

**ASPECTS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRITOURIST
ACTIVITY IN BRAN-MOECIU AREA**

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***Abstract:** In present, is accepted that the fact that rural tourism represents a way to save agriculture and cultural heritage, being an activity in full ascension, with a positive impact on local development. Rural areas will have to define new functions, more ecological and recreational, increasingly important, being new developmental alternatives for those involved in agricultural field. In this context a major role will be played by the development of a multitude of tourism activities in rural areas. Specifically for European economies, rural tourism brings an essential contribution to the integration process. Recognized as a developed agritourist region, the Bran-Moeciu area through the rich natural, anthropic, cultural, community and heritage resources offers a special combination of architecture, heritage buildings, community monuments and events, a historical past based on a cultural multitude blending of the modern lifestyle with traditional agrarian and medieval one.*

Key words: natural resources, ethnographic potential, agritourism, Bran-Moeciu area

INTRODUCTION

The authenticity of rural areas is a growing quality d more and more demanded, in the conditions of the present life. [1, 3] Many governments in the European Union recognize that rural tourism is an alternative that can save agriculture and that "over the next 20 years tourism will be the core component of the rural economy, and rural tourism will become tourism of the future." [4, 17]

Situated in the southern part of Brasov County, the Rucar-Bran Corridor represents an area with a north-north-south-south-south position between the Piatra Craiului Mountains to the west and the Leaota and Bucegi Mountains to the east. The Bran consists of three communes, totaling 14 villages. These villages are grouped according to their altitude in: "The villages of Bran de Jos" and "The villages of Bran de Sus". [14,15]

Tourist patrimony is a gift of nature and a result of human creation, effort and intelligence, a condition without which tourism can not be practiced, because it forms the basic tourist offer and determines the size of the attraction justifying the tourist movement.[2, 10, 12]

The area has many anthropic resources of interest for the tourists who come here. The Bran villages scattered between Bucegi and Piatra Craiului attract tourists in particular, both through ethnography and folklore, as well as by the beauty of the places, because here is an artistic sense developed among the locals, everything bearing the seal of originality.[7, 11, 14]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper aims to be an empirical analysis of agritourism activity in the studied area. To document and accomplish this work we used a series of information taken from specialized literature, and for analyzing data we used the INSS source.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Accommodation structures encountered in the studied area are characterized through a variety of forms, starting from a hardly estimated number of households that provide accommodation and food for tourists (and which operate outside the tourist accommodation classification system), boarding houses whether or not are component of ANTREC, villas and hotels, motels, cottages, tourist villages, camping sites. [5, 13]

According to statistical data, during the 2005-2017 period the evolution of the various types of accommodation units in Bran has an upward trend, until 2015, when there is a slight decrease in the number of accommodation units.

Regarding the agritourist guesthouses, in the main localities with agritourist potential from the Moeciu-Bran-Rucar area, an area with tradition in practicing agritourism, during 2005-2017 period the number of their has increased with 85.92%. [11, 19]

The largest share in the structure of the accommodation units was the agritourist guesthouses, in the year 2017, they accounted 88.40% from the total number of accommodation units existent in the area. The largest share in the structure of the accommodation units has the agritourist guesthouses, in 2017 they accounted 88.40% from the total number of accommodation units from the area.

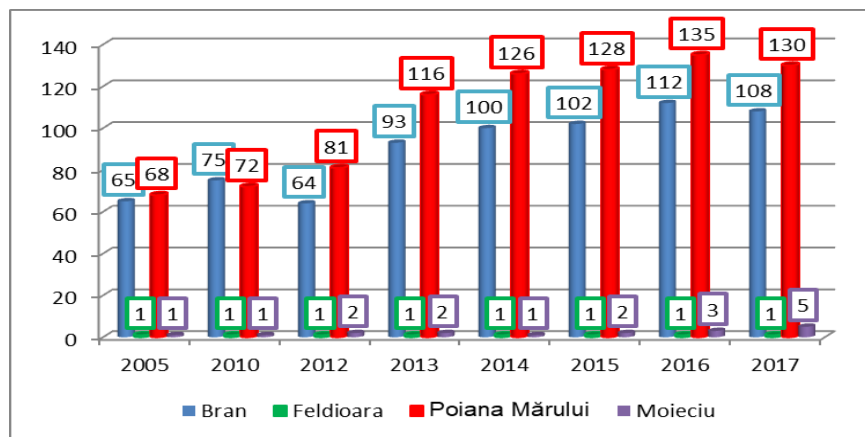


Figure 1. The evolution of accommodation units' number in the Bran area

The technical and material basis specific to the accommodation establishments is partially old, requiring modernization, the quality of the services offered to the tourists being in close correlation with the degree of modernization and technical endowment of the accommodation units. [16]

In order to analyze the tourist offer, the accommodation capacity (existing and in operation) must be given special importance, this indicator expressing the number of existing tourist accommodation places and those actually used during the operation period of the tourist unit.

In the year 2016, the existing accommodation capacity in the Bran area was 5,866 accommodation places, representing 20.71%, from the existing accommodation capacity in the county of Brasov. At the level of the studied area, 98.47% from the total number of accommodation places are from Bran and Moeciu. [8, 18]

Regarding the capacity in operation, existing in Bran area, this represents 21.22% from the capacity registered at the county's level. The accommodation capacity in function in agritourist guesthouses amounts 22.04% from the total of the existing capacity at the county's level. [11]

Specific to Bran is the fact that the majority of accommodation units (86.4%) are rural tourism units, namely agritourist hostels, which own 66.04% from the number of rooms offered at the resort level and 83% from the one of accommodation places.

From the point of view of comfort degree, at the resort level there are tourist guesthouses classified as 1, 2, 3 and 4 daisies respectively, 2 and 3 star villas and 1 and 2 star hotels. At the level of 2017, the distribution of rooms by comfort category was as follows: 9.2% of 4 stars, 22.4% of 3 stars, 50.7% of 2 stars, 17.7% of 1 star. This distribution is common to Romanian resorts, dominated by 2-star accommodation units.[19]

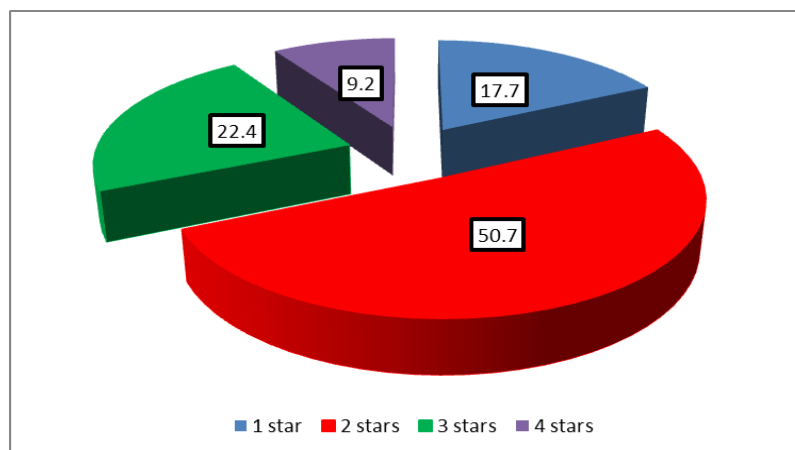


Figure 2. Distribution of rooms by comfort category in Bran tourist area, 2017

Regarding the structures of tourist reception for food, in the year 2017, in the Bran resort, there were 11 food units, distributed on the following types: classic restaurants 32.3%, followed by restaurants with specific 29.8% , buffet-bars 12.3%, pizzerias 11.0%, restaurant-board 7.1%, disco bars 6.3% and wine cellars 1.2%.

The analysis of the tourist demand is based on indicators referring to the number of tourists accommodated, the number of overnight stays and the average duration of the stay.

Table 1.

The evolution of tourist arrivals, in Bran tourist area

		2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	Brasov County	448147	510196	642829	737810	834979	865689	997601	1114395
	Bran	22181	40062	50353	54139	65481	68214	67557	73810
	Feldioara	488	:	:	:	366	481	494	538
	Moieciu	17410	23154	30286	49363	52418	53111	53365	70605
	Poiana Marului	10	238	80	156	87	1177	1012	2915
Agritourist guesthouses	Brasov County	30348	45735	65633	72665	87094	94081	110417	133626
	Bran	12595	23773	31963	29325	38130	38768	39863	45339
	Feldioara	488	:	:	:	366	481	494	538
	Moieciu	15091	13908	21302	27389	31304	32714	36380	43979
	Poiana Marului	10	238	80	156	87	1177	1012	2915

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

During the 2005-2017 period, at the level of the Bran tourist area, there can be noticed oscillations regarding the number of tourists' arrivals. The tendency manifested at the level of the studied area is one of an increase in the number of tourists. For the analyzed period, tourist arrivals increased with 268.85%, on the structure of

accommodation establishments and with 229.16% in the case of agritourist guest houses.[8, 18]

The Bran locality concentrates the largest number of tourists accommodated in the agritourist guesthouses from the studied area, 33.93% in 2017. During the analyzed period, another important indicator of tourist demand is the number of overnight stays. In 2017, the value of this indicator was 194082 tourist days, representing 13.60% from the total number of overnight stays in the county. Regarding the analysis of the indicator in the agritourist guesthouses, the overnight stays for this form of accommodation in Bran the tourist area represent 68.05% from the value of the indicator at the level of Brasov County.

Between 2005 and 2017, the value of the indicator, the number of overnight stays, in the total number of accommodation units, in the locality of Bran increased with 190.15% and in the case of the agritourist guesthouses with 187.24% [9]

The structure of tourists' categories shows a higher share of Romanian tourists, but we also encounter quite a large number of foreign tourists, the studied area being recognized as a tourist area with a high tourist potential.

Regarding the average length of stay, during the 2005-2017 period was of 2,08 days/tourist in Brasov county of and 2,14 days/tourist in Bran area. It is about, for both situations, of a relatively short length of stay.

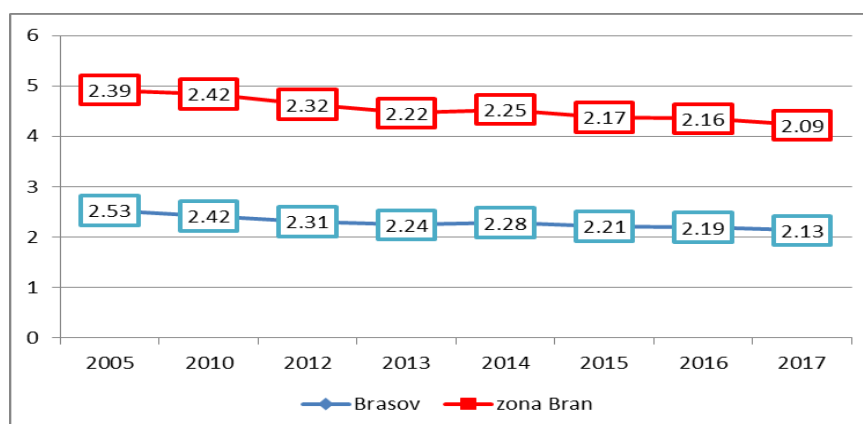


Figure 3. The average length of stay in agritourist guesthouses from Bran area

The analysis of the indicator for agritourist guesthouses indicates higher values compared to those recorded on the accommodation unit. However, there is a tendency to diminish the average duration of the stay, both in Brasov County (12.55%) and also for Bran area (15.81%). [19]

The low value of the indicator for Bran area indicates that many tourists are more likely passing through the area and are mainly interested in visiting the Bran Castle.

So, it can be said that there is still not a proper promotion of the entire tourist offer at the resort level, which makes the stay of the tourists to be reduced to the potential of the area, as well as the receipts from tourism.

Most of those who choose to spend more time at Bran are those who have built holiday homes in the area or the staff of companies that own properties in Bran.

Due to the large number of tourists and of individuals/firms that own holiday homes, the Bran tourist resort is becoming more and more crowded at the peak of the season (especially during the weekend). This influx of tourists also produces negative effects: road jams, uncontrolled household waste disposal, overuse of distribution networks, etc. To solve these problems, local authorities have initiated projects to develop the infrastructure of the locality in order to maintain the current development trend and the status of tourist resort. [9,11,18]

CONCLUSIONS

From the point of view of the physico-geographic location, situated in the South-Eastern part of Transylvania, Brasov County represents the largest part of Brasov and Fagaras depressions. From a tourist point of view, Brasov County is one of the most varied tourist areas in terms of both natural and anthropic resources, but also regarding the variety of forms of tourism that can be practiced in this area.

On the territory of Brasov County, the natural tourism potential is harmoniously intertwined with the anthropic tourist potential that has many elements of great cultural and historical value. In Brasov County, agritourism is mainly practiced in Bran area villages (Fundata, Moeciu, Bran) and Poiana Marului, areas that represent a natural, historical and tourist potential, but also in Sacele-Tarlungeni area, a border area of Brasov town.

The Bran area is the first agritourism region developed at national level. Here rural tourism and agritourism have seen a continuous development, tourists coming to these lands for nature, clean air, lack of sound pollution and urban agglomeration, as well as for keeping traditions and returning to authenticity.

The local rural villages spread between Bucegi and Piatra Craiului attract tourists mainly through ethnography and folklore well preserved in these places, but also the beauty of these lands that preserve the artistic value of the place sealed by originality.

A special place in the structure of the accommodation units is held by the agritourists' guesthouses in 2017, they accounted about 88.40% from the total number of accommodation units from the area.

In 2017, the existing accommodation capacity from Bran area was 5,866 accommodation places, representing 20.71%, from the existing accommodation capacity in the county of Brasov. At the level of the studied area, 98.47% from the total number of accommodation places are in Bran and Moeciu.

The tourism development strategy of Bran area must aim at the following directions of sustainable development: the development of new elements of tourism infrastructure; upgrading the infrastructure needed for sustainable development; diversifying the local tourist offer and expanding the ski area; appropriate signage of cultural and historical objectives from Bran; improving the quality of tourism services.

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