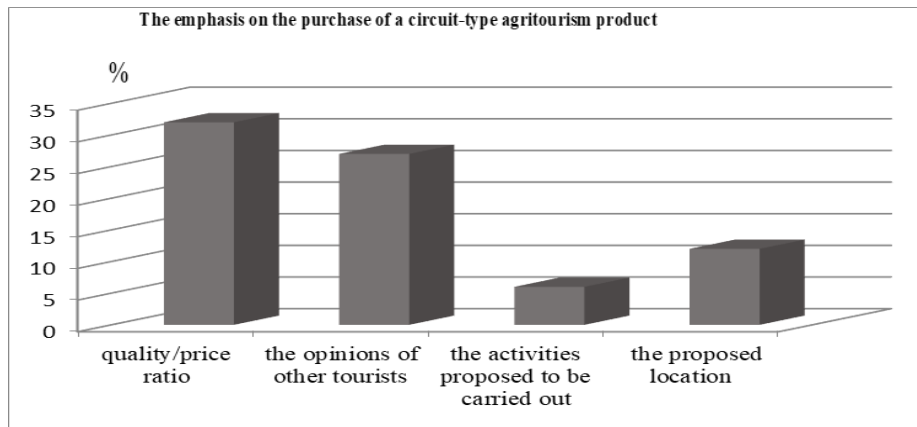


Figure 7. The emphasis on the purchase of a circuit-type agritourism product

Question number nine highlight which of the villages of Margina commune has the "highest potential" in order to be able to create a successful "Margina brand agritourism product".

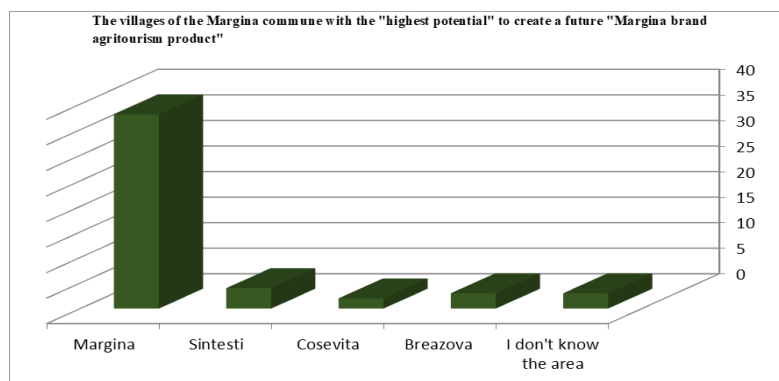


Figure 8. The villages of the Margina commune with the "highest potential" to create a future "Margina brand agritourism product"

From the villages of the commune:

- Margina village is considered by tourists to have the highest agritourism potential in order to create a future "successful agritourism product", the reasons being landscapes, the possibility of fishing, the developing infrastructure, easy access to various routes, development potential, accessibility to different localities, the access road to the Poiana Rusca Mountains.

- followed by Sintesti, for its positioning at the edge of the forests, close distances between villages, reasons for which it can be included in a future tourist circuit.

- Cosevita for various customs and traditions specific for Banat.

- and Breazova for the landscape and history of the area, the originality and uniqueness of the tourist package, the knowledge of the authentic Banat village.

The last question of the questionnaire, number ten, sought to identify

actions/measures that the tourist would take if he were co-opted into a "local committee for agritourism".

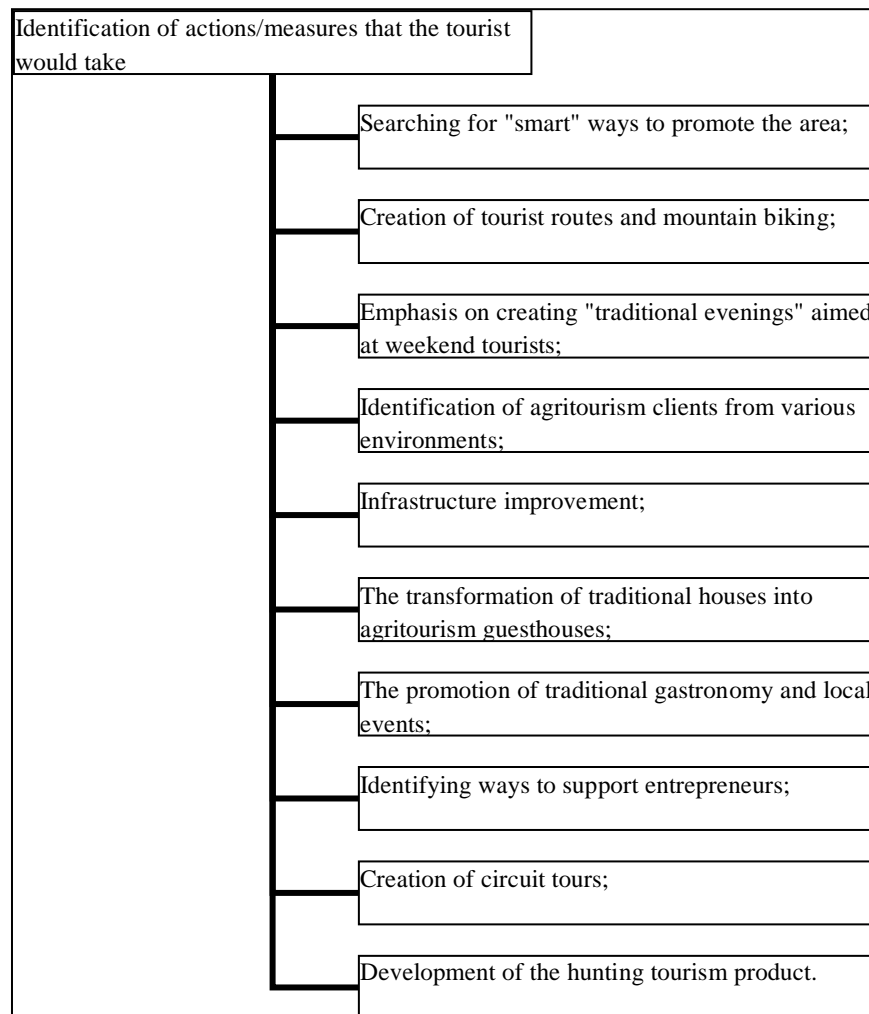


Figure 9. Identification of actions/measures that the tourist would take if they were co-opted into a "local agritourism committee"

The question assumed free answers from the tourist and are reproduced in figure 9. The answers refer to: infrastructure improvement; the transformation of traditional houses into agritourism guesthouses; the promotion of traditional gastronomy; supporting entrepreneurs; promoting the area through the media, creating a website; circuit type trips; traditional evenings; establishing a calendar of events; looking for the target customer with low and medium incomes; involvement of local authorities in organizing events to attract tourists.

CONCLUSIONS

In formulating future recommendations, we start from the conclusions drawn following the application of the questionnaire, namely that tourists who want agritourism in Margina "expect" from the agritourism product: hospitality, beautiful landscapes, nature trails, traditional food, possibilities for agreement, decent accommodation, valuing traditions and gastronomy, and based on these aspects were issued some proposals, provided by tourists:

- infrastructure improvement;
- the transformation of traditional houses into agritourism guesthouses;
- the promotion of traditional gastronomy;
- supporting entrepreneurs;
- promoting the area through the media, creating a website;
- circuit type trips;
- traditional evenings;
- establishing a calendar of events;
- looking for the target customer with low and medium incomes;
- involvement of local authorities in organizing events to attract tourists.

Visiting any rural tourist settlement involves combining different components such as transport, accommodation, tourist attractions and services. Several aspects give the agritourism product the chance to be successful:

- Relatively easy access to tourist attractions and accommodation infrastructure is crucial in determining the success of an agritourism product.
- An imperative requirement of agritourism would be the capitalization of ethnographic values from rural area, by offering services with high added value.
- It is possible to try the development of circuit-type agritourism products, in collaboration with other areas.
- Increasing the attractiveness of tourist areas by combining rural/agritourism specific leisure opportunities with other types of specific attractions.
- Paying special attention to the construction of special off-season products.

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