

RURAL TOURISM SERVICES BETWEEN TRADITIONALISM, MODERNISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Rural tourism, the complex form of valorization of the natural, cultural and human resources of the rural environment, offers visitors experiences located at the intersection of traditionalism, modernism and sustainability, dimensions that complement each other, defining the specificity of the contemporary rural space. Traditionalism, the identity foundation of rural tourism, transforms the village into a space of living cultural experience. Modernism expresses the adaptation of the tourist offer to the current demands of the market, rural tourism becoming an integrated product, combining traditional hospitality with contemporary quality standards. Sustainability, the premise of the continuity and viability of the sector, involves protecting the environment in all its aspects. The increasingly important role of green technologies contributes to the transformation of rural tourism into a model of sustainable and ecological development. The research was based on a sociological survey, conducted through a self-administered questionnaire addressed to tourists, the instrument being structured on five dimensions — traditionalism, modernism, sustainability, socio-demographics and general opinions, the analysis of the responses aiming to identify the general perception and preferences related to the balance between authenticity, comfort and ecological responsibility.

The following working hypotheses were formulated: a) tourists attach high importance to traditional elements (gastronomy, customs, architecture), essential for the authenticity of the rural experience; b) there is a tendency to balance the need for modern comfort and the desire to preserve local specificity; c) the degree of ecological sensitivity, the acceptance of green technologies positively influences the perception of the sustainability of rural tourism services and the results aim to highlight an integrated model of rural tourism, where tradition confers identity, modernity offers attractiveness, and sustainability guarantees durability, long-term social relevance, rural tourism becoming not only an economic activity, but a vector of cultural cohesion, of green innovation in the contemporary European space.

Keywords: Rural tourism, natural and cultural resources, tradition, modernity, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is one of the most dynamic forms of alternative tourism, based on the valorisation of the natural and cultural heritage of the rural environment [2], [6]. In a