

## AUTHENTICITY IN FARM AGRITOURISM

VĂDUVA LOREDANA\*<sup>1</sup>, PETROMAN CORNELIA<sup>1</sup>,  
MARIN DIANA<sup>1</sup>, PETROMAN IOAN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara,  
Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: loredana\_heber@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** Authentic tourism in general, and farm agritourism in particular, is a phenomenon with multiple local cultural, traditional and pastoral resonances, due to the ethnic multiculturalism in different areas of the world but also at the level of local communities, through the customs regarding animal husbandry, the traditional processing of raw materials and distribution of finished products as specific farm products. Authenticity in farm agritourism from a social point of view is a negotiable concept rather than an absolute concept, farm tourism turning the traditional culture of a rural area into a product, replacing the real with directing authenticity through its impact on the unaltered culture and tradition of communities of breeders, processors of animal products.

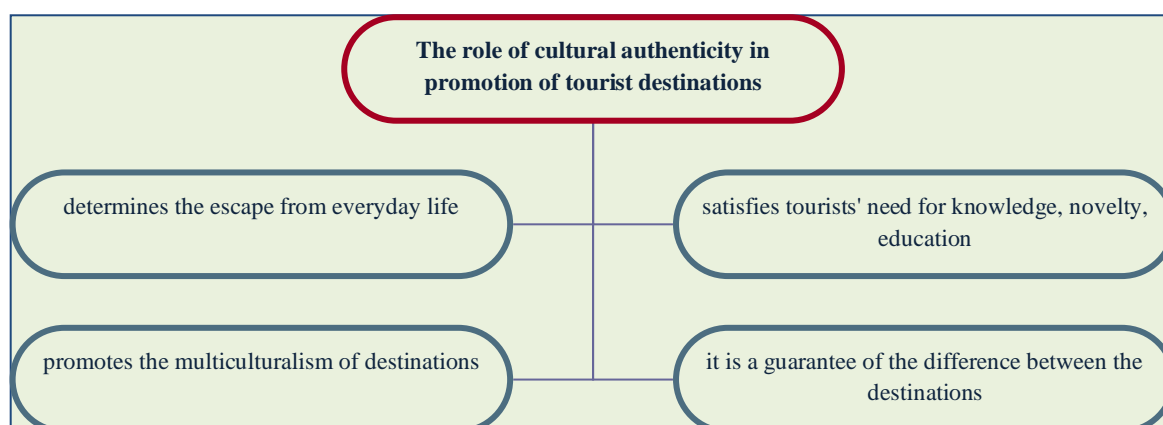
**Key words:** tourism, farm tourism, authenticity

### INTRODUCTION

Authenticity in tourism as a term is used for the first time in the Charter of Venice, where the emphasis is placed on historical monuments that must be preserved with all their authenticity while respecting temporary structures. [3,4,19] These documents highlight the progress recorded throughout history from multiple perspectives, cultural differences being the starting point in:

- the definition of authenticity; [10,15]
- the criteria for selecting monuments as sites;
- the protection of human and cultural resources as well as their authenticity [1,7,8].

It is found that some concepts related to authenticity or inauthenticity in tourism are not clearly presented, for these reasons specialists from the field have launched the slogan of inauthentic authenticity or authentic inauthenticity. [12,17]



**Figure 1. The role of cultural authenticity in promotion of tourist destinations**

Source: own creation

Considering these aspects, authenticity has become a research topic in the field of tourism, to meet the needs of cultural tourists because it makes possible the contrast with everyday life in the sense that:

- satisfies tourists' need for knowledge, novelty, education;
- determines the escape from everyday life; [9,13]

- it is a guarantee of the difference between the destinations;
- promotes the multiculturalism of destinations.

Analyzing the term authenticity from a social point of view, as a negotiable and not absolute concept, we find that "tourism transforms culture into a product, replacing the real with staged authenticity. This aspect highlights the fact that authenticity in tourism is seen as: [2,5,6]

- socially constructed concept;
- variable appreciation from tourist to tourist. [16,18]

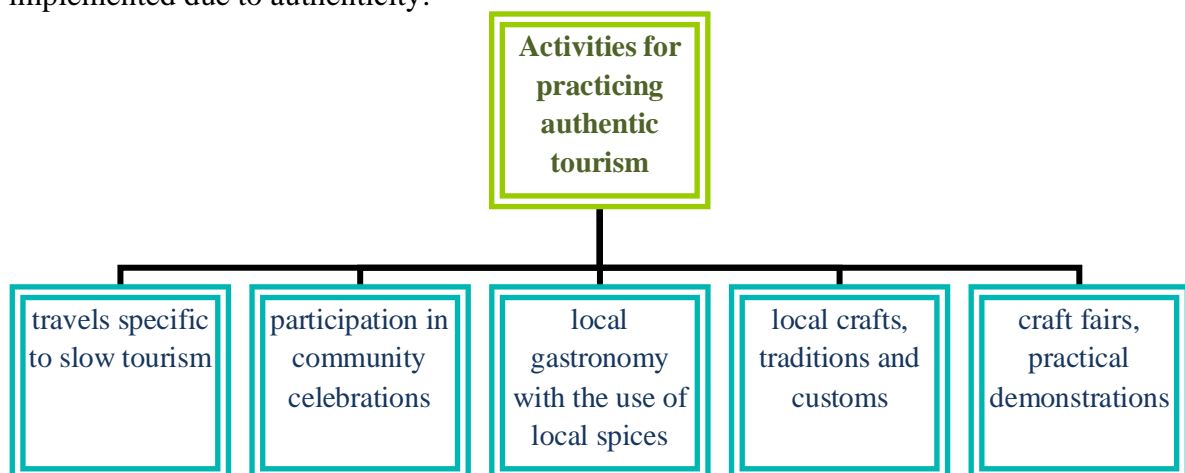
Considering these aspects, we conclude that researchers are no longer concerned with the impact of tourism on unaltered culture, but with the problem of tradition and the connection of tourism impact on cultural policies at the community level. Authenticity for communities as well as for tourists is susceptible to change because the expectations of those who practices tourism change and customs and traditions are invented-reinvented.[11,14]

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the case of this scientific approach are subject to analysis the current concepts regarding authenticity in tourism, the impact of tourism on culture, as well as the motivation of tourists for practicing authentic tourism using the methods known in research, because the term authenticity for those who practice tourism are susceptible to the fact that at the destination customs or traditions can be reinvented, to attract as many tourists as possible or to reorient tourist flows.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

According to the new concepts regarding authenticity, from the consultation of specialized literature and research in the field, the natural question arises, what is the use of authenticity. It follows that the term authenticity refers to obtaining general information about the traditions and customs of communities and in the case of authentic tourism at value-added trips, quality experiences, the discovery of new destinations specific to the area and traditional lifestyles. Through authentic tourism, the following activities can be implemented due to authenticity:



**Figure 1. Activities for practicing authentic tourism**

*Source: own creation*

Although it is quite difficult to make a distinction between the terms of authenticity and inauthenticity in the practice of tourism, due to the fact that only some objects can be evaluated scientifically or on historical periods, these two terms can be considered imaginary constructions attributed not only to objects but also to people or craftsmanship

practices, gastronomy, traditions and customs as attributes, so it can be considered without error that:

- what is considered authentic is postulated to be true, valuable and legitimate;
- what is considered inauthentic is postulated to be false, without ethical, material or moral value.

Taking these aspects into account, modern tourism is suspected that sometimes promote inauthenticity because it causes changes by transforming some destinations into something totally different. At a certain moment, a tourism product that is considered inauthentic can be recognized as authentic, dealing with emergent authenticity. According to the study of the International Council for Monuments and Sites, it is recommended to avoid the use of "mechanistic formulas or standardized procedures in defining authenticity". It is claimed that behind authenticity are statements about the meaning and significance of some component elements of the object evaluated from the point of view of its originality: the content; the consistency of the reference; provenance and context.

It is necessary to propose in some situations even strategies in defining authenticity, each strategy can lead to:

- ways of defining the concept;
- alternative implementation tactics by focusing on:
  - the originality of the entity and which can be implemented with the help of the following strategies:
    - focus on intrinsic properties;
    - focus on the process through which the entity was preserved.
  - the intrinsic properties of the entity;
  - suitability degree with suitability testing.

Because it is difficult to define authenticity abstractly, it is proposed to elaborate principles of authenticity by fields or study disciplines. These principles must respect the intention to preserve the authentic from an ethical and historical perspective and to preserve the authentic from a specifically clearly stated perspective. In Romanian specialized literature, authenticity is defined as:

- authority or reality that cannot be doubted;
- recognized object specific to an evolutionary stage of history;
- the appropriation of an anthropic resource to be original;
- something true;
- something real, original.

The above definitions have in common the rectification of authenticity, this representing the inherent quality of an object. We consider that the following conceptual approaches can be used for authenticity in tourism:

- objectivism where authenticity is based on a static original.
- constructivism through which authenticity is a social process;
- postmodernism where authenticity itself is irrelevant;
- existentialism considers authenticity in itself and not as a cultural object.

Regarding authenticity in tourism, we distinguish two categories of definitions from the perspective of the two poles of the tourist act:

- of the supplier of tourist products, the authenticity:

Authenticity can be also classified from an existential perspective, starting from the analysis of repeated attendance at a festival, identifying two categories of authenticity:

- intra-personal;
- inter-personal.

In table 1 it is presented the adapted scheme [5] regarding the main concepts and categories of existential authenticity.

Table 1.

Concepts and categories of existential authenticity		
Concepts	Categories	SUB-CATEGORY
Intra-personal authenticity	Body feelings	The sexual experience
		Alcohol consumption
	Self-determination	The transformation of the self
		The emergence of an alternative self
		Building self-identity
Inter-personal authenticity	Tourist community	Equality
		Acceptance
		The Judic nature of the interaction
		The specific regulation

Source: Adapted from to different authors [5]

We can conclude from the analysis of the data presented above that:

- intra-personal authenticity includes the categories of:

- body feelings;
- self-determination: when the various social and self-imposed rules of everyday life limit our self-perception and constrain our actions.
- interpersonal authenticity: when interaction in institutionalized social contexts is subject to normative constraints.

## CONCLUSIONS

Authenticity is a concept present in all forms of tourism and is the element that can produce a reorientation of tourist flows in a destination through the phenomenon of reinventing customs or traditions. We believe that a very important aspect that is being created is the one of tradition and the link between the impact of tourism on communities because the expectations of those who practice tourism change over time and customs and traditions are invented and reinvented. A solution that could lead to the development of tourism could be the promotion of new modern forms of authentic tourism such as farm tourism by promoting traditions and customs, festivals and events as well as gastronomy specific to agritourist farms. Also important are the aspects of authenticity from the perspective of the host and the tourist. We believe that in the tourism activity, two categories of authenticity must be strongly emphasized - the authenticity of the host and the authenticity of the tourist. However, it is necessary to make a clarification: authentic tourism does not necessarily mean exotic tourism. The authentic can be discovered by experiencing the vibrant life of a tourist destination, including change and development - this is experiential tourism.

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