

EMPOWERMENT OF TOURISM MARKETING IN RURAL AREAS

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SUPPORT MANUAL



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Abstract

The current research paper has focused on the identification of several issues that are related to the Tourism Sector, and most importantly, to the Rural Areas, which constitutes one of their most important economic activities. The research has evaluated the concept of Culture as a major issue and that it can provide several benefits. Leading to the job creation, retaining the people to their areas, and the contribution to the GDP. The need for professional advice for the Rural Areas, in terms of Marketing is essential for the businesses in the rural areas, especially for the SMEs, as these have limited productive resources, which leads to other problems, such as the need for Innovation and competitiveness. In addition, there is an increasing need for the rural areas to ensure that they develop an adequate level of collaboration with several external stakeholders, in order to become more effective in their activities, and attract the best possible visitors. Furthermore, the need for developing alternative forms of tourism, is greater now more than ever before, as the businesses in the rural areas are facing a substantial level of challenges due to the entry in the market of a number of emerging places. Therefore, the current work has identified a number of alternative forms of tourism that can contribute to the overall economic development. The concept of Marketing plays a key role and calls for professional marketers to identify new forms of operations, and that calls for

creativity. The emotional marketing has been identified to have a great deal of impact and creates enormous opportunities for the rural areas, as well as for the HORECA Industry. Finally, marketers are called to develop policies that enable them to go ‘Beyond Marketing’, which constitutes a real challenge and can provide several benefits to the rural areas.

Keywords: Hospitality, tourism, rural areas, HORECA, marketing, strategy, empowerment, culture, service markets, competition, SMEs, communication.

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1. Chapter 1: The Convergence of the Economic and Spiritual Interests

1.1. Rural Areas and Culture

The development of Tourism has in recent years shifted the way that contemporary economies focus on the development of Strategies that will have a substantial impact on the operations, especially when this concerns mature economies that have the appropriate productive resources; financial, human, land, and technological that can drive them forwards and ensure that the appropriate results shall be delivered. As a result of all the above, this creates the need for a clarified identification of all the elements that constitute the Rural Areas, Culture, and of course, Tourism, that have a great deal of impact on the designing and application of such Strategies that will provide the Rural Areas with the appropriate competitiveness and create an environment of Leadership that is indeed essential for long-term success (Schein, 2010).

The impact of competitiveness cannot be underestimated and it constitutes an integral part of the overall Strategies, thus, creating the appropriate of opportunities of attracting the adequate resources. The role of

Rural Areas in the overall economic development is essential and this is identified on both global and local levels and creates the need for understanding from a strategic point-of-view and ensures that this will lead towards the best possible results. This is experiencing a greater importance in remote areas in which the financial capabilities are not realistically accessible. This is of a great importance and critically evaluating the situation, it must be clarified that the access to all possible financial resources can provide the organizations operating in Rural areas, both public and private, with the ability to ensure that they will develop the essential understanding and create the appropriate environment for further success.

The definition of Rural Areas is rather difficult to identify as this varies due to the differences that exist in terms of understanding what 'Rural Area' constitutes, as well as due to the fact that there are differences in the population composition in various countries. This is clearly identifiable across the globe, therefore, the need for a general term regarding the particular issue, is rather essential in order to provide the opportunity to gain a clarified understanding over the major issues related to it. In USA the Rural areas vary from 2.500 to 50.000 people (USDA, 2019), therefore, creating more confusion over the understanding of the Rural Areas. Therefore, the current research proposes that the appropriate definition regarding the Rural Area should be identified as "A geographic area that is located outside cities and towns".

Furthermore, the identification of the concept of Culture is essential in order to ensure that the examination of both the Rural Areas and the Culture shall prevail. Despite that several scientific definitions have in recent years been developed, the current research focuses on the identification provided by Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952, p. 2). The authors support that " Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups,

including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action."

Despite that the particular definition can be viewed as rather broad, its adoption critically evaluated as essential and can provide the current work with the appropriate knowledge in terms of scientific approach and ensure a comprehensive understanding of all the related issues.

Rural Areas can be positively influenced shall they identify the need to focus on the concept of Intellectual Property (IP) as this has taken an increasing importance during the last decades, especially in developed economies that have clearly managed to identify its role and create the appropriate policies regarding the particular issue. This primary identification provides the roadmap of how and why the Rural Areas should strategically focus on the development of strategies related to the protection of their IP and create the appropriate environment for the adequate investments that will lead to the much-needed job-creations and financial growth. This is more essential in Rural Areas that are indeed facing serious growth issues and experience lack of attracting and obtaining the adequate financial resources.

Several countries across the globe such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, Scotland and Wales, have managed to ensure that their IP in terms of 'Tourism and Gastronomy' has been protected. This is important as it is directly associated to the 'Culture' definition provided by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). Within the current identification, the role of Hotels, Restaurants, and other related Tourism businesses is evaluated of the utmost importance and creates the opportunities for the national governments to

identify and develop the appropriate strategies that will lead to the relevant benefits for the local economies.

In general, Gastronomy encompasses a broad range of Cultural trends and characteristics that are clearly identifiable in every single country and national origin, with focus on the countries that have already been identified. Therefore, these must be developed accordingly by the Tourism professionals, and of course, in collaboration with their national governments in order to ensure their protection and development as part of a comprehensive strategy.

The connection between the Rural Areas and Culture has experienced a great development in terms of a really important issue that can be seen as a fine resource for financial benefits shall it is developed within the appropriate professional and strategic manner; thus, enabling rural areas to enjoy a sustainable development by focusing on the particular element. Shall these be taken into consideration, can indeed enable a rather deeper understanding of how the Rural Areas can focus on ensuring a long-term growth and create the appropriate environment for Innovation, as this constitutes a real challenge for contemporary managers and organizations within an increasing competitive global environment; elements that must clearly characterize Leaders.

Culture can easily be identified and characterized as one of the major elements that contribute towards the prosperity and long-term growth of the Rural Areas, hence, having a great impact on the lives of all the people involved in the procedure. The fact that the Culture has been found to contribute towards the development of several parts of the planet, makes it even more important and such identification enhances the approach that Culture must be seen within a broader concept.

A clarified Technical Term related to all the under-examination issues has been identified and strongly supported by the European Network for Rural

Development (2016, p.1) which clarifies that “Arts and culture can play an important role in improving rural areas and the quality of life of people living there. Among others, they can help to create new connections and bring together different communities (e.g. urban and rural, farmers & customers, rural communities and administrations), improve communication about rural areas, contribute to the improvement of shared cultural identity and engage disadvantaged groups (such as youth or migrants)”.

In addition to all the above, the examination of the results of the European Network for Rural Development, and more specifically during the “5th NRN Meeting & Amsterdam Rural Forum Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 11-12 May 2016” has clearly identified a number of benefits that can arise by focusing on the development of Culture and Arts. The cases of five European Union countries (Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Belgium, and Austria), have clearly led to the development of specific conclusions that can have a substantial impact on the local societies. More specifically, the findings are related to important strategic elements such as the:

- i. Transformation of work in the countries; thus, enabling them to become more focused and developed their Human Resource Management (HRM) Strategies in such way that can have a rather comprehensive social and financial impact with long-term benefits for the local societies. Given the role of HRM in improving the Quality of Service in contemporary economies, this is of a great importance for the Rural Areas;
- ii. Connection between the global world and local region which can provide the local societies and businesses with the chance to take advantage of the enormous opportunities that are provided in the globalized environment. Globalization is essential and calls for both private and public organizations to focus on the issue;

- iii. Social Creative Innovation which enables the Rural Areas to ensure that all people in the particular areas shall participate in the process; hence, creating a team environment which can lead to the best possible results, given the increasing role of Teamwork in the globalized environment;
- iv. Multimedia and artistic transformation enables the local societies in terms of authorities and businesses, to fully focus on the role and impact of the Digital era and ensure that they will take advantage of the opportunities provided. The digital age has indeed reshaped the way that the Rural Areas are operating and developing their capabilities; hence, this can lead to a great positive impact shall a comprehensive strategy focus on the new concept of Inbound Marketing. The challenges in terms of Digital Marketing and effective promotion for the Rural Areas remain a real challenge, and consequently, all these need a focused and well-defined, developed, and implemented strategy, that will provide the particular areas with the appropriate competitive advantage and create an effective operating environment at all possible levels, political, business, and individual.

As a result of all the above issues, it is more than obvious that the Culture in the Rural Areas is affected by a number of reasons that are experiencing a constant and rapid change. This change calls for all the stakeholders to strategically focus on the particular element and provide the appropriate resources, financial, human, land, and technological, and of course, allocate them in an effective way in order to ensure that success shall be put in place. The cooperation of all the stakeholders is of a great importance as this can become a Key Success Factor (KSF), especially since the role of Internet has taken such a great importance. It is therefore, important for all parties involved

to clearly focus on the particular issue in order to ensure that success shall prevail in the long term.

In order to promote themselves, Rural Areas need to ensure that they identify possible obstacles that can lead to the development of serious problems and hold them back whilst they are trying to establish themselves as powerful and attractive holiday and hospitality destinations. Recent research has clearly shown that particular Rural areas have come across to such obstacles that are related to the geographical 'isolation' and the lack of strategy behalf them in order to overcome these particular problems. As a result of all the above, attractive areas in Japan have missed out on implementing long-term strategies and there was a real lack of internal and external communication between all the relevant stakeholders. This calls for the local authorities to focus on eliminating these obstacles that will enable them to take of the opportunities provided in terms of Culture and establish a logical flow of processes through A comprehensive approach based on clarified scientific facts.

Earlier research in the particular field and geographical areas has led towards similar results which add to the need for more focused strategies and activities that will encompass all the possible stakeholders. Such actions have been identified by Soini and Birkeland (2014, p. 213) who stated that "By making the obvious semantic connection between 'culture' and 'sustainability', a path has been laid to make sense of sustain-able development through the lens of culture. The growing interest in culture and sustainability draws on many conceptualizations of culture, both wide and narrow. A wide understanding of culture makes culture a condition and pre-mise for action, meaning, and communication. The reference by the authors leads to the clarified conclusion that the obstacles are long-lasting, and create the opportunity for solving the problems. However, the communication problems related to Culture are still in

place and as a result, the impact of the lack of collaboration is more than obvious in several areas.

The Cultural Heritage enhances the ability of the Rural Areas to promote themselves as part of the overall Culture and enhance their place in the Tourism industry as a really attractive destination that has a lot to offer towards not only to the tourists but towards the overall financial development, job creation, and contribution towards the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The financial impact of Cultural Heritage cannot be demoted as it contributes to a substantial level and is directly related to the restoration and development of several areas that have suffered during the past decades as a result of continuous poor national strategies that have failed to pay attention towards the specific field.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2016 – On-line) “Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture, intangible culture, and natural heritage.” This identification constitutes a milestone in understanding the role and impact of Cultural Heritage, and how this can have a strategic impact on the Rural Areas through the assistance of the national governments that play a crucial role in the overall approach within the particular field.

The Cultural Heritage provides the Rural Areas with the ability to enhance their overall Products and Services encompass the entire communities in the strategic actions developed, hence, lead to a sustainable business environment. Cultural Heritage has enabled the development of art crafts and intangible attributes of society inherited from past generations; hence, enabling the local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to develop a sustainable set of operations. Such operations need to consider a number of activities that must

come, of course, from the past; however, they must not neglect the contemporary trends.

Importantly, the development of Cultural Heritage can lead to further positive effects such as the creation of the fundamentals for the Sustainable Tourism which remains in the global agenda and can be developed in most countries, as they carry their own unique Cultural Heritage. Consequently, the positive momentum that derives from the constant development of Tourism on a global scale can indeed have a positive impact on the Culture and most specifically, on the Cultural Heritage, which is visible to a number of activities that are developed within the European Union which provides a clarified direction of how these policies must be implemented as part of an overall strategic approach (European Commission, 2017).

European Union Countries such as Greece have managed to strategically focus on the concept of Heritage Culture and develop their national economies, with attention to the role of the Tourism. All the above are clarified by Alexandrakis, Manasakis, and Kampanis (2019, p.80) who have focused on the examination of several relevant elements, identified the impact of Heritage Culture in the Rural Areas and the overall national economies and strongly suggested that “The inclusion of cultural heritage sites in the decision-making process for development is based on the consideration that their societal value is considered as that of an “unpriced good” characterized by attributes and society links that are not included in the conventional market metrics commonly used in assessing the economic outcome of an investment”. The authors’ identifications are fundamental in understanding the how Heritage Culture can lead to a substantial impact and enable the Heritage Culture to become a key-driver towards success and long-term growth. Provided that the Heritage Culture constitutes a priority for all the countries, and the European Union pays

exceptional attention towards this direction, any actions that focus on protecting and promoting it should be more than welcome.

As a result of the examination of all the above-mentioned issues, the combination of the Rural Areas and Culture, can lead to a high level of positive influence. In any case, such actions can only take place through a comprehensive approach and with the support of the national government that have the appropriate know-how and resources to support such activities.

The fact that the urbanization creates obstacles to the long-term development of the Rural areas leads to a clarified negative impact on the Culture of the Rural areas. Unfortunately, this constitutes a global trend which is experiencing a massive growth due to the fact that the urban areas provide more and better paid jobs; hence, attracting the most qualified staff that are graduating from universities and possess the appropriate knowledge that can essentially drive the Rural areas and their Culture forward.

It is essential to focus on the fact that the competition in the Tourism areas, especially in the Rural ones, is experiencing a massive growth and this is taking place in both local and global levels, as the development of the Information Technology and the role of Social Media enables the travelers to gain the relevant information and take their decisions.

The Culture in the Rural Areas is highly affected by the fact that the people live in a slower pace and create a solid bond with their families and the local communities. Such bonds are also associated with the issues of Religion which has an impact on their lives. Based on this identification, the operations of the local businesses are affected and enable them to adapt their operations according to the needs and requirements of the local communities. Consequently, the decisions by these companies must consider all the above in

order to ensure that success shall prevail by using all the appropriate productive resources.

1.2. Hospitality Management in Rural Areas

The recent financial and banking crisis has reshaped the way that the overall economy is operating as a large number of financial sectors have been affected in a rather negative way; thus, creating the need for the national policies to divert into new ways of economic development. Such approach requires from the national government to develop long-term strategic planning that will provide the appropriate direction, as well as allocating the appropriate productive resources; such financial, technological, and human. All these are fundamental aspects for the contemporary economic activities and enhance the approach that the strategies of the past cannot provide the appropriate solutions (Prodromou, 2019).

In addition, during the financial crisis, several countries and particular geographical rural areas have experienced massive problems in terms of financial development, ability to attract and provide remuneration to their employees, especially those that are considered to be vital for the overall operations and constitute the frontline, as well as to pay their running overheads. All these created several problems that had an impact on their ability to operate within a smooth business environment; hence, creating further challenges for the Rural areas Hospitality Managers. Massive countries and economies such as those of China and the broader Asian region, have come across to relevant challenges during the particular period and have managed to develop sustainable policies in full cooperation with the regional authorities that have enabled them to become more effective, boost employment, and also focus on the protection and development of their local Culture. Culture has been identified a major element for the Hospitality Managers in the Rural areas;

hence, such identification can only enable the relevant professional practitioners and authorities to become more focused and effective.

The role of the National Government in cooperation with the local authorities as well as with the professional bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, can lead to higher levels of productivity for the SMEs in all financial sectors and develop the appropriate environment for Public and Private Partnerships (PPP). PPT is critically evaluated of a Strategic importance for the contemporary organizations and must become part of an overall approach by all parties involved. Kenton (2019 – Online) focuses on the concept and importance of PPT in the contemporary societies and clarifies that:

“Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding. These partnerships work well when private sector technology and innovation combine with public sector incentives to complete work on time and within budget. Risks for private enterprise include cost overruns, technical defects, and an inability to meet quality standards, while for public partners, agreed-upon usage fees may not be supported by demand—for example, for a toll road or a bridge.”

As a result of the particular identification, the need for the Hospitality Management in the Rural Areas to design the relevant policies in full cooperation with the local and national authorities is of an increasing importance and can potentially provide the opportunity for a sustainable competitive advantage. Such approach is enhanced by other large global organizations such as the World Bank which promotes such activities, provides the relevant know-how and financial support, as well as the relevant legal framework that regulates such operations. Importantly, the World Bank (2018) focuses on the relevant strategic issue and clarifies that “An increasing number

of countries are enshrining a definition of PPPs in their laws, each tailoring the definition to their institutional and legal particularities.

The development of Tourism on a global scale has managed to hold-on and create the relevant environment that has managed to assist the global economy to a good level, with a large number of countries to be experiencing massive growth due to the impact of Tourism. Therefore, this can be considered as a key driver for sustainable economic growth leading to substantial benefits, not only for national economies, but also for particular regions that have realized the need to develop their Hospitality sector as the alternative way of growth and job creation entrepreneurship and leaving no one behind, as this could create an unstable economic environment and also could lead to potential social exclusion, an issue that must be taken into serious consideration by the local authorities as part of their overall strategies. The structure of a new economic model based on the above issues requires a clarified focus by all the relevant stakeholders as they need to ensure that they will work together within an environment of communication and collaboration, much needed for such activities (Kim & Scarles, 2009). Therefore, all the above creates the need for an overall approach by the national governments with the regional authorities.

Vecchio (2011, p.5) identifies the role of Hospitality Tourism in several areas within the European Union and the fact that this has experienced serious problems during the recent financial crisis with aspects such as “ageing, depopulation, out-migration of higher educated youth, and decline in agricultural employment” are just a few of the many challenges facing these areas and creating the strategic need for the national governments and the local authorities to work closely in order to confront each one of the problems that some of them go beyond the closed concept of Hospitality Management and can be considered as of a broader national interest that extend to elements such as the national security and the countries’ foreign policies.

The declining impact of the Hospitality Sector in the Rural areas has been identified from its very early stages and it has been pointed-out that this has an influence in a large number of European countries, both, internally and externally of the European Union. The identification of the roots of the problems is essential as it enables the national governments and the local authorities to identify the particular problems and provide solutions that will indeed confront the problems before they get too large, and therefore, not predictable and difficult to overcome.

All the above raise the importance for the Hospitality Management in the Rural Areas to take into real consideration the relevant opinions of both the local authorities and the local people as these are the ones that are at the front-line of the problems and the challenges, and have a direct knowledge of the problems' roots and how they need to be confronted. Gaining feedback from Community-driven professionals and individuals can become a real challenge, and hence, these need to become part of an overall strategic approach and lead to the relevant benefits for all parties involved.

The Hospitality Management in the Rural areas must take into account the increasing role of the Agriculture sector as this is considered to be of a great importance and lead the particular areas to the creation of diversity and development of Innovation in particular areas. The Agriculture sector can lead to the job creation and entrepreneurship due to the increasing importance of Information Technology which is essential for introducing better quality products in the market; thus, attracting new customers and consumers, and also, penetrating into new markets that have not yet been accessible for the particular products that are critically evaluated of a strategic importance for the sector and the national economies within the European Union.

The relevant Hospitality Management functions must also focus on the concept of Education of the people in the Rural areas as lack of Education, not only in terms of academic or high school, but most importantly, in regards to the social education, can lead to negative issues that are really harmful towards the development of a clarified strategy. In addition, the Education can have positive impact on the Entrepreneurship and create the appropriate environment for economic and social growth that will enable the Rural areas to develop their Hospitality industry. This requires from the Rural areas to develop close relationships with the local academic institutions, both public and private; hence, enabling them to gain the appropriate scientific knowledge which is essential for the Education process at the highest possible level.

Education remains a powerful tool in the hands of Hospitality Managers as they need to identify the particular element in order to take advantage of the relevant opportunities that exist in the marketplace and create a positive environment for their Rural Areas. It is therefore essential to ensure that this will become of the overall strategy.

Hospitality Management is linked with all the scientific Management functions; Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling. All four functions provide the contemporary Managers with the appropriate skills and competences, as well as market understanding in order to ensure that they will apply the relevant policies that will eventually lead to the desired successful results. These functions are also associated with the overall performance, productivity, profitability, as well as the development of the appropriate organizational culture that is essential for the long-term and sustainable development. In addition, the four Management functions can enable the contemporary Managers to become Leaders and establish the relevant relationships with all the Stakeholders.

The need for the Hospitality Managers to apply the four Management functions is essential for a number of reasons that can have a substantial impact on their businesses. The lack of the appropriate skills based on the Management functions are related to the poor Information provision, Communications, Promotions and the enhancement of Transactions with the external stakeholders. Therefore, all these can be critically viewed and approached as drawbacks for the businesses' operations and possibly with the entire industries, shall this be identified to a large degree across many businesses within the same industry. The Small and Medium Sized Hospitality Organizations (SMHOs) are highly affected by such policies and research has revealed this obstacle which calls for the SMHOs to strategically focus on eliminating the problem as it can lead to serious industry drawbacks. Given the fact that these businesses lack of the appropriate productive resources (Human, Financial, Technological, Land, and Capital), the need for cooperation between these businesses in the Hospitality Industry is not an option, it is rather a necessity that needs to be effectively addressed before the problems escalates and become an insurmountable obstacle.

The above identifications related to the Hospitality Management and the connection to the Four Management Functions, leads to another crucial business and management dimension, that of the application of the appropriate Marketing Mix that is vital for the development of the SMHOs. As a primary identification, the role of Marketing must be viewed as an integral part of the Management operations; and consequently, this needs to be linked to the operations of the SMHOs and their ability to gain a competitive advantage in a rather demanding and globalized market which requires the application of all the relevant skill that can drive the organizations forward and provide them with a high-level of benefits in the long-term.

As the concept of Marketing is developed in a separate Chapter within the current work, this is not developed within the current Chapter. However, this needs to be clearly identified in order to raise the importance of Marketing and how this can have a substantial impact on the contemporary organizations and provide them with the ability to become more competitive in a rather complex environment which requires from the Hospitality Managers to gain a comprehensive knowledge and implement all the appropriate strategies that will enable them to successfully reach their objectives. Consequently, Marketing constitutes an integral part of this procedure, it is a massive issue, and this is why it needs to be examined as a separate strategic management issue.

The Hospitality Managers in the Rural Areas are indeed facing some serious challenges that can be seen in several activities and can create obstacles, despite the fact that the Hospitality Managers may possess all the relevant skills, experiences, and other leadership characteristics that can be viewed as core for the overall development. Such of these obstacles refer to:

- i. *Under-developed people* – Shall the local population in the Rural Areas do not have the appropriate education, can lead to several problems such as the ability to explain them the need to cooperate between them and understand that being competitors if they have their own businesses, does not make them enemies. Hence, this identification is important and the Hospitality Managers need to ensure that prior the development of their policies must ensure that they inform and educate the local people. The Communication process at this stage is essential, and this calls for the people in charge to ensure that Communication shall prevail and provide all the relevant benefits to all stakeholders involved;
- ii. *Under-developed markets* – It is indeed crucial for the contemporary businesses to proceed to an extensive research at all

levels and possible dimensions in order to clearly identify possible problems that can potentially exist and create development obstacles in the long-term. This carries an exceptional value and creates the environment for a more comprehensive approach of a number of elements related to the overall Hospitality sector. The Rural Areas may be operating in difficult, or even worse, in under-developed markets which create several problems such as funding, cooperating with the national and local authorities, attracting, hiring, and developing the appropriate Human Resource (HR). The role of HR must be considered as crucial for all businesses, especially for companies that are operating in under-developed markets, as it constitutes the most important asset of any given organization and can lead towards a substantial competitive environment. In addition, undeveloped areas in terms of infrastructure, can face difficulties in attracting visitors, hence, the cooperation with national authorities in order to improve poor infrastructures is essential and the Hospitality Managers must pay the relevant attention towards the particular way. Poor and undeveloped areas are difficult to improve and strategies must be developed. The impact of under-developed markets constitutes a real challenge for the entire global economy, and not only for the particular areas as globalization has created new challenges and threats that need to be effectively identified in order to avoid the problems that exist. The issue is also associated with the declined level of education as well as possible poverty; hence, creating a number of other problems in terms of the financial development.

- iii. *Seasonal demand* – Seasonality in the Tourism area constitutes a serious problem as this limits the time available for operations and the local businesses need to ensure that they acquire the appropriate

revenue that will assist them towards the financial viability. In addition, Seasonality can become an obstacle in attracting and maintaining the best possible HR, as this HR can focus on other markets that the employability will either be longer or even permanent. As a result of this identification, the Hospitality Managers must focus on extending their seasons; thus, extending the benefits and advantages for all stakeholders involved in the process, both internally and externally. The tackling of these problems needs to consider the development of the Marketing Mix as this is directly associated with all the activities and provide the Hospitality Managers with clarified direction which is essential for all activities. However, most recent research in the Northern Poland (Southern Baltic Sea Region) has shown that Seasonality can see from a positive point-of-view from the Students that want to work only for few months, obviously during the summer season; hence, enabling them to earn some extra money, as well as having a pleasant holiday time. This enables the Hospitality Managers to attract cheaper HR that does not require a lot of training; which, however, can have some serious drawbacks in terms of the overall quality offered. Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff (2010, p.395) provide a better understanding of the need of understanding the impact of Seasonality by the Hospitality Managers in the Rural Areas by stating that “Seasonality is a key aspect for the performance of the majority of tourism enterprises and a central theme for policy makers”

- iv. *Ethical Considerations and Poverty* – In recent years, the concepts of Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have been clearly linked to the Hospitality sector, which of course, includes the Rural areas, as this constitutes a non-separated part of the

overall industry; hence, connected with all the management functions and strategic activities. The Ethical and CSR are associated with several aspects such as the treatment of the local communities, especially in cases in which the companies have the ‘upper-hand’, and the HR in which the lack of training and remunerations can cause serious drawbacks in the overall development procedure and lead to the establishment of an extremely negative working environment. Critically evaluating the particular aspect, this can lead to a hostile environment and create further problems for all parties involved. In addition, these actions can also be associated to the concept of Poverty. According to Chen (2019 – Online) “Poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. Poverty means that the income level from employment is so low that basic human needs can't be met.” The protection of local communities from the state of Poverty and their exploitation to any physical and financial hazards constitutes a real challenge for the Hospitality sector and creates the opportunity for an overall development of policies that will attempt on eliminating such potential risks. Human Resource and cooperation with local producers can indeed become a driver towards tackling the problem; and therefore, increase the opportunities for the disadvantaged societies involved in the process to overcome such unfortunate situations.

1.3. The Tourist Product Must Combine the Components and the Environmental Circumstances

The Quality of the overall Tourism Products & Services has in recent years experienced a massive growth that has led to a substantial impact on the

financial performance of the overall industry. This has been identified on a global scale with all the geographical areas to have been benefited. In addition, other side-industries such as the marine and fishery have also experienced massive growth as a result of the tourism development which requires from the industry to identify new ways of increasing its overall job creation and ensuring that it will attract some more investments that will further boost the entire industry and enable it to become even more competitive. This can also contribute towards the environmental protection which is essential for the development of sustainable strategies, much needed for long-term success.

The Environmental Resources and its protection play a key role in the Tourism industry as the people's concerns drive the actions of the industry as this is directly associated with the perceived ethical values that must govern the contemporary organizations in the Hospitality industry and enable them to develop the appropriate CSR policies. All these are interrelated and create the opportunity for the entire industry and the individual companies to strategically focus on protecting the Environmental Resources. Massive organizations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have in recent years managed to develop a number of strategic plans that will enable the entire continent to ensure that the Water Protection shall occur in benefit of the local populations and businesses, and enhance their abilities to attract tourists that will enhance the financial development. It is therefore crucial to identify the particular issue in order to gain a clarified overview of how this can influence Tourism (ADB, 2017).

In order to achieve the development of the actors, factors, and elements of the Environmental circumstances or other relevant situations, the Hospitality Managers need to ensure that Innovation shall occur at all stages; hence, enabling them to become more focused and diversify their product to such level that it will be difficult for customers to consider the Price as the primary

element when it comes to the decision making point. Innovation plays a key-role in the overall procedure, provides the ability to the Managers, especially those that are considered as ‘Brand Destinations’, to implement the relevant innovative strategies and become even more competitive.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005 – Online) has defined the terms Natural Resources as “The naturally occurring assets that provide use benefits through the provision of raw materials and energy used in economic activity (or that may provide such benefits one day) and that are subject primarily to quantitative depletion through human use. They are subdivided into four categories: mineral and energy resources, soil resources, water resources and biological resources.” This definition is vital towards the overall understanding over the major elements associated with the Natural Resources and how this can have an impact on the operations of the Hospitality industry; especially when this are threatened by scarcity.

In addition, the Natural Resources can be sub-divided into two more major categories; those of Inexhaustible (also referred as Renewable Resources), and Exhaustible. Provided that the earth is feeding (or should do so), over 7.4 billion people per day, the impact of both the categories is fundamental in the operations and the development of the global economy; therefore, that of Tourism (BYJU’S, 2020 – Online). This must be taken into serious account, and become an issue of serious critical thinking that it will enable the overall and deeper understanding.

The Natural Resources have been long identified as one of the most important Environmental circumstances as they are considered to be fundamental for the overall industry as they are directly associated with the fundamental law of the Economy, that of the Supply and Demand. This early identification is considered as vital for the overall understanding of the

under-examination issue and provides a clarified direction that can become a driver for the entire industry. Provided that any industry and individual business must have clarified strategic goals and visions, focusing on the particular elements, as part of the overall organizational culture, can indeed be considered as a fruitful approach by the industry, and can potentially provide the appropriate benefits that will drive them forward.

The need for engaging in activities that will indeed take into consideration the Natural Resource and the environmental concerns and circumstances is self-evident for the entire economy, and of course for the Tourism industry, calling for the businesses and the professionals, especially those at the higher possible levels, to strategically focus on the development of such strategic activities in order to ensure that this will not become a problem. Instead this will need to focus on the fact that Strategy can become a clarified vision, much needed for any given business, especially when serious challenges are in place.

Several EU countries such as Croatia, have in recent years have managed to become more focused on the need to design and implement such approaches that will eventually become more beneficial for the entire industry. This can only be evaluated as a step forward, enabling these countries to fully utilize their natural resources thorough a positive outlook and enhance their overall industry, especially when this was at its primary stages and coming across to several problems that could become a real problem.

All the above-mentioned issues are directly leading the current research towards a serious question and concern that must indeed be critically approached, evaluated, and of course, be answered, in order to ensure that a clarified understanding of the related issues has been achieved. The real Question that arises as a result of the primary identification of the

above-mentioned elements in relation to the concept of Tourism, is to what extent the Tourism, including both the Businesses and the Visitors, have a substantial impact on the Natural Resources in their day-to-day operations, and of course, how these can be associated with the overall environmental circumstances in the current globalized and highly challenging environment. This Question cannot be isolated from the increasing impact of the environmental changes and how these affect the global Tourism development. The Global Research Development Center (GRDC, 2020 - Online) focuses on this emergence and provides an important understanding of all these issues and explains that:

“Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires.”

The above statement is evaluated as crucial for the Tourism development and enables the industry professionals as well as the political leaderships, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the changes that are occurring in the global marketplace. This can become a driver for future activities that will provide clarified direction and leave no room for mistakes in such important aspects.

In addition, the Global Research Development Centre (GRDC) the role of the Tourism Industry and its relation to the environmental circumstances is associated with other Strategic Spheres such as:

- i. “Environment - Environmental decisions occur within neighborhoods, small businesses, corporate boardrooms, and in the offices of local, state and national governments;
- ii. Urban - explores the themes of urban governance and urban heritage and conservation;
- iii. Community - the level of the man-on-the-street that everything revolves around - the causes of environmental and developmental problems, its impacts and also the finding of solutions;
- iv. Economy - the broader objective of the need for incorporating market dynamics and financial resources in development activities... of technology management (as a need to understanding the management of technology knowledge and matching needs and offers), and of sustainable businesses (as a need to use sustainability as a profit-driven factor for businesses, particularly SMEs);
- v. Information - Internet and information and communications technologies (ICTs) have become bywords in the information age, highlighting a critical need for better and more holistic knowledge management, along with the concept of information 'design' that deals with the collation, packaging and dissemination of information.”

Source: GRDC (2020).

All the above identifications are evaluated as important and provide a clarified overview of how the environmental circumstances are interrelated.

The environmental circumstances are associated with the concept of Destination Management and how this can be used in the development of Management operations within the Tourism industry. Destination Management refers to “Destination management is a coordinated process, where almost all

aspects of a destination are managed, including marketing efforts, local resources, accommodation, activities, events, environmental concerns, tourist attractions and transportation. It is usually the responsibility of a destination management company (DMC)” (REVFIVE, 2020).

The role of Destination Management has been identified to have a substantial level of impact on the operations of a large amount of countries and individuals businesses, and this has enabled specific Destination Management Companies (DMC) to strategically focus on the designing of Service Experiences that encompass the environmental circumstances and the components that are accompanied by the particular focus. In order to do that and create a sustainable advantage by focusing on the environmental circumstances, companies must apply specific strategies that will encompass elements such the Marketing Mix (4Ps) and the Extended Marketing Mix (7Ps). This can enable the Destinations and the DMC to exploit all their relevant resources and gain a deep and useful knowledge that can lead visitors towards the particular destinations. Emerging Tourism countries in the European continent (such as Serbia) have managed during the last years to develop such activities by taking advantage the existing positive environmental circumstances, enabling the DMC to become more focused and ensure that the country’s competitiveness shall indeed remain at high levels. Therefore, this can lead the companies and the countries towards the long-term financial development, attracting new investments, enhancing their regional and global competitiveness, and ensure that job creation shall remain a priority.

The environment al circumstances can become indeed become an essential part of the overall Destination Management as this carries several benefits such as that of the added value which is essential in any contemporary business environment, especially since this is highly affected by the rapid development of Information Technology and the ability of the DMC to inform

the potential visitors through a number of promotional channels. As a result, focusing on the particular element is of a great importance and the role of the DMC in cooperation with the regional and national authorities can only provide the Hospitality industry with the relevant benefits.

Furthermore, the environmental circumstance, shall they be considered as positive for the Hospitality industry, can attract the appropriate investors, especially when the Destinations are characterized as remote and face difficulties in accessing the relevant financial support from both the private financing institutions and the regional and national authorities. However, these environmental circumstances, in order to ensure attracting the relevant financial support, must be accompanied by the appropriate strategic and business planning, as this is essential in supporting any relevant development, especially when there is a high risk and limited business expertise. Therefore, all these must become a priority for any business that strives to focus on the particular dimension in order to ensure sustainable development.

The above elements require the smooth and close relationship between all parties involved in order to avoid potential mistakes. The evaluation of the current situation in terms of the environmental circumstances is essential in the development of the appropriate actions. Shall such needs appear, the local businesses need to ensure that they will acquire the relevant external support in order to ensure that they will refrain from wrong-doing.

The environmental circumstances must also consider several ‘external environmental circumstances’ that may not be associated with the industry itself, or what people consider as ‘environment’ and can also include a number of other elements that are also considered as important, and can provide several benefits related to the overall destination development regarding Tourism. Each one of these elements carries exceptional importance and creates the right

opportunities for the Hospitality industry professionals to become more focused and ensure that these environmental circumstances shall be exploit to the best possible way. Hence, the particular environmental circumstances refer to the following:

- Research – Research constitutes a real challenge for the entire business world, and of course, the Hospitality industry and refers to “The process of gathering, analyzing and interpreting information about a market, about a product or service to be offered for sale in that market, and about the past, present and potential customers for the product or service” (Entrepreneur Europe, 2020). The role of Research is indeed a crucial environmental factor and can create the opportunity for the Hospitality industry to gain an important insight that will enable it to develop the relevant strategies. Shall the industry carry such abilities, these must be developed in the best appropriate way and professional manner.
- Information Technology – The appropriate technological development can potentially support the Hospitality businesses; hence, ensuring the infrastructure of the country can assist the business in their overall development, attract visitors, and most importantly, ensuring the appropriate financing g opportunities. The role of Universities is also considered as of a strategic importance;
- Economy- The role of the economy is of a primary importance and can enable the Hospitality managers to evaluate the overall stability and how this can become a key driver towards a comprehensive identification of the problems and ensure that the right support shall be applied. In recent years, poor economic circumstances have resulted to negative financial performance and affected the

relevant operations and created an environment that leads the businesses to potential losses, especially when these businesses do not have the appropriate productive resources that will enable them to overcome the problem and become more competitive. European countries such as the Republic of Cyprus have managed to survive during the recent financial and banking crisis due to the positive impact of the Hospitality industry, despite the fact that the rest of the major economic pillars such as financial services and constructions have suffered from massive decline, and job losses. Therefore, all these are considered to be of a critical importance and can become a critical success factor, directly associated with the overall environmental circumstances.

- Historical or Cultural Importance of Destination – The particular environmental circumstance is critically identified as possible one of the most important environmental circumstances as it affects the entire populations and create the need for a long-term and comprehensive understanding of the attitudes of the entire population in the particular areas. It is therefore, clarified that the identification of these areas must consider regional, cultural, and religious research in order to become more focused and avoid possible misunderstandings that could lead to possible problems.

1.4. Tourism and Motivation

Motivation for tourism

The term “tourism” involves and includes different situations which can be classified in depending on a number of parameters. These can refer to the place where an individual can spend their holiday, the duration of a holiday, the travel agency that the individual chooses or not, the period of time during which the vacation takes place, means of transportation etc.

However, out of all possible classifications, the most extensive is the one that refers to the motivation behind travelling. Of course, trying to explain people's motivation is of utmost complexity for those who study motivation in general, as well as for those who study motivation in relation to tourism. Generally, motivation is considered as a subjective state where the individual perceives their needs as a deficit, which pushes the subject to seek an object or action that can reduce or eliminate this state of need.

As far as the tourist experience is concerned, various aspects regarding motivation combine, which can also contradict each other: there are subjects looking for rest and relaxation, others who are in search of transgression, and others who want to escape the daily stressful hustle.

Then there are people who, while on holiday, want to form new bonds or strengthen existing ones, other people look for isolating or fulfilling particular desires (for instance, seeking sexual fantasies). Therefore, tourism and traveling in general can be categorized, from a psychological point of view, based on the motivation for movement.

The first determining variable of travelling, of moving from one place to another, is precisely the one of voluntary behavior, in this case tourism. Therefore, voluntary movement is derived mainly from important motivational processes for the person.

Motivation is a much broader concept, which certainly includes intention, but also other factors; in fact, it is made up of the forces, needs, attitudes of the individual and, consequently, it is internal, dynamic and constantly evolving.

Among the main motivational "forces" that push people to travel are the physiological ones, which concern the body, health and sport; the getaway ones, which determine the individual to escape the stressful daily routine; the interpersonal ones, which take into account, for instance, activities of social interaction; the psychological ones, which respond to different internal needs of

a person (relaxation, peace of mind, free time etc.); the cultural ones, which arise from the desire to visit places of historical or artistic interest.

However, there are many other “forces” that influence motivation. In fact, there are state variables, when travelling offers prestige or leads to frequent people from a similar or higher class; exploratory variables, which derive from the need for adventurous trips or hikes; environmental variables, which lead to visiting a place for its beauty or unique characteristics.

These are the main aspects that have emerged from the multiple studies conducted throughout the years and that tried to identify the reasons which determine a person to travel.

The studies on tourism motivation are, in general, derived from the application of the most important and influential psychological theories in the field of tourism studies. The main theory regarding motivation, the one of Maslow (1943), based on the hierarchical classification of needs (from physical needs, to needs of safety, then to the psychological needs of belongingness and love, and esteem needs, and finally the needs of self-fulfillment), was one of the first psychological theories taken into account in the field of tourism.

Attempts have been made in order to apply it to the motivation of the tourist on holiday (Sessa, 1985; Pearce et collab., 1993). This model makes it possible to combine biological motivation with the most appropriate social one and accepts that there are various reasons that influence people.

Despite this fact, the application of this theory in tourism has not proved to be without problems, mainly because the needs do not occur in a rigid hierarchical manner, but they rather overlap and intertwine.

The perspective of symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1969) was also used in order to try to explain holiday behavior and tourism motivation. According to this theory, a fundamental aspect of behavior, thus including tourism, is the one where the individual and his actions stand in a social context and are influenced by the relationships with others.

Each action is learned through symbols and meanings created and used by the type of society in which the individual lives, which are transmitted through interactions. Each behavior, depending on the relationship with others, can be explained in a different way. Based on the system of symbols possessed by the subject, their behavior can be interpreted and defined as a tourist behavior or not. According to the applications of this theory, the images and symbols possessed by the individual are thus fundamental in interpreting the context and in one person's motivation to engage in travelling or not.

Based on the manner in which the environment is classified, the behavior and motivation of the subject are also changed. In this regard, the process of socialization and of creating meaning becomes essential and is influenced especially by the interactions which occur during childhood within primary groups, particularly within family.

Naturally, symbols and meanings, no matter how deeply rooted they are within the individual, are not subject to change, but they can be altered based on personal experiences. So, ultimately, according to the symbolic interactionists, tourist behavior and motivation for tourism strongly influence the processes of socialization and interaction with other people or specific objects rich in meaning for the individual.

But in order to better understand the psychological motivation related to tourism, it is necessary to also identify the possible barriers which, from a psychological point of view, are opposed to the decision of going on a trip. McIntosh (1972) has identified five of these barriers: costs, lack of free time, physical limitations, particular stages in which family life is found, lack of interest. Perussia (1985) has found similar reasons, however, the author added other aspects, such as the fact that, in general, one prefers to stay home (even in the absence of specific barriers) or to travel alone.

Many studies have tried to clarify two concepts that appeared in relation to the motivation for tourism, those referring to the so-called pressure factors

and factors of attraction. Generally, the pressure factors concern socio-psychological motivation and can explain the desire for a holiday, while the factors of attractions are related to cultural motivation and are useful in explaining the choice of place to go on vacation. These two factors act by constantly influencing each other. Regarding the pressure factors, the main motivation of travelling seems to be the “desire to escape”. Dann (1977), while examining the pressure factors, has linked motivation for travelling with the socio-psychological concepts of “anomie” and “ego-enhancement”.

The potential tourist lives immersed in a society within which rules no longer regulate interactions in a peaceful and non-confrontational manner, but are continuously transgressed, an actual anomic society. This abnormal situation can motivate the individual to engage in travelling, motivation driven by the desire to move away from such society and daily life. At the core of this decision stands the need for love and affection, which, since it cannot be expressed within the society the individual lives in, is sought after in their travel, which offers precisely the opportunity to fulfill these needs.

The concept of anomie is related to “ego-enhancement”, which can be defined as the “search for recognition”, an improvement as far as the status gained through travelling is concerned. The main cultural motivations, derived from the factors of attractions, are related to the place one chooses to spend their holiday. Crompton (1979) divides them into motivation for novelty and motivation for education. Motivation for novelty concerns the search for new experiences, for adventure. On the other hand, motivation for education regards those trips made in order to develop the knowledge of the individual, the so-called cultural tourism.

In practice, following Crompton’s model, the tourist choice derives from a situation of subjective imbalance which the individual is trying to mend by going to a holiday resort. The pressure factors and the factors of attraction should not, however, be understood as being rigidly separated, but rather as

aspects which can simultaneously be present and interact in order to motivate the individual.

Crompton has also described up to seven types of socio-psychological motivations that lead to travelling which are:

- escaping the everyday ordinary living environment;
- self-exploration and evaluation;
- physical and mental relaxation;
- prestige;
- regression to forms of behavior from childhood or adolescence;
- improving and strengthening the family and friendship relations;
- facilitating social interactions.

Moreover, there are analyses of tourist motivation which develop and draft models which refer to disciplinary paradigms, such as psychoanalysis (Grinstein, 1995) or anthropology (Nash, 1981). According to these points of view, tourism is essentially considered to be a collective, recurring and organized ceremony, in which most subjects take part without being fully aware of its authoring and deep meaning.

Psychoanalytic theories and scientists have identified in choosing to travel a means of satisfying an entire series of subconscious needs and stress. Travelling is considered to be a form of regression which leads to the fulfillment of various challenges and desires that have been developed during childhood but have been repressed. Among the most recent developments and theories, an important and concise point of view was proposed by Manell and Iso-Ahola (1987), who deal with leisure behavior, thus including tourism, and who state that it is related to two types of forces that act simultaneously:

- escaping from the daily environment and routine, which pushes the individual to escape and move away from daily problems and stress;

- seeking psychological rewards, which leads to searching for bonuses both individually and socially.

This two-dimensional theory recognizes the possibility of an exchange between dimensions, so that it is possible for the subject to move from seeking psychological rewards to the need to escape from daily life. This can happen not only on different holidays, but also during the same one. It should also be noted that several studies on this subject tend to consider that tourism has only positive aspects. In fact, this is not true. The tourist situation, regardless of its being actively sought after by the individual, can often cause anxiety, stress and even frustration.

For instance, Rubenstein (1980) has discovered that travelling can cause both psychophysical and psychosomatic problems. This results in a sort of ambivalence inherent in travelling: on the one hand there is the pleasure related to travelling and visiting new and unknown places. On the other hand, precisely the novelty of the environment can create feelings of distress, as the tourist activity has become in some ways a mandatory choice, a constraint, losing its pleasant characteristics and taking the form of a duty to fulfill.

As previously presented, the topic of tourist motivation is, therefore, extremely broad, varied and complex. However, the study of the tourist activity can be understood and completed only if the entirety of those psychological behaviors, which are always present in one's motivation to travel, are analyzed. In addition, by doing so, the importance of psychology in the study of tourism as well as the various psychological factors that influence this study are highlighted and emphasized

Travelling and its meaning

Travelling has held countless meanings throughout history and even nowadays it is experienced and interpreted by people in completely different

ways. In the light of various contemporary phenomena, such as travelling to dangerous countries, mass tourism or illegal immigration in itself, the meaning of travelling can lead to psychopathological aspects. The story of daring travelers of Niger, as well as the phenomenon of mass tourism or mass migration of illegal immigrants from North Africa must lead to reflection also upon the psychopathological aspect of travel and its meanings.

Can a journey be a psychological experience that can lead to the development of the individual? Can medicine and the knowledge of psychology, psychiatry, and tourism therapy help the traveler grow on a cognitive and emotional level through the experience of travelling?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to take into account the main meanings of travelling. Humans are a migratory species. Through migrations from Africa to Europe and Asia, hominids have evolved into homo sapiens. Homo erectus (or, his ancestor, Ergaster, older but more evolved) is considered the first great migrant of humanity: from the African savannah, which witnessed his wandering over a million years ago, he arrived in East Asia.

The current mass tourism (World Tourism Organization - WTO, reports over 600 million international travels every year) must definitely have an anthropological explanation, even if it is not yet sufficiently studied.

In March 1988, the WHO (World Health Organization) Center for Travel Medicine has organized in this regard the first European Conference of Travel Medicine, entitled *Mobility and health: from hominid migration to mass tourism* and opened by the great paleontologist Donald Johanson, the one who discovered Lucy (an adult female dating to 3.2 million years ago, discovered by Johansons in 1974, together with Tom Gray).

In turns, John Bowlby, a renowned British psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and psycho-pedagogue of the 20th century, believes that children stop crying when rocked because of an ancestral memory which brings them back to a time when

they were being carried on other people's shoulders along prehistoric paths. Therefore, rocking mimics the movements of those distant times.

The journey was for a very long time a way of change, a method to change one's social status, to escape legal consequences in a country for the committed crimes, or, from a more noble point of view, to gain fame for archaeological or geological studies, or, in a simpler light, to find a job.

Transforming the social individual through travel, becoming someone else through travelling a physical distance are literary stereotypes and common facts in the experience where, for instance, a member of the middle class with a limited income can decide to live for one weekend as part of nobility or as a wealthy person, by choosing high class hotels and any other type of comfort.

Travelling as penance

One can travel through faith, as is the case of pilgrimages or visits to sanctuaries and oracles which can predict mass tourism. The so-called "geography of devotion" - Lourdes, Fatima, Mecca, The Jubilee - are landmarks of religious travels which combine mysticism, free time and penance. The concept of travelling as penance is as old as the travels of the Original Couple, banished from the Garden of Eden because of their sins, who is forced to travel and work strenuously to atone for their guilt. The departure breaks the bonds between the sinner and the place, with its temptations to sin.

The Islamic religion assumes that a good Muslim makes a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life. The Middle Ages were characterized by Christian pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, Rome, etc. Palestine began to be a vital destination for pilgrimages in the 4th century, and during the same period a canon of Christian texts was founded.

The delimitation and mapping of holy sites, as well as making the place visited by Jesus Christ sacred started in 326 when Helena, the mother of

Constantine, visited Palestine. In order to support this movement, the Bishop Macario of Aelia Capitolina - name derived from Jerusalem after its destruction and subsequent reconstruction in 130, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian - who, during the Synod of Nicaea in 325, told her it is necessary to preserve and commemorate the passion for Christ by making places sacred. During her trip to Jerusalem, Helena has identified the main locations related to the birth, life and death of Christ, including the one of the Holy Sepulcher, the liberation of which was the intent of various crusades.

Travelling as a way of giving life meaning

The idea that shows an increase in intelligence as a result of travelling is as old as Gilgamesh, who due to his travels got to know the countries of the world, became wise, and solved mysteries that were inexplicable in that time. Strabo talked about those who seek the meaning of life as people who are in the habit of “wandering the woods” and he repeats an idea that was proverbial in the first century BC, when he wrote: “The wisest heroes were those who visited many places and roamed over the world; for the poets regard it as a great achievement to have seen the cities and known the minds of many men”. Odysseus traveled to pursue "virtue and knowledge."

Therefore, one can travel to study or to do research, following the example of past archaeologists and explorers, but also to challenge themselves and enrich their culture, according to the great traveler von Humboldt, emphasizing the importance of having direct contact with diversity and nature.

Modern science emerged during a time where European people became aware of their travels inside and outside the borders of a civilizations, in a context in which peoples, civilizations, plants, animals, and landscapes become objects of study.

In this new representation of a scientist- traveler, it was implicit that his comments and notes were enough to understand and identify things. In the 20th century, the image of the traveler has also acquired the sociological connotation of “foreigner”, a definition that still comprises those characteristics that ancient civilizations thought of when defining the traveler as a “philosopher”, and also those ideas which at the beginning of the Modern Age lead to a particular dignity given to the traveler who behaved as an objective observer and “descriptor of the world”. On the strength of the mobility and distance with which one can evaluate and judge, “the outsider” can understand the generality of relationships.

According to Rimmel, the characteristics of the traveler are: freedom, objectivity, generality and abstraction. The traveler observes and records. He can describe the reality he observes and knows to a greater or lesser extent according to his level of culture. This type of contact and the relation with the local community must be analyzed and evaluated in order to interpret the mental state of the traveler, his inhibitions, and growth potential.

In an attempt to sum up, if the archaic myths were based on the Nomad hero (Gilgamesh, Hercules, Ulysses) and on the great travelling lecturers of humankind, such as Herodotus or Ibn Battuta, over the centuries there has appeared a concept of travelling in order to tell, write or film stories, or, as it happened during the time of the great explorers, to mesmerize readers with amazing stories of the newly found lands.

The description of travelling experiences does not only imply the reporting of major war events, political situations, social phenomena or the description of beautiful artwork or landscapes, but also it is a possibility for everyone to tell personal experiences, share emotions, reveal themselves through travels.

Consumer travel

One can travel by imitation, because others do it and people need to follow models imposed by consumerism. Travel as mass consumption often implies an all-inclusive trip.

Many countries in Asia, Africa and South America are under severe pressure from the tourism industry and they had to change their traditions and culture according to mass consumerism trends.

It was predictable that in a world where great distances can be crossed in a few hours by fast planes, the search for more “exotic” destinations or for the “impossible” became more and more stimulating.

According to anthropologist Giancarlo Ligabue, real-time information, the internet, paradoxically eliminates the mysteries, erases fairytales and myths, and makes life monotonous, busy and repetitive. It makes it so gaps do not exist. There are mountains with traffic lights for climbers, and tourists that queue to visit the Sahara desert. The cultural contribution of travelling can be translated through the increasing trend of worshipping souvenirs, photos and videos taken on vacation which are displayed as a proof of a lived experience.

Thus, people face an illusionary geography where the itineraries prepared by tour operators according to the market trends became the expression of submissive and superficial behaviors.

Travel deviations

There are trips such as the ones that are under the definition of the so-called “sexual tourism” which shows deviations. In these cases, travelling conceals a detachment from social rituals and commodities of one’s place of origin, in order to project the individual in extremely different situations, where the conscience is silent, believing that, in a mystical way, there are laws and morals different from those of one’s homeland.

A branch of social psychology studies why many people feel the need to travel around. There are indeed many aspects of one's personality which come into play during a journey, because leaving in order to discover the world is also a way for people to discover or find themselves.

Let's discover together the aspects of travelers' psychology

The main element of travelers' psychology is self-discovery. This pushes people to travel with pleasure, to leave their home and the safety it provides, even if it is for a short period of time, in order to see new places and meet new people. However, constructing one's identity in this manner is only one of motivational mechanisms related to tourism, thus it is only valid for those who associate travelling with the idea of discovery and acculturation.

Other mechanisms are related to the increased self-esteem through the admiration from those who have stayed home. Self-esteem increases as a result of the appreciation of pictures, travel notes, experiences lived in exotic places or destinations that provide pleasant flashbacks for most people.

The discussion is therefore split between the psychology of the tourist and the one of the traveler, because there are some differences between the two. First of all, as far as satisfying needs is concerned, the former is content with satisfying primary needs - food, water, sex, cleanliness - while the traveler needs to feed his intellect. The reward for their effort is entirely mental or consists in exceeding their limits. The psychology of travelers is characterized by a few specific personality traits: they are restless, seeking freedom and experiencing travelling at the highest intensity, they do not despise loneliness, they love being frugal and having light luggage.

For the tourist, on the other hand, travelling only has value if it is socially recognized, if it meets the expectations created at the time of purchase. As planned trips get increasingly more popular, the tourist starts to lose the general

characteristics of the traveler and to become part of the mass that unconsciously follows trends.

The greatest travelers are the so-called thrill seekers. The psychology of these travelers is that of extremely curious people, continuously seeking new and interesting stimuli, meaning those who look for the most exotic destinations, who need strong colors and scents in order for them to really feel “elsewhere”.

These are the people who, paradoxically, prefer not to be very comfortable. In fact, the lack of comfort is what provides them with adventure and romance, which is exactly what they seek. Essentially, the perfect trip is the result of a difficult to achieve balance between romance, adventure and emotion, on the one hand, and inconvenience and adrenaline, on the other hand.

Eight reasons to travel

Travelers’ psychology is characterized by eight main reasons which, combined differently, determine the will to travel and the choice of destination.

Subjective Psychological Reasons: relaxing, focusing on oneself, and resting represent motivations related to the person’s experience and needs;

Interpersonal Reasons: meeting new people, finding a partner, strengthening pre-existing friendships;

“Escaping” Reasons: abandoning complex situations one has to handle, leaving a difficult relationship or a crisis, escaping daily life;

Physiological Reasons: pursuing physical well-being, medical or aesthetic procedures;

Environmental Reasons: visiting uncontaminated places, breathing fresh air;

Exploration Reasons: satisfying the needs of a new experience;

Statute Reasons: showcasing one’s financial possibilities, having the same experiences as their own social reference group;

Cultural Reasons: learning new things, cultural enrichment.

Why do people travel?

The traveler is usually characterized by certain personality traits, he seeks freedom and lives travels as an ultimate experience. The traveler is an extremely curious person, who constantly seeks new sensations, emotions, and stimuli. The perfect trip is the result of a difficult to achieve balance between romance, adventure and emotion, but also a little fear and inconvenience. Because those who do not travel only when they go on vacation, travel with their heart, they get involved, experiencing emotions and sensations which makes them feel truly alive.

Therefore, the traveler travels in order to relax and rest, but also to seek physical well-being and to see new places, thus satisfying the need for new experiences. And last but not least, he travels in order to grow from a cultural and personal point of view.

When a person travels, they feel connected to a type of harmony that allows them to live outside routine and regulations, looking for a sunset or waiting for a sunrise, feeding their mind and soul, giving life to new stimuli.

Travelers' Personality

Could certain personality traits influence the choice to travel? Most approaches of the psychology of tourism are focusing on analyzing mainly the travelers' motivation, expectations and satisfaction. But could these elements be influenced by the dominant personality traits of each traveler? Therefore, the personality traits that affect the most travelling expectations are travelers' imagination and empathy, which are very important in the process of building expectations; those who have a vivid imagination and empathy expect to make

new friends and get to know a new culture and have personality traits that are very different than those who prefer a relaxing vacation.

As far as accommodation during travelling is concerned, women are more demanding in regard to the conditions on-site than men; while the camping option is chosen by 14% of men, only 8% of women would choose it. Also, geographical origin is a relevant factor, as Europeans prefer to stay in a bed & breakfast (37%), while Americans prefer to stay in hotels.

The most discriminated personality trait was the defense mechanism, in fact, the most defensive people prefer to stay in a luxury hotel or a bed and breakfast, while the least defensive prefer to camp. 34% of men prefer to travel alone compared to 23% of women who would choose the same; while 31% of women expressed their preference of travelling with their partner or with their family, an option chosen by only 24% of men. Europeans prefer to travel with their partner or family (35%) while Americans prefer to travel alone or with a friend (37%). People who are very defensive prefer to travel with their partner/family and in a group.

Very introverted people prefer to travel alone, this being a very important aspect that must be observed within all the dominant personality traits of a single traveler; those who travel alone have a social curiosity, but also a natural tendency to be alone with their thoughts. It is interesting to mention that people who prefer to travel alone are very dynamic and show a low level of vulnerability.

How does one organize the trip?

Once they decide to go on a trip, people make a comparison between an ideal self and a real self, or as Kaplan states: " the image of the traveling subject is attributed to the representation of his reality and the image of himself, a

concept that brings a series of expectations, identifications, status symbols and social conventions of desirability.

The tourist experience can change or confirm the idea that people have about themselves, can allow the expression of the self or even the expression of an alter ego and, as it always happens in life, this might not lead to the best experience. The choice of going on a trip does not only involve the tourist package a person will purchase, but also the self image the person chooses to experience. By analyzing the way subjects view themselves on vacation, one can easily identify the type of expectations that were built before deciding the type of experience the subject will experiment with. For instance, if a person identifies with the self image of “a night market in Thailand”, one can say that this answer will follow the expectation of “getting to know a new culture”, while a “trip in the Andes” contributes to “contemplating nature”.

The personality trait that discriminates the self-image during travelling the most is the defensive side. In any choice there can be physiological reasons, such as the need to relax and recharge, which are also often related to the need to escape the daily life and interpersonal needs, which can be portrayed as making time to be with family and dear ones, compared to what one usually does, and taking the time to make new friends. Every individual can have psychological reasons, such as the need to find oneself, self-observation and self-listening; and social reasons, such as prestige, the idea of asserting that ideal self. The possibility of applying behaviors that are usually not undertaken, because they may not be understood very well by society or they are not in line with one's everyday image, can be understood a little as a way of escaping social constraints, rather than those of the routine of everyday life.

The social phenomenon of our times, unlike the one from the 70s-80s, identifies travelling as a moment in which a person can actually devote time to themselves, seeking one's real self while travelling is seen as a moment in which the traveler has the time and the means to listen to their own needs and

shortcomings, an activity that is very difficult in the chaotic context which people live in nowadays.

The travel experience contains certain elements that are related to the experience in itself, rather than to the motivation. It cannot be known to which extent travelling will change these domains, but this aspect can be projected depending on the scenario and the context a person is about to experience, but in this case, they can be seen as expectations that were imagined or built. The strong impact happens when the person returns; the impact usually causing the change of these domains.

By travelling one can experience their boundaries, such as physical boundaries, as fatigue, resistance, the cold or the heat; social boundaries, which can be the relationships with the ones with whom people travel or getting to know a new culture with different rhythms, different conventions. The self on the inside cannot be foreseen, it cannot ever be predicted what will trigger a journey within everyone. There are experiences that change people at a certain speed and with a certain impact that only a trauma can have, however, fortunately, almost always travelling is related to positive change. In my opinion, as a psychologist and traveler, I believe that a trip can have an impact on the entire area of the Self, it can have a strong and deep impact, however, at the end of the trip, people should be guided back into reality, in order to make sure that this experience leads to real change or at least to a different self-awareness.

The habit of seeking places that can allow for the discovery of a new reality, away from the mundane everyday life, is a means of “forgetting” who one is, where they live, who they have living around them, and, for a limited period of time, they are able to breathe a different air, to experience different places, cultures, customs and traditions.

Travelling in the Modern Era, which has now become routine, has radically changed the historical and social figure of the traveler, as it can be

observed in various etymologies, which have emphasized the restructuring of this term over time.

Finally, one must imagine that what people experience today as freedom and has technically become a mass phenomenon, in the past it has caused difficulties in relocating, significant discomfort, adventures in search of unknown lands, which even involved great risks for survival.

But why do people travel and, more importantly, does it always have to have an end goal?

From these questions one must exclude the consumer purpose which will provide a deeper meaning going forward. In fact, it is a false way to travel if one goes somewhere just for the sake of being able to talk about it when they return, mentioning a number of names and places destined to be forgotten after a short period of time, but which, at the moment of speaking, may impress the listener.

It is implied that this way to travel satisfies the need for vacation, but it is also far from those elements that represent the foundation of a journey, meaning the expectations of the unknown.

Admittedly, this does not mean measuring a trip in terms of kilometers: every place can become the chosen one both to redefine one's worldview and to find one's own center of self. The repertory is vast: from the areas of the five continents to those of the mind, tradition, community, and identity.

Moreover, the type of traveler does not necessarily determine the choice of destination. One's personality, directions of movement, beyond their purpose, are always characterized by three key moments: the departure, the journey, and the return home. If from a historical and anthropological point of view, these three phrases are based on multiple and diverse meanings (discovery, conquest,

exploitation, adventure, wandering, exile, migration), the theme of circularity includes constantly nostalgia, the desire to return home.

In literature, one of the most famous heroes who turns his journey into a place where he can return from is Odysseus, who celebrates the issue of nostalgia in all its vicissitudes, well known for his giving up the gift of immortality, happiness and wealth in order to return to the port. In the idea of reuniting with the place of departure, the partial and temporary journey acquires an educational and formative value. Abandoning and leaving one's home represent essential initiating moments for intellectual and moral growth. These ways are altered by one's change of mood and emotions, and testify to the tireless correlations between subjectivity (ego) and the world in which one lives.

At this point, the journey highlights a deeper dimension because it calls for the direction of the inner path and the relationship between the self and the world. James Hillman calls this psychological investment "*if it is true that the soul is connected with the deepening of events, these events are not only in us, but can be within the world.*" Therefore, on an emotional level, every place can transmit a particular force and trigger different emotions: thus, the journey becomes the best way for one to get taken out of themselves to meet the world, to explore environments that may activate different mindsets and self-reflection. Naturally, individual predilections will direct the end goal, the exercise of the soul in observing unknown things can be directed to natural elements, so plural and different in latitudes and human transformations of the landscape, or to live more simply on their own social spaces (villages, cities).

Robert Walser states that: "*Every walk is filled with phenomena valuable to see and feel. A pleasant walk most often teems with imageries and living poems, with enchantments and natural beauties, be they ever so small. ... Without walking and the contemplation of nature which is connected with it, without this equally delicious and admonishing search, I deem myself lost, and I am lost*".

Therefore, the answer to the question *Why do people travel?* can be expressed through a summarized statement: to discover the world, human beings and themselves.

So, people travel as a way to escape everyday life and as an opportunity to experience exceptions, as opposed to the rules of everyday life; as an education towards self-restraint (packing a suitcase); as a cognitive stimulus to learning and knowledge, and as an enrichment of imagination and open-mindedness.

But also, a journey that supports the construction of a transformation process, a limited detachment, that helps the individual believe he can move a little forward and that helps him better measure his life.

1.5. A Conceptual Approach

The World Tourism Organization defines *rural tourism* as “a form of tourism which includes any tourism activity organized and conducted in the rural area by local population and which exploits the local tourism resources (natural, cultural-historical, human) as well as the tourism endowments and structures, including the pensions and agro-tourism farms”.

According to J.W. Kloeze, rural tourism is a concept that includes all tourist activities that take place in rural areas.

Within the tourism economy, rural tourism is defined as the capitalization of agricultural areas, natural resources, cultural heritage, local folk traditions, rural houses and products, brands of which reflect regional identity and cover the consumer's need for accommodation, food, entertainment and other services, aiming at sustainable local development and an adequate response to the need for new ways of entertaining the modern society.

There are certain differences between rural areas from one country to another, from one region to another depending on the natural environment, the socio-economic development that the country or the region is facing. These characteristics have led to different forms of rural tourism activities and products offered on the tourist market.

The phenomenon of rural tourism is not new. For nature lovers, the desire to explore and spend their free time and holidays "in the countryside" was an

older concern. What is in fact new is the way in which this form of tourism has evolved both quantitatively and qualitatively in recent decades.

The expansion that rural tourism experienced at the end of the 19th century was determined by two reasons: the revival and development of rural areas on the one hand, and on the other hand the form of alternative tourism compared to traditional, classic or mass tourism.

1.5.1 The concept of Rural Tourism



The concept of rural tourism, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), is used when rural culture is a key component of the product offered. The characteristic feature of the tourist product in rural tourism is the desire to offer visitors a personalized contact, an image of the physical and human environment in the rural area, to allow them - as much as possible - to take part in daily activities and customs of the local community.

According to psychologists, rural tourism is a special form of tourism in which the emphasis is on the human side. The tourist is considered a real guest, a friend, and human contact is vital. The tourist must respond to this hospitality with respect and consideration for the rural community.

Sociologists believe that rural tourism can be practiced in the conditions of normal development of rural life. The tourist will get to know the person, their daily life, the rural culture. For this reason, the tourist arrangements in the rural environment must belong exclusively to the rural community, the only one able to keep the rural space unaltered. (Mac I., Petrea Rodica, Petrea D., 1999).

A general definition would be that rural tourism is the tourist activity carried out in rural areas viewed in all its complexity. This activity must ensure the perpetuation of the specific values of this area, as well as the satisfaction of

the interests of those who offer tourist services, but also of those who are beneficiaries. (Mac I., Petrea Rodica, Petrea D., 1999)

In the opinion of some authors from the European Union (<http://www.ruraleurope.org>) there are two tendencies:

- If the benefits resulting from the tourist activity belong to the local community, the notion of rural tourism or tourism in the countryside is used, but if they belong exclusively to the farmers, the term agritourism is used;
- The second trend is based on the variety of elements that constitute the tourist offer. The term rural tourism is used when the rural culture represents the basic component of the tourist product that is offered. Depending on the element (which belongs to the rural culture) that holds the largest share, the notion of agritourism, green or ecological tourism, gastronomic, equestrian, nautical, cultural tourism, etc. is also used.

A clear cause of the reason why one cannot have a clear delimitation of rural tourism on a European scale is the use of different meanings depending on the country in which it is practiced.

Studies conducted on rural tourism in European Union countries indicate some differences between the concepts related to the notion of rural tourism, specific to each country.

For instance:

- In Italy, rural tourism is known as a form of manifestation of "green holidays" and has as main its component agritourism. Accommodation is made in agritourism structures of which over 45% are farms where organic farming is practiced. The other structures are households and inns that combine agricultural activities with Italian culinary art, castles or wineries;
- In Cyprus, rural tourism means accommodation in rooms decorated with traditional furniture, in its picturesque villages surrounded by vineyards, with traditional breakfast with olives, almonds, figs, dates;
- In Romania, rural tourism is a form of tourism developed from scratch, in the first years after '90, following the French model, and is known as a form of manifestation of "countryside holidays", "holidays with charm". Its main component is agritourism;

- In the Netherlands, rural tourism means especially farm accommodation where most of the services offered are related to cycling routes or horseback riding;
- In Greece, rural tourism means accommodation in traditionally furnished rooms, with traditional breakfast, most often prepared from home-made products;
- In England, rural tourism includes farm holidays, but also interest in nature holidays, art and heritage educational trips, hunting and fishing;
- In Hungary, the term "village tourism" is used. The only activities and services offered in the villages are included in this type of tourism, respectively accommodation at low prices, involvement in agricultural activities or other types of local activities;
- In Slovenia the most important form of rural tourism is farm tourism, where guests live either with the family of farmers or in guest houses but visit the farm to dine or explore the farmyard;
- In Finland it means renting cottages or offering services in rural areas such as food or transport.

Rural tourism can be seen as that type of tourism that meets the following characteristics:

- it takes place in rural areas;
- it is rural from a functional point of view, meaning it is made up of the characteristic features of the rural world;
- it involves having contact with nature and the natural world, cultural heritage, society and traditional practices;
- it is rural as scale, meaning it has small dimensions, buildings, settlements and flows;
- it has a traditional character, growing slowly and organically, in close connection with local families;
- it is usually locally controlled and developed for the long-term improvement of local communities;
- it is varied, corresponding to the complexity of the rural environment.

Rural tourism as a whole includes a wide range of accommodation options, activities, events, festivities, sports and entertainment, all taking place in a typical rural environment. It has become a well-defined economic activity

in Europe that has seen continuous development and through its evolution has contributed to the well-being of rural communities.

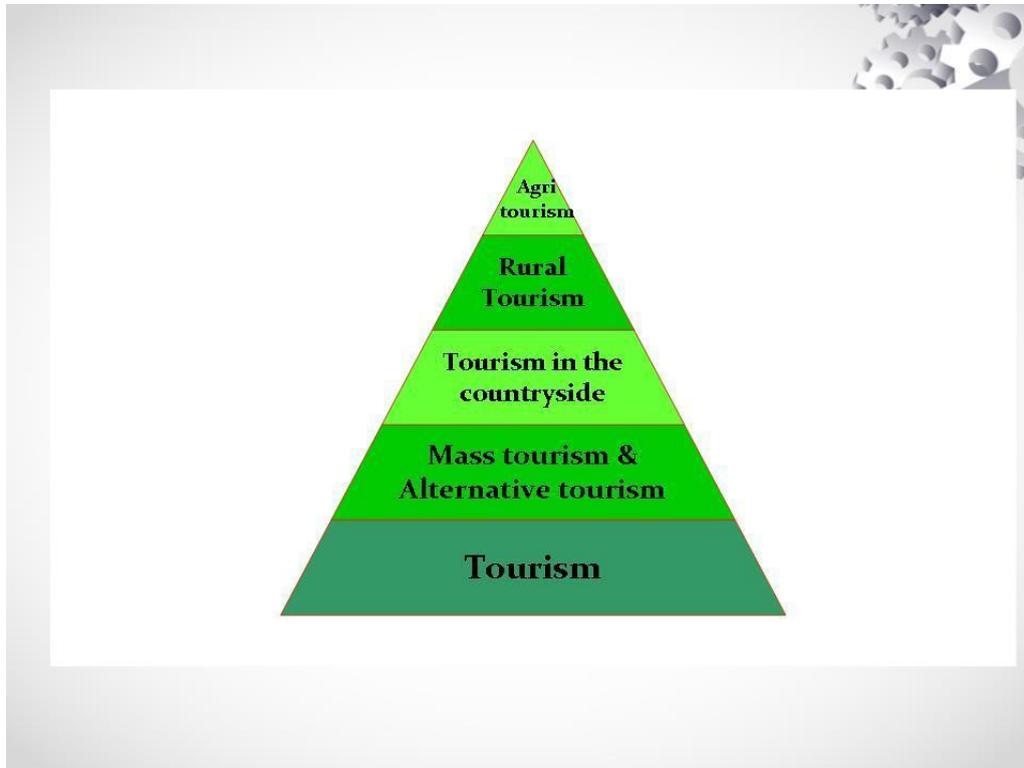


Figure 1 - Position of rural tourism

This form of tourism has been developed due to the particularly favourable characteristics of the three main elements that compete in carrying out the tourist act:

- *the rural space* as a support for the process of living and carrying out specific activities;
- *the rural population* as an element of the permanence of the popular customs and traditions of the villages;
- *the natural products* that satisfy the personal requirements and those of the tourist offer, destined for the people who come as guests.

The economic, social and cultural activity of the rural areas is always carried out in close accordance with the particularities of the landscape. The environment represents the "raw material", the object and the scope of the tourist activity.

Rural tourism and agritourism are two different concepts, although some authors consider them to be identical. These concepts are similar up to a certain level after which they become different. Rural tourism covers a much larger area, including agritourism.



Figure 2 - Components of rural tourism

Agritourism is a smaller concept, integrated in rural tourism and refers to all tourist services practiced and directly related to the peasant household, benefiting from a natural and picturesque environment and cultural-historical values, traditions and customs present in the village environment. Agritourism is achieved by capitalizing on the natural environment, accommodation services, services provided by households or agritourism farms through tourism programs. Tourists will be served traditional menus prepared from products obtained in natural conditions, with a high biological value, as well as the opportunity to attend and participate in a series of household activities and a series of traditional customs in the area.

Cultural tourism, a component of rural tourism, is a form of tourism interested in culture, cultural environments and landscapes, values and lifestyles, heritage, visual arts, artistic products and performances, traditions of local destinations or the host community. It is recognized for the development and promotion of local cultural identities, offering the chance to preserve the cultural heritage, especially the lifestyle of the people in those areas, the history of those people, art, architecture, religion and other elements that have

contributed to shaping their way of life. Cultural tourism is based on a wide variety of tangible and intangible resources, actions and relationships between the arts that are practiced for the benefit of tourists.

Ecotourism - Green tourism is a form of tourism developed in natural areas, the purpose of which is to know and appreciate the local nature and culture, which involves conservation measures and ensures an active involvement, generating benefits for the local population. It represents an important component of rural tourism and consists in visiting natural areas for relaxation in nature, for mental recovery, knowledge, appreciation of nature and its effects.

Ecotourism always introduces various activities in the middle of nature (hiking, mountain climbing, observing living things in their natural habitat, etc.), but can also include cultural activities. It has an important educational component and is a chance to learn respect for nature, local culture, a chance for self-reflection inspired by the beauty of the surroundings.

Ecotourism must meet the following conditions:

- nature conservation and protection;
- educational character;
- respect for nature by raising the awareness of tourists and the local community;
- use of local human resources;
- minimal impact on the natural, cultural and social environment.

The concept of rural tourism has evolved over time, encompassing all activities that take place in rural areas, so that, as the diversification of tourist services in rural areas progressed, other types of tourism, which are considered to be niche, have emerged and intertwined: gastronomy tourism, wine tourism, religious tourism, curative and leisure tourism, cycling tourism, hunting tourism, fishing tourism, photographic tourism, bird-watching, etc. .

Gastronomy tourism refers to travelling to regions that are rich in gastronomic resources, which generate recreational experiences or have entertainment purposes, including: visits to producers of gastronomic products, gastronomic festivals, fairs, events, cooking demonstrations, food tastings, or any activity related to nutrition (Lee et al. 2015)

This experience is closely linked to a lifestyle that includes experimenting, learning from different cultures, acquiring knowledge and learning by tasting traditional foods and culinary specialties produced in the regions visited.

Wine tourism is a recreational activity practiced in wine regions. An integration of the marvelous landscape of vineyards with the art of living with satisfaction and pleasure, expressed through the history of the vine and its products.

Religious tourism is closely linked to other types of tourism, based on the cultural and environmental heritage of each place. It involves a certain type of training and culture from tourists, in order for them to appreciate the objectives in terms of architecture, the value of spiritual meanings, and the desire for a divine experience.

Holistic tourism refers to a series of activities and treatments designed to develop the body, mind, spirit and improve the lives of tourists at the same time.

The development of rural tourism through its components has produced important changes in the life of the villages, especially those that have an important tourist offer, bringing new elements regarding:

- increasing the stability phenomenon and avoiding the process of rural depopulation;
- the appearance of specific constructions (tourist pensions, agritourism farms, local gastronomic points, facilities for sports and horse riding, information points, etc.);
- the development of small rural industries for the primary capitalization of agricultural products and the revitalization of crafts specific to the rural area;
- capitalization of specific own resources (natural, balneary, viticultural, hunting, gastronomic, artisanal, ethnographic, folklore);
- capitalizing on local water resources for energy purposes and especially for fish farming;
- combating environmental pollution by eliminating sources and preserving in this way optimal living conditions;

- creating new sources of income, including by acquiring financial incentives for new investments in tourism or expanding existing ones.

Going from general to specific, the notion of "tourist village" appears. Establishing the types of tourist villages consists in identifying and revealing the specifics of the areas and grouping them according to the main characteristics, as well as the main motivations and opinions of the tourists who frequent the respective area.

Climatic and landscape tourist villages

The predominant characteristic of these villages is the natural setting and the geographical position isolated from the crowded centers and the main roads. Hill and mountain villages, with houses spread over valleys and hills, at some distance from each other, with meadows, fields or orchards. They satisfy the fundamental motivation of many tourists to "return to nature".

Tourist villages for practicing sports

Many rural regions have excellent conditions for practicing winter sports and water sports. These types of villages can attract tourists especially among young people, amateur athletes, uninitiated or less initiated tourists but who are eager to practice those sports.

Fishing and hunting tourist villages

Apart from the accommodation and leisure possibilities, in these villages fishery and hunting gastronomic culinary services can be offered.

Pastoral tourist villages

This group can include mountain villages, where the main concern of the locals is raising sheep and cattle. These villages can attract tourists through menus based on dairy products and, as entertainment, there can be organized shepherd's feasts and traditional parties.

Ethno-folk tourist villages

In this category can be included the villages in which the traditional dress, architecture, furniture and interior decoration in rustic style, music, folk choreography predominate and are imposed as essential features of the village.

In these villages, tourists can be offered accommodation and meals in authentic conditions. The authentic setting is rendered by furniture, decor, popular style bed equipment, traditional menus served in crockery and specific cutlery. Permanent handicraft exhibitions can be organized or several households can be arranged as an open-air ethnographic museum.

Tourist villages of artisanal and artistic creation

These villages offer the possibility of practicing the type of tourism during which, in specially arranged workshops, under the guidance of some popular artists and craftsmen, tourists could be introduced to folk art and techniques. The essential characteristic of these villages is the artistic and artisanal production.

Vine-fruit tourist villages

In the villages where this characteristic predominates, the tourist activities are possible both during the harvest and after it, having as a key feature the offering of fruits, grapes and dishes based on what was harvested. Wine tastings and fruit dishes can be considered.

For rural tourism to become a real factor of local development, it must be considered the maintenance of an optimal balance between the ecological, socio-economic and cultural system of the area.

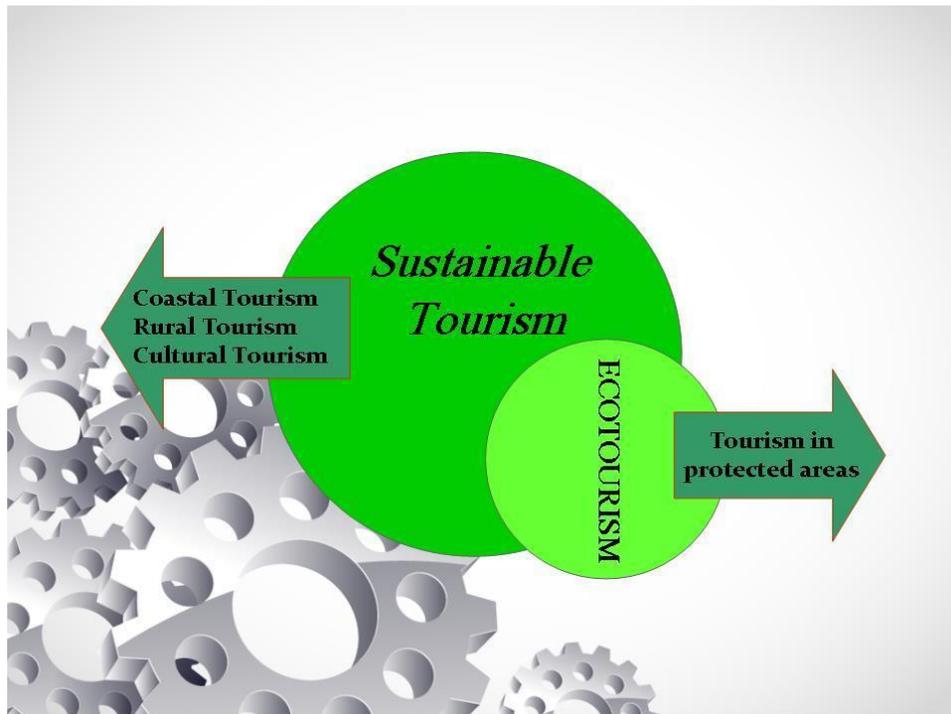


Figure 3 - Sustainable tourism

Rural tourism can be considered a form of sustainable tourism that aims to minimize the negative effects on the natural and cultural environment, optimize the satisfaction of tourist expectations and the long-term economic growth of a region.

The concepts of sustainable development are derived from the famous 1987 Brundtland report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987).

The report highlighted four crucial principles for the concept of sustainability:

- the idea of holistic planning, cross-sectoral planning and strategy development;
- the importance of preserving the main ecological processes;
- the need to preserve both valuable human heritage and biodiversity;
- the recognition that zonal development should take place in such a way that long-term resource depletion is not achieved.

Additionally, the Brundtland report also introduces to the debate the issue of equity - intergenerational equity and international equity - greater

convergence between nations to keep the system stable and preserve natural resources.

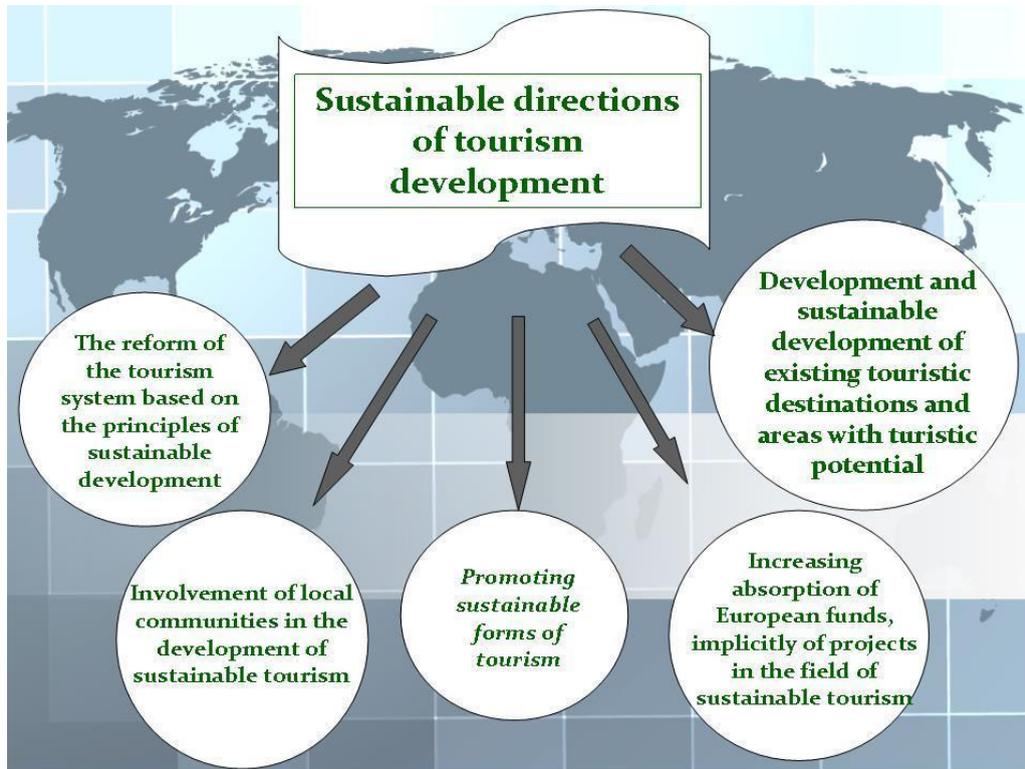


Figure 4 - Sustainable directions of tourism development

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the development of sustainable tourism meets the needs of current tourists and host regions, while protecting and increasing the chances and opportunities for the future. The notion of sustainable tourism has in mind 3 important aspects:

- **quality** - sustainable tourism imposes a valuable experience for visitors, while improving the quality of the host community, its cultural identity and environmental protection;
- **continuity** - sustainable tourism ensures optimal exploitation and the continuity of natural resources on which preserving the culture of the host community is also based on;
- **balance** - sustainable tourism ensures a balance between the needs of the tourism industry, environmentalists and local communities, with economic and social benefits, correctly distributed to all actors involved.

The development of uncontrolled tourism exposes important inconveniences for tourist destinations and actually represents problems for natural resources.

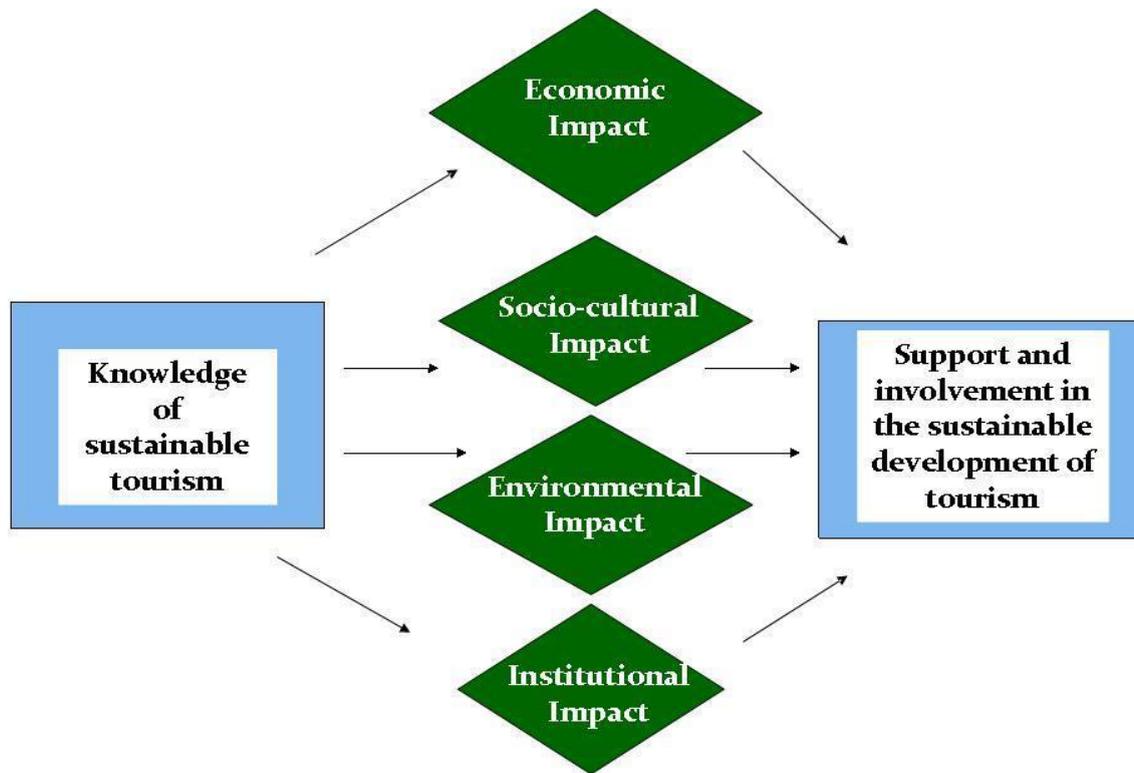


Figure 5 - Model of Sustainable Tourism Development

The market economy system and the lifestyle tend to create a homogeneous environment, and cultural traditions are strictly related to local resources and the needs imposed by natural factors. That is why sustainable development requires:

- inventorying all natural and cultural features that can be the basis of tourist potential and analysing all the information obtained;
- identifying all the values and finding the possibilities that can be the basis of sustainable tourism in natural tourist areas;
- appreciating the support capacities of the component regions of the tourist natural areas for quality assurance of standards;

- monitoring and analysing the domestic and international market as well as the tourism requirements for diversification and development of tourism activities;
- initiating in the protected natural areas a new tourist product based on the amplification of its educational, didactic and scientific role;
- the existence of an adequate management for the development of sustainable transport systems and the complex exposure of the promotional communication strategy for the promotion of the idea of protected natural area. (Şuşu Şt., 2006): Socio-economic efficiency of rural tourism, the impact of development and sustainable use of natural resources

	Sustainable Development	Tourism Compatibility
Fundamental principles:	<p><i>Holistic approach:</i> development and environmental issues integrated within a global social, economic and ecological context.</p> <p><i>Futurity:</i> focus on long-term capacity for continuance of the global ecosystem, including the human sub-system.</p> <p><i>Equity:</i> development that is fair and equitable and which provides opportunities for access to and use of resources for all members of all societies, both in the present and future.</p>	<p>Tourism is a diverse, multi-sectoral and fragmented sector, comprising innumerable small business and organisations. Hence, limited possibilities for an holistic approach.</p> <p>Tourism businesses typically focus on short-term profit objectives.</p> <p>Access to tourism as a social activity and an economic sector remains inequitable.</p>
Development objectives	<p>Millennium Development Goals Improvement of the quality of life for all people: education, life expectancy, opportunities to fulfil potential.</p> <p>Satisfaction of basic needs; concentration on the nature of what is provided rather than income.</p>	<p>Tourism brings potential economic benefits; broader developmental benefits are not an inevitable outcome of tourism, and are dependent on local socio-cultural and political-economic conditions.</p> <p>Ecotourism projects may contribute to basic needs and cultural sustainability.</p>

	<p>Self-reliance: political freedom and local decision making for local needs.</p> <p>Endogenous development</p>	<p>Low compatibility between tourism and development goals</p>
<p>Sustainability objectives</p>	<p>Poverty reduction</p> <p>Sustainable population levels.</p> <p>Minimal depletion of non-renewable natural resources. Sustainable use of renewable resources.</p> <p>Pollution emissions within the assimilative capacity of the environment</p>	<p>Specific programmes (pro-poor tourism) may be targeted at specific groups</p> <p>Local projects may minimise resource depletion and enhance environmental conservation</p> <p>Tourism (i.e. travel) will inevitably be a major contributor of greenhouse gases.</p>
<p>Requirements for sustainable development</p>	<p><i>Sustainable consumption:</i> Adoption of a new social paradigm relevant to sustainable living</p> <p><i>Sustainable production:</i> Biodiversity conservation; technological systems that can search continuously for new solutions to environmental problems.</p> <p><i>Sustainable distribution:</i> International and national political and economic systems dedicated to equitable development and resource use.</p> <p>Global alliance facilitating integrated development policies at local, national and international levels.</p>	<p>Limited evidence of ‘responsible’ tourism consumption in practice. ‘Tourists are consumers, not anthropologists’.</p> <p>Some evidence of ‘corporate social responsibility’ and environmental programmes within some organisations: also benchmarking schemes.</p> <p>Limited opportunities for global alliances or global systems equitable access to and distribution of tourism resources.</p>

Sursa: Sharpley,R.2010.The myth of sustainable tourism.CSD Working Paper Serie.nr.4. Pg.10.

1.5.2 Why people are attracted to this kind of tourism

Does rural tourism have specific intrinsic qualities or is it just a simple tourist activity that takes place in a rural settlement?

According to the forms of manifestation and the world practice, the features that rural tourism has, which makes it really deserves the qualification of "rural", are:

- proximity to nature;
- tranquility;
- a non-mechanized environment;
- personal contact in opposition to the irrationalism and anonymity of the urban;
- the feeling of continuity and stability, of experiencing a living and lasting history;
- the possibility to get to know places and the people of those places closely;
- close knowledge of local businesses;
- the possibility of having a clear image related to the identity of community individuals;
- the chance of integration in the community during the stay.

In this context, rural tourism fits the trend of travelers looking for unique experiences and authentic local lifestyles. European travelers want to experience natural, unaltered landscapes, to stay in authentic accommodation, to participate in activities, lifestyles and traditions of the rural community. This way they get a personalized experience of the environment.



Figure 6 - The Rural Tourism Community

The strengths of rural tourism can be attractions for this form of tourism:

- tourist potential throughout the year;
- diversified accommodation structures;
- the hospitality of the inhabitants;
- relatively low level of pollution, compared to the urban area;
- high level of environmental conservation;
- spa resources;
- varied and rich flora and fauna;
- numerous tourist attractions (museums, churches, monasteries, memorial houses, nature reserves);
- rich cultural heritage;
- the diversity of traditions and folklore;
- multiculturalism;
- specific gastronomy;
- relatively lower prices;
- the growing interest of investors for the rural environment.

Rural communities have excellent resources to provide such experiences. Cultural experiences and interaction with locals are becoming increasingly popular, as are holidays spent at farms.

The positive energy that tourists find in rural tourism is the main asset in a world of maximum competitiveness.

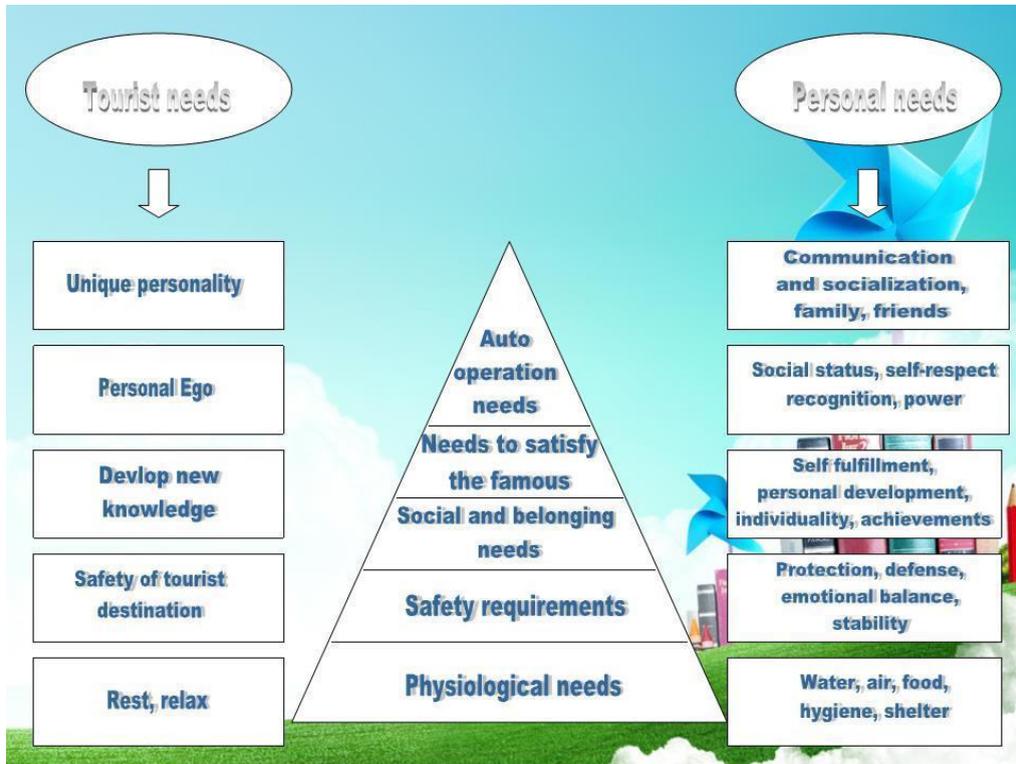


Figure 7 - A. Maslow's pyramid - adapted in travel tourism

The people who fall into the category of rural tourism consumers depend on the general purpose of the trip:

- people oriented towards activities related to the physical environment;
- people attracted by the lifestyle and cultural activities;
- people who want to integrate all these elements in the tourist experience.

These people are oriented towards rural accommodation for several reasons:

- **objective reasons**: vicinity of natural or anthropic tourist attractions that constitute stopping points on the tourist route, prices lower than those of hotels;

- **subjective reasons:** desire to relax in a familiar and more personal environment than the atmosphere in a hotel, desire to stay in locations with direct access to open spaces for relaxation (courtyards, gardens, terraces, etc.), desire for simplicity, fresh air;
- **physical reasons:** they are related to the need for physical and mental recovery, relaxation, exercise;
- **cultural reasons:** people aim at knowing different cultures, discovering unique places and their specifics regarding lifestyle, music, art, folklore, dance, etc.;
- **interpersonal reasons:** they focus on the desire to meet new people, to seek new life experiences, to visit friends or relatives;
- **reasons related to social status and personal prestige:** they include desires to practice personality development hobbies, to get recognition and attention from others.



Figure 7 - Motivations for choosing tourism destination

Authentic accommodation

Travelers in rural areas are looking for a wide variety of accommodation types in a wide price range, ranging from campsites to small rural hotels. They

like authentic, small-scale accommodation, run by locals, preferably reflecting the authentic rural heritage of the area.

Usually, they rent rural accommodation, which they can combine with (rural) activities and attractions, preferably using local social, cultural and natural resources.

Authenticity

It is an increasingly demanded quality. Most travelers come from an urban environment, which is saturated with audiovisuals, dominated by highly industrialized products and impersonal collective relationships. The tourist appreciates more and more the authenticity, the simplicity of the country life, the warmth specific to the small rural communities.

Rural experiences

Travelers from rural areas are interested in authentic rural experiences. They like places and activities that are fun as well as educational. They should reflect the unique character of the area, its rural qualities and heritage.

The interaction with nature shapes the tourist experience in specific ways. Artisanal food production models and their quality, the importance of artisanal skills and trades, the predominance of family-run farms, care for quality and management of environmental resources are closely linked to the sustainability of new tourists and their search for "authentic experiences".

Common activities include:

- animal observation and participation in household activities;
- trips through the village;
- cooking or craft workshops.

Popular attractions include:

- archaeological or heritage sites;
- cultural centers, museums, churches;
- cultural, heritage or gastronomic routes;
- local or agricultural organizations, fairs.

Natural landscapes and sustainability

The main reason for a holiday in the countryside is to enjoy the quality of natural unaltered landscapes. This is often more important for rural tourists than

the level of facilities. In this sense, rural tourism must be understood as a form of activity that provides the urban population with adequate therapy conditions against the stress caused by the turmoil of daily life.

Recreational and adventure activities

Rural travellers enjoy participating in recreational activities such as walking and cycling. Other adventure activities are also becoming popular, such as horseback riding, rowing or rafting. Practicing them can compensate for the lack of movement in the professional activity and family life of the modern man.

Hiking - can become the main way to practice rural tourism that has a natural and picturesque setting.

Biking - almost all tourist attractions are reachable by bike, the roads through communes, villages, hamlets and forest roads being of a special picturesque.

Horse riding / Carriage rides / Horse-drawn sleigh rides - physical exercise combined with escaping into nature, along with the positive energy of these wonderful animals and the love for them help the tourist to disconnect, restoring their mental balance.

Rafting - an experience that gives you a little more adrenaline which is able to "keep you on your toes" for a while.

Gastronomy and traditions

Gastronomy, the traditions of rural communities and authentic tourist experiences are important reasons that travelers take into account when choosing a holiday destination.

By knowing the local cuisine, tourists will have knowledge about the material culture of the country and about the elements of folklore. During the tasting, tourists can enjoy local music and dance, try local folk costumes, and visit traditional houses.

The choices of foreign visitors are in line with European trends that show that tourists are increasingly interested in rural, cultural, gastronomic and wine tourism. The last decade has marked a turning point characterized by consumer trends for organic and traditional products, which are able to meet tourists'

requirements of authenticity and safety, which contain few additives and do not contain genetically modified ingredients.

Cultural experiences and interaction with the locals

European travelers include more and more elements of local culture in their vacation. They are looking for experiences, rather than going to sights. During these experiences, they like to interact with the locals.

Many countries have interesting rural areas, with their own cultures and traditions which offers opportunities for rural tourism providers. Rural tourism can contribute to changing the image of a country in the world through the ethnocultural contact and the natural environment of the village.

Quality

Travelers are price conscious, however, they are willing to pay more if they get a quality experience. Quality is generally more important to them than price. In this context, quality includes things like authentic experiences, good organization, hospitable staff, experienced and safe guides.

Health and safety

Health and safety are important for travel in rural areas. They are often interested in the safety of their destination. Vehicles and accommodation must also be safe, especially as some developing countries are sometimes politically unstable.

Accessibility

In rural areas, accessibility can be a challenge. Good roads and public transport are often lacking. Unclear and inappropriate signs are a common complaint of travelers in rural areas. Clear signage is needed at the beginning of a route or routes, as well as road signs.

Generating direct sales

Online is a trend that has grown exponentially in recent years. Travelers increasingly book their vacation directly with destination service providers - online reservations. Freedom and flexibility are also important.

The tourist who stays in rural areas can generally be classified in the following types:

The profile of *the weekend tourist* - consumer from an urban environment, with a stressful and tiring life, who prefers to retire at the end of the week in a pension for relaxation and recreation; travels with family or friends; general preferences: acceptable distance from home, good accommodation conditions, traditional meal, price below the hotel; moves on their own; they can be loyal to a pension if it meets their qualitative conditions; generally prefers tourist areas with high natural resources.

The profile of *the traditionalist tourist* - consumer from an urban environment, who prefers to spend his holidays in a traditional rural environment; travels with family or friends; general preferences: rich tourist area from a cultural and ethnographic point of view, good accommodation conditions, traditional food, access to the traditional customs of the area and to the local gastronomy; moves on their own; may be loyal, but they are generally looking for new places to see and experience.

The profile of *the high-income tourist* - consumer from the urban environment who spends their weekend or vacation in the rural environment in order to discover the "local - traditional specific"; travels with family or friends; general preferences: superior accommodation conditions (at the level and quality of hotels), varied local gastronomy, traditional and according to their preferences, they are willing to pay to have access to their "vision on accommodation and dining conditions"; moves on their own; generally prefers tourist areas with high natural and anthropic resources but which offer something interesting or important to visit in their free time (festivals; monuments; religious objectives, etc.).

The profile of *the average income tourist* - consumer from the urban environment who wants to spend their vacation in an environment accessible from the budget point of view, so as to ensure the optimum between satisfaction and costs; travels with family or friends; general preferences: the desire to see as much as possible in the area where they move, acceptable accommodation conditions, the possibility to prepare their meal and not to be tied to the hours of preparation / serving the meal, the desire "to feel like home"; moves on their own; generally prefers tourist areas with high natural and anthropic resources ("with something important to visit"); chooses the locations based on the recommendations or prefers to choose on the spot.

The profile of *the low-income tourist* - consumer from the urban or rural environment who wants to spend their free time in an environment accessible from the budget point of view; they generally choose off-season offers that have low prices and that allow an extended stay; travels alone, with family or organized groups; general preferences: acceptable accommodation conditions; traditional meal in general in the form of full board, possibilities for outdoor recreation, short hikes, generally travel by public transport: choose the location depending on distance and price; Can't be loyal, always choosing offers based on price.

The "Western" foreign tourist - family person: eager for new cultural experiences; adventurous spirit; follower of holidays, especially in rural areas, traditionalist, knows basic elements about the country in which they travel, travels based on a very clearly established route and chooses known locations or where there were other compatriots of theirs; prefers self-transport; wants to know the rural experience, cultural and religious customs, gastronomy, crafts and local handicrafts, etc. In general, everything that is specific to the country, region, place; preferring first the known areas (example - Transylvania, Sibiu). If they are delighted with the experience, they are willing to come back and recommend it to other potential tourists; organized groups are generally oriented towards resorts.

The "neo-Western" foreign tourist (from South-Eastern and Eastern Europe), unlike the Western one, they are aware of the general tourist offers of the country they visit, especially of the important areas of interest; the locations are generally chosen in the area close to the border, where they can also have access to public transport; also prefers group trips; they want accommodation in higher capacity pensions located in resorts that are of tourist interest; the choice is made depending on the price and offer; they can be loyal especially during the holidays.

Rural tourism can be considered an instrument of reconnection to values and the sense of naturalness.

1.5.3 What are psychological triggers (homemade food, familial landscape, escape from urban life, simplicity, validation, etc.)

The psychological factors are of a subjective nature and stimulate the tourist demand through their persistence in the psyche of each individual, as a

reaction to the aggressions and nervous demands, to the physical and intellectual efforts imposed by work and daily life.

Psychological well-being includes important principles that affect emotions, can influence all dimensions of human behavior, its development, including physical and mental health, skill and educational development, social competence and the creation of positive relationships.



Figure 8 - Rural tourist psychographics

Tourism, in general, is an integrating element in communication between people of different cultures, different nationalities and religions.

Rural tourism can be a therapy for the soul, a simple therapy, as well as an instrument of reconnection to nature, to values, to the sense of naturalness.

Simplicity

The simple way of life and the possibility of temporary return to nature is a motivation for all socio-professional categories, age, sex because it is the result of the trend of conservation, health, physical comfort and more. Today's

people cannot break away from the original framework of life, and their contact with a rustic environment has wide echoes in the functional balance.

Escape from urban life

Peace and mental comfort are also increasingly sought after by many tourists, given the stress level of everyday life. The voluntary aspiration to leave the urban living environment, the idea of escape in nature is found almost unanimously among the desires of today's citizens. Rural areas help to ensure the environment, in favor of the materialization of the idea and the possibility to find pleasure in a quiet, unpolluted, comforting environment, away from the constraints of daily activities.

Familial landscape

The contact with nature, the desire to relive the past days stimulates the nostalgic seekers to travel in rural areas, which have a kind of vintage charm, which can give them the ability to understand, better appreciate the body and self-esteem. Direct experiences can promote emotional affinity for nature and acts of kindness can improve the emotional connection with host communities.

Homemade food

Smell is a feeling with a fantastic power over the psyche. Some smells can trigger clear memories and make us relive a certain moment in our lives. A culinary experience can leave an extraordinary mark on the tourist. Consumption is in fact an integral part of the travel experience, which is equally a consumption of places, customs and traditions, as well as a local consumption of flavors through specific dishes.

Handmade authentic

The traditional and the national inspiration is a gesture of gratitude for ourselves, because we are talking about a personal report of an individual related to their soul, their aspirations, origins and identity.

Nostalgia

The feeling of melancholy caused by the desire to see again a dear place, especially the birthplace, a close person or to relive an episode from the past. Family vacations, trips with friends, birthday parties and family reunions on holidays are cherished experiences and happy memories. Nostalgia stimulates a good opinion of oneself and promotes the feeling that life is full of meaning and purpose.

Nationalism

Nationalism is the consciousness of belonging to a nation, it is a form of attachment to your people, to the community to which you belong and to the native lands. Romantic nationalism has developed mainly culturally - artistically by protecting popular traditions, customs and habits, and which triggers national pride among visitors.

Spirituality

From a spiritual perspective, the experiences that an individual can consume in a certain place, can act as a psychological comfort. They induce a state of joy, serenity, blessing that their psyche needs.

The "search for spiritual experiences" outside the church framework aims to revive abandoned beliefs and cults, in a significant share of modern people who seek a link between thought and spirit.

Religion

People follow religious beliefs, approach inspiring buildings, escape from everyday life, explore the historical roots of religion, conceptually interpret spiritual values in search of feeling connected to the creator. The source of meanings and spiritual refreshment and a ritual passage that acts as a counterpoint to daily life and work. Through the sacred journey, visitors hope to learn more about themselves and to think more deeply about the essence of life.

Socialization

It is an essential element for many consumers of rural tourism. People's emotional relationships with the place are based not only on physical and objective environments but also on their experiences and socially constructed location.

1.6. Chapter 1 Conclusions

The examination of Chapter 1 has identified some important facts that are evaluated as of a great importance for the economic development and the spiritual interests related to the overall economy, with focus on the Hospitality industry, as this constitutes one of the most important aspects of the global marketplace, especially within the European Union.

The first part of Chapter 1 '*Rural Areas and Culture*' has identified the major issues that are related to the Rural Areas and how these can develop their operations in the Hospitality sector by ensuring that they will effectively

understand the role of the Rural Areas. Culture has been identified in two levels; Tangible and Intangible; however, both of them are carrying equal importance that must be critically evaluated. The Rural Areas have a massive potential and they can become an effective element for a comprehensive development and job creation, and also contribute towards confronting the increasing Urbanisation which is considered to be a real threat for the Rural Areas.

The second part of Chapter 2 ‘Hospitality Management in Rural Areas’ has focused on the examination of the major challenges faced by the Hospitality managers in the particular geographical areas, especially for the Small businesses. Lack of expertise, financial support, stakeholders’ relationships, strategy, and cooperation with the local authorities are amongst the obstacles.

The third part ‘The Tourist Product Must Combine the Components and the Environmental Circumstances’ has identified a number of external elements that affect the operations in the Hospitality industry and can potentially lead to the right decision-making. Religious, culture, and economy are only some of these challenges that need to be confronted by the Hospitality industry.

2. Chapter 2: Marketing – Overview and Definitions

2.1. Definition of Marketing

According to the American Marketing Association (2017 – Online) “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” The particular definition clarifies the impact of Marketing for businesses as the contemporary Marketing activities go far beyond the conventional approach and deal with the need to implement deep market research which is essential for the right market identification and the relevant development of knowledge of how to overcome the potential obstacles that will be developed.

Marketing has in recent decades played a key role in the development of contemporary management functions and has enabled companies, both Multinational (MNC) and Small & Medium Enterprises (SME) to develop new skills and capabilities, become more competitive, and most importantly, focus on the need for Innovation and Diversification as part of their overall strategic approach. Yohn (2019, p. 1) clarifies that "...marketing is and should not be executed merely through tactical functions of acquiring and retaining customers, as many companies practice it today."

This is an important identification which provides the opportunity to clearly understand of the role of Marketing and how this should be used by companies in the tough; however, highly-promising business environment in which Globalisation plays a key-role and the need for competitiveness through well-designed marketing activities is more important than ever before in the business history. All these are vital identifications for any given business.

2.2. Why is Marketing Useful?

The identification of the Marketing concept leads to the need for a clearly identification of the real impact of Marketing and answer to a common question which refers to 'Why is Marketing Useful?' Several contemporary authors have focused on the particular element and have clearly identified some major Marketing Benefits; hence, making Marketing Useful for contemporary organisations. As a result, these Marketing Benefits have a practical application in the Hospitality Industry.

Therefore, some of these Marketing Benefits refer to the following aspects:

- i. *Marketing Informs* organisations and individuals of what is happening in the marketplace, especially, due to the fact that the marketplace is extremely everchanging. In addition, it enables

professional Marketers to inform the Market and ensure that this will establish a sense of trust between the organisation and the rest of the Stakeholders. This refers to both Internal and External Stakeholders, as they can both help the organisation inform and get informed about important Marketing and other business-related issues. Feedback is crucial for Marketing and a two-way Information strategy must be put in place;

- ii. *Marketing Engages* people in the organisation's activities, especially when these activities are concerned with the concept of Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This is extremely important in crisis situations in which the development of ethical activities is considered as important as this will lead to benefits for the organisation and the societies at large, and can have several benefits for the Hospitality industry;
- iii. *Marketing Builds Reputation* as it provides the ability to develop a solid image, enhance the Bonds of Trust with all the Stakeholders, and create an overall positive environment that will lead to a long-term, and Sustainable relationship. Reputation takes time to Build, and only few moments to destroy it. Therefore, Marketing must be used in order, not only to build this Reputation, but most importantly, to extend this Benefit in order to Maintain the overall fragile organisational Reputation;
- iv. *Marketing Sells* as it can create a positive image and ensure trust between the company and the customers. Despite that the current work identifies that 'Marketing is Not Sales', Marketing can potentially create the appropriate environment that will enable the company to penetrate into the market, create a solid relationship, understand the market, and develop the right products for the right price; thus, boosting Sales;

- v. *Marketing Grows Businesses* as it keeps them engaged with all the Stakeholders, creates a broader network, and ensures that it will educate people. All these are some of the element that derive as a result of a clear market identification which is based on extensive research and enable the Business to grow on health and steady pace.

All the above are only some of the identified Benefits that have through the decades been found to make ‘Marketing Useful’ for contemporary businesses. As this list is massive, the role of Marketing cannot be neglected, by any company, especially, by the Hospitality Industry. All these must become part of deep critical thinking in order to ensure that the role of Marketing shall be part of all businesses, especially by the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).

2.3. Marketing is not Sales

Marketing does not simply deal with sales, which is of course an important part of it, but most importantly, it deals with the businesses’ ability to engage in a fruitful cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders and ensure that the activities will indeed become beneficial for the entire societies. Local communities do not just want to see their businesses thriving, but also, they need to see them returning a part of their revenue back to the communities, especially when the social needs are at a high level and disadvantaged groups of people seek assistance that will improve their overall quality of life.

Therefore, it is fair and true to identify that ‘Marketing is Not Sales’, it goes far beyond sales, and the later only constitutes one of the major goals that will only be reached by the strategic focus on broader identifications such as the need to ensure a high-level of quality in terms of relationship with all the Stakeholders, internal and external, increase social responsibility, and ensuring

the well-being of all people, organisations, and societies involved. This identification has been historically identified and developed and provides a solid background for what Marketing really 'Is Not', enabling the Marketers to, indeed, become more customer-oriented and focused.

The real question and challenge for contemporary Marketers is to what extent they really understand the particular issue and how this understanding can enable them to focus their policies towards other major marketing questions and challenges; such as that of the need for Marketing Research and Innovation. The importance of all that is also directly associated with the contemporary Marketers' ability to ensure that the appropriate Marketing Plans shall be developed in the most appropriate way that will offer the expected benefits.

2.4. Marketing Research

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2017 - Online) "Marketing Research links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information—information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process." The particular scientific definition provides a clarified understanding of how Marketing should be positioned within the Hospitality industry professionals.

Marketing Research carries several advantages and this is vital for the Hospitality industry in order to identify all the relevant variables that can influence its operations and provide a sustainable competitive advantage. Special parts of the Hospitality Industry such as the Rural areas cannot afford to neglect the strategic role of Marketing Research and its ability to provide a clarified overview of all the major variables related to them; hence, the

appropriate attention must be paid towards it and ensure that this will become part of their organisational culture.

The need for Marketing Research has in recent decades taken a massive and positive attention by the managers, and this is something that is directly associated with a number of issues that can enable contemporary organisations to develop all their capabilities and create a positive internal environment; hence, becoming a valuable driver for all people within the organisation. Corporate, Business, and Marketing strategies have clearly been positively impacted by its development, making it a real challenge for contemporary organisations, especially in mature markets. In addition, Marketing Research is crucial for both MNC and SME; hence, increasing the need for strategic focus on the particular management tool of the current marketplace.

2.5. Market(ing) Segmentation

Market Segmentation refers to “...aggregating prospective buyers into groups or segments with common needs and who respond similarly to a marketing action” (Tarver, 2019). Marketing Segmentation under no circumstances can be separated from the overall Marketing activities as the Segmentation provides a clarified roadmap for the entire organisation and can create a substantial competitive advantage for both the companies and the industries that they strategically implement the relevant policies. Consequently, its impact can be considered as a milestone for all organisations, especially for the Hospitality industry, considering that it goes through several challenges, such as customer preferences and the impact of Information Technology.

The Hospitality Industry and more specifically the Rural areas can be highly benefited by the Market Segmentation as they can clearly identify their target-market; hence, design, develop, and implement, the appropriate strategies that will enable them reach the right customers/clients, at the right time, for the

right price. Homogeneity, Distinction, and Reaction, are only some of the criteria that need to be developed by the Hospitality Managers in order to accomplish their Market Research objectives and ensure that Segmentation will provide all the relevant benefits. Such actions can only ensure the well-being of both Products/Service and the customers.

The critical approach of the concept of Marketing Segmentation enables some indeed valuable insight related to the entire concept of Marketing and how this procedure can have a benefit in the overall Hospitality industry. The challenges for the Marketers are obvious and Marketing Segmentation can solve several problems and become an effective tool for the Hospitality professionals.

2.6. Strategic Marketing Positioning

Strategic Marketing Positioning focuses on occupying a distinctive place in people's mind when they are going through the buying decision process; hence, making it easier for the customers to focus and identify the particular product or service amongst an ocean of competitors. Therefore, the development of Innovative actions by the Rural Hospitality Managers is highly crucial as the development and long-term establishment of a Strategic Marketing Positioning can indeed offer several benefits that can create a serious competitive advantage in the market place, especially since the Information Technology has changed the way that the market is operating.

Strategic Marketing Positioning can become an important management tool for the Hospitality industry, for both the rural and urban areas as it enables managers to become more focused, and consequently, develop the particular strategies that will drive them towards success. In order to ensure that Positioning shall be effectively developed and applied, the Hospitality managers must ensure that guest experience must align with expectation, gather on-line reviews by using the capabilities provided by the rapid internet development

and the internal company's capabilities, gather guest feedback as this is crucial for analyzing current and future trends and also correct possible problems that may arise during the operations.

The Hospitality industry is facing serious obstacles and challenges in terms of Strategic Marketing Positioning as the targeted markets are increasingly demanding and complex, creating the relevant concerns for the industry professionals in order to align their Positioning policies with the customers' expectations.

2.7. Marketing and the Macroenvironment (PESTEL Analysis)

The development of the Marketing is influenced by the careful examination of the external Macroenvironment. Macroenvironment is identified as all the external for the company uncontrollable elements that can have an impact on the company's or the industry's operations. All these create a particular level of certainty or uncertainty, they have an impact on the industry's or the company's strategic decisions, and must be taken into serious consideration by the Hospitality professionals, as lack to do so, not only can have a negative role on the operations of the industry, but also, can become catastrophic shall the companies do not have a clarified overview over the role of the Macroenvironment, as this can expose them to several hazards that can indeed create complexity and conflict within the entire industry.

A fine tool towards the identification of the external Macroenvironment refers to the PESTEL Analysis (Political, Economic, Social-cultural, Technological, Environmental, Legal). The PESTEL Analysis provides a fine opportunity to develop a comprehensive set of skills and expertise that will eliminate risks and threats, and enable the Hospitality industry to take advantage of the opportunities provided in the globalised marketplace; hence, increasing the overall competitiveness of both the industries and the individual companies.

As a result, this can be eventually transferred into the overall national economy and provide the relevant benefits such as the increase of the GDP, job creation, increase of investments, and entrepreneurship.

All these constitute benefits that must be critically evaluated, they have a serious impact on the Hospitality industry, and must become a tool for the entire industry. PESTEL Analysis is explained as follow:

Political: Refers to the overall political situation in a particular country or a region, the level of stability or instability. This affects the decisions taken by a company or by the entire Hospitality industry. Political decisions are considered as the milestone of the PESTEL Analysis.

Economic: Refers to the economic situation in the country of operations, or the targeted markets, and how these can influence the overall operations of the industry. Given that Economy affects Political decisions, the importance of the Economic environment is self-evident.

Social-cultural: Refers to the structure of the society of operations, as well as that of the targeted markets. This enables the companies to ensure that they will gain a solid understanding and develop the relevant policies that are crucial for the Hospitality industry.

Technological: The particular element refers to the country's ability to provide the appropriate IT support in terms of infrastructure, knowledge, know-how, and HR. The role of the Universities is also important as they can provide the appropriate support to the industry.

Environmental: The role of the Environment is crucial as these conditions can influence, the operations of the Hospitality industry, and also, affect attracting the relevant investments. Pollution and change of temperatures affect the Hospitality industry to a great extent.

Legal: The Legal environment plays a key-role for the Hospitality industry as it defines the rules and regulations that are applied in a particular economy, affects the political decisions, and creates the relevant circumstances for the Hospitality industry to develop, and of course, to invest the relevant capitals in the industry, especially for the Start-ups.

2.8. Digital Marketing

The rapid development of the IT industry and the opportunities that have raised as a result of the Internet, have shifted the way that conventional management and marketing activities are identified, designed, and performed. Consequently, this has a greater impact on the overall business operations and how employees in several departments, especially those that need to have direct access to the Internet, perform their jobs. All these have led to a new type of Marketing, that of the ‘Digital Marketing’, and understanding its impact is important for the contemporary businesses, and of course, for the entire Tourism industry which is experiencing massive opportunities.

According to Barone (2019 – Online) identifies that “Digital marketing is the use of the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other channels to reach consumers... targets a specific segment of the customer base and is interactive... includes search result ads, email ads and promoted tweets – anything that incorporates marketing with customer feedback or a two-way interaction between the company and customer.” The identification of the Digital Marketing concept is essential for its development, as it provides clarified directions of its effective and strategic use by the professional Marketers.

Digital Marketing can provide several benefits for the entire Hospitality Industry, such as Marketing Automation, Structured data & semantics, Live streaming, chatbots, Artificial intelligence, personalized services, Mobile-first

strategy, Greater use of analytics, Big Data and the Internet of Things. All these are only some of the benefits that can be used by the Hospitality industry in terms of Digital Marketing; however, it must be clarified that this must be developed by qualified professionals and avoid misunderstandings.

2.9. Marketing Mix

Identifying the concept of Marketing Mix is considered to be of the utmost importance in order to enable its overall development that will provide a comprehensive understanding of its role and impact on the development of the Marketing Strategies, and how these Strategies will indeed have a substantial impact on the contemporary Businesses. According to Kenton (2010, Online) “Marketing mix includes multiple areas of focus as part of a comprehensive marketing plan. The term often refers to a common classification that began as the four Ps: product, price, placement, and promotion.” This is an indeed important approach, and the term ‘Classification’ creates the opportunity for greater exploration for its overall understanding.

The development of the Marketing Mix which refers to the traditional 4Ps (Product, Place, Price, Promotion), plus the later 3Ps (People, Procedures, Physical Environment) creates the opportunity for the Rural Areas Hospitality Managers to ensure that their Product and Services will be transferred into the marketplace in a highly-professional manner.

All 7Ps carry their own unique value and cannot be separated from each other as this could create a ‘weak link’ between them and create a difficult-to-fill gap. The role of Marketing for the Rural Areas is vital as its implementation can enable these areas to shift from a bureaucratic rhetoric approach into a more realistic policy that will enable them develop all the relevant and available resources. In addition, the Marketing Mix must be developed in full alignment with the rest of the Strategic Objectives as these

must be clarified within the overall Strategy. The Marketing Messages must be consistent with the real capabilities of the Rural Areas in order to remain realistic and ethical.

The development of the Marketing is influenced by the careful examination of the external Macroenvironment which has been previously identified and developed in order to provide a better and deeper understanding of its overall impact. However, it must indeed be clear for the Hospitality professionals, especially for those who do not possess the relevant management skills, that such identification and understanding is for the utmost importance, and as such, it must attract the relevant attention.

All these create a particular level of certainty or uncertainty, they have an impact on the industry's or the company's strategic decisions, and must be taken into serious consideration by the Hospitality professionals, as lack to do so, not only can have a negative role on the operations of the industry, but also, can become catastrophic shall the companies do not have a clarified overview over the role of the Macroenvironment.

Following, the Marketing Mix shall be developed in order to provide an understanding of the role of the Marketing Mix in the Leisure, Events, Tourism and Sports (LETS) Industry, as this constitutes an important part of the Hospitality Industry, on both local and global corporations. Identifying such crucial issues not only can boost the Marketing itself, but most importantly, it can have a substantial impact on the operations of other business departments, such as the HR and Accounting.

All these create an important framework which has to be critically approached and evaluated in order to enable the Marketing Mix all the benefits that its operations carry for contemporary Hospitality organizations. Each one of

the Marketing Mix elements carries its own unique importance and they must all be evaluated in relationship with the rest of the elements.

Product/Service: It refers to the Products or the Services each industry decides to provide to its potential customers, consumers, or even, clients. The particular decision must be based on the previously developed market segmentation which will enable the company to develop its products. The Product must be able to serve particular needs and wants and provide the relevant satisfaction to the customers. Providing the right Product is essential as it constitutes the major driver for the rest of the actions that must be taken in order to ensure that the company and the industry shall become effective in the long-term. Given the access that contemporary customers have to a large amount of data and information, the impact of the Product, as the primary Marketing Mix element, must be seriously identified and developed in order to provide the relevant benefits to the company. In addition, the Product must provide the customers with the relevant Added Value in order to ensure competitive advantage.

Price: Following the Product/Service development, the Hospitality companies must ensure that they design and implement the appropriate Pricing Strategy that will enable the company to remain competitive, attract the targeted market, and create the opportunity to retain the expected profit margins that are crucial for the successful operations for the Hospitality industry. It must also be clearly identified that the Price must reflect the overall Strategic policies, be in alignment with the Brand Image, hence, avoid possible problems, misleading, and misunderstandings with the customers. Furthermore, the Price constitutes the only Marketing Mix element that generates income for the company. All the rest of the elements generate cost; hence, the Pricing Strategy must cover all the rest of the Marketing Mix. Pricing is crucial and deep critical thinking is

required by the Hospitality managers, as only such approach can ensure that the organization and the industry remain competitive.

Place: The 3rd Marketing Mix element refers to the location in which the company is placed as well the location in which the Products and Services are distributed to the market. Choosing the appropriate Distribution Channels is vital for the Hospitality Industry as comprehensive national strategies may include Exhibitions, Conferences, and other related actions that enable the Promotion (that is developed in the next section). Importantly, the Internet and the capabilities provided by the rapid development of IT can help towards new Distribution Channels and enable the Hospitality Industry to become more effective towards its targeted customers. Shifting from the conventional Place approach that refers to the ‘Location – Location – Location’, towards the contemporary view which takes in consideration the IT and refers to the ‘Information -Information – Information’, is indeed important and has a great deal of impact on the ability to effectively expand the range of the Distribution Channels. Therefore, all these must become part of the Place element and exploit all its potential capabilities.

Promotion: The final element of the original Marketing Mix refers to the ways that the company, or the industry, uses in order to ensure the appropriate communication with the targeted market. The establishment of the appropriate Strategies must encompass actions such as Advertising, Selling, Direct Marketing, Sales Promotion, and Public Relations. All these are best identified as the Promotional Mix, creating the opportunity for the under-examination companies and industry, to become more focused and effective in their actions. The need for an overall Strategy is important as the internal stakeholders must be considered as vital for the Promotion, and the Marketing Managers must ensure that the personnel is fruitfully used as part of the Promotional activities in order to ensure the best possible results.

People: The first element of the extended Marketing Mix, and fifth overall, refers to the People that work in an organisation, and constitutes the most important asset of any given contemporary. The role of People in the Marketing Mix for the Hospitality and Tourism industry is of a crucial importance as they are the ones that have a direct communication with the visitors, and the rest of the internal and external stakeholders; thus, they can be considered as the mirror of the organization; consequently, for the entire industry. The Tourism industry is considered to be highly affected by the people, as the level of Hospitality, especially in Rural Areas in which attracting visitors is more difficult. The level of training, know-how, and accumulated knowledge that the People possess, constitute serious impact on the overall organizational operations, and creates the need for the national governments to focus on its development in order to provide the appropriate sustainable competitive advantage. The market Globalization increases the need for further strategic actions in terms of people and the appropriate Human Resource Management (HRM).

Procedures: The particular element focuses on the overall improvement of the organizational Procedures, for both Internal and External reasons. In terms of Internal Operations, the role of Procedures is of a great importance as it can enhance the concept of Communication between individuals as well as departments. This can ensure that conflict shall be avoided; therefore, higher efficiency shall be ensured. In terms of the External Operations, the Procedures can enable the Hospitality industry to boost its Communication with the Stakeholders such as the suppliers, banking institutions, government departments, professional bodies, etc. This is essential to ensure the smooth operation and avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. The role of the IT is of a primary importance, calling for the companies to undertake the relevant measures.

Physical Environment: The Physical Environment constitutes the final element of the extended Marketing Mix and refers to the environment that is created at the workplace and improves the overall conditions for the workforce. This can lead to higher levels of performance and productivity which is essential for all organizations, and of course, for the organizations operating in a highly sensitive industry, such as that of the Hospitality and Tourism. In addition, the Physical Environment is important for the rest of the Stakeholders as it provides a sense of professionalism, which can have a substantial positive influence on the overall relationships with these Stakeholders. Finally, the Physical environment is important for the Visitors, as this can influence their overall opinion about the organization, help the company to retain these Visitors, which can potentially become the best promoters through the Word-of-Mouth. The need for the improvement of the Physical Environment is vital for the Hospitality industry, and this does not only concern the individual businesses, but most importantly, must become a part of an overall national policy that will enable such actions and provide the relevant incentives.

The examination of all the above elements of the Marketing Mix leads to the safe conclusion that the particular tool is essential for the establishment of a comprehensive development of an effective Strategy in terms of Marketing. It must be clarified that the Marketing Mix is must be in full alignment with the rest of the organizational and Industry strategic objectives in order to ensure that this will serve its objectives. In addition, it must also be clarified that the implementation of the Marketing Mix must encompass all the elements and none of them can be excluded as this can potentially create several obstacles. The role of IT is vital in the overall implementation; therefore, the appropriate resources must be allocated; hence, enabling the Marketing Mix strategy to become more effective.

2.10. Marketing Mix and Personalization

Despite the fact that the Marketing Mix is known as the 7Ps, as they have previously been developed, the contemporary approach is to encompass the concept of Personalization as the new part of it. According to Fraser (2017 – Online) “Personalized Marketing uses customer information, demographics and behavior to determine the best place, at the right time, to the right person.” The particular definition enables the understanding of focusing on providing Personalized Products and Services that will serve the specific needs and wants of the Customers, Consumers, and Clients. Therefore, this is essential for the demanding Hospitality industry and also provides the opportunity for the Industry to become more Innovative and Creative, leading these organizations to the relevant sustainable competitive advantage.

Personalized Marketing works based on two particular elements that are both equally important:

- i. *Information Overload:* Consumers are constantly bombarded with a massive amount of information through a number of Channels. This leads to confusion as the consumers may not be able to identify the real differences between the available Products and Services; hence, the only element that differentiates them is the Price, rather than the overall Quality of Service;
- ii. *The Desire of Control:* A large number of Consumers, especially those that have the financial ability to differentiate themselves in terms of Pricing, focus on paying more in order to gain private attention based on their own unique needs and wants, satisfying them and differentiating them from the rest of the Customers.

The Marketing Personalization in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry requires from the industry to design and implement a long-term and successful Market Research, Segmentation, and Positioning. This process will enable the industry to gain deep understanding of the elements that affect the Personalization and therefore provide a set of Benefits and develop a Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

These Benefits must be clear for the entire Hospitality Industry and are mainly concerned with:

- i. *Increase Sales* to a particular Market Segment; thus, boost both the Revenue and Profitability which is essential for businesses that focus on such executive strategies;
- ii. *Build Better Relationships* between the companies and the Clients, whether this refers to Business-to-Business (B2B) or Business-to-Consumer (B2C), leading to higher-levels of trust;
- iii. *Improving the Customer Experience* as the company's focus all their attention and allocate particular resources towards satisfying the relevant personalized needs, wants, and requirements;
- iv. *Attracting Customers' Attention* as the potential Clients that will require the particular Services, will look for organizations that will be able to do that.

All the above are fundamental for the implementation of personalized Marketing Strategies and can indeed provide all the relevant benefits for the Hospitality Industry. However, all that must be developed in full alignment with the rest of the Corporate Strategies and must be part of the Marketing Mix and be encompassed in the Marketing Mix.

2.11. Marketing Myopia

Marketing Myopia refers to the level that a company focuses its Marketing activities on ensuring its own profits and solely serves its own best interests, rather than focusing on the Product/Service and the benefits that this will eventually have for the customers; hence, creating a short-sighted. Therefore, this identification enables the Marketing professionals in all industries, and most importantly, in the Hospitality industry, to shed light to the needs and requirements of their customers, and avoid to focus on their own needs, as their sole approach, which is obvious that this can create several negative issues for both the companies and the customers.

Recent research has identified that the Hospitality industry is facing some particular problems regarding the Marketing Myopia and raise the importance for shifting from this problem in order to improve their attention towards their customers and avoid mistakes. In addition, the authors call for the industry to develop a comprehensive approach, identify the impact of the problem of Marketing Myopia, and ensure that an overall understanding will have a comprehensive benefit for the entire industry.

Marketing Myopia can have other problems for the Marketing professionals such as remaining far from the need for developing ‘Green Products’; hence, serving a particular need for some contemporary customers that are shifting their preferences towards new trends, such as that of the ‘Green Products’, which constitute an important element of the overall economy. In addition, this can also lead the companies from staying far from Innovation, and this constitutes a real threat for the Marketers. The role of Marketing Myopia is crucial and the professional Marketers need to ensure that this will not become a threat.

2.12. The Rapid Growth of Service Markets

The Services economy has in recent years played a key-role in the overall economy development and contributed towards the job creation and generating several benefits that have expanded to a large part of the economy, including the Hospitality and Tourism Industry, which has indeed become the heart of the Service Economy development. According to Chappelow and Scott (2020 – Online) “The service sector produces intangible goods, more precisely services instead of goods, and it comprises various service industries including warehousing and transportation services; information services; securities and other investment services; professional services; waste management; health care and social assistance; and arts, entertainment, and recreation.”

The Service Market carries some particular characteristics that must be clearly identified in order to provide the relevant understanding. These characteristics are mainly referring to the following:

- i. *The Service sector* is the third largest economy, following the raw material production, and that of the manufacturing. This is essential for the development of a long-term and successful strategy, and of course, an effective Marketing Strategy which has a massive impact in the Hospitality and Tourism industry;
- ii. *The Service sector* includes both Tangible and Intangible assets, making its operations rather complex to handle as this requires from the Hospitality and Tourism industry to be really focused on the overall development;
- iii. *The Service sector* is the fastest economy on a global scale and provides added-value, especially in advanced economy.

In the above context, the Tourism and Hospitality sector constitutes an integral part that has during the last decades managed to develop rapidly as part of the Services Industry. As a result of the particular development, the Hospitality industry has managed to experience growth in several aspects such

as the economic growth, job increasing, innovation, creativity, increase of accumulated knowledge, attracting foreign investments, and most importantly, accelerating continuous development on other parallel sectors that have direct interdependence with the Tourism sector. Given the complexity of Tourism, the particular growth is evaluated as of a great importance that provides the opportunity for future success and enhancement of operations on a global scale and also, on a local application, especially in disadvantaged areas (OAS, 2018).

The above-mentioned elements in terms of ‘The Rapid Growth of Service Markets’, the Tourism sector is affected by particular elements such as the Boundaries of Tourism, the Cost of Investments, the overall Supply and Demand, the Added Value, Income Distribution Effect (IDE) and Employment, the shifting of Trends in the Global Market, Accommodation availability, Cruise Ships, and Visitors, Expenditures. All these are only some of the elements, the list is far from being exhausted, and provides a solid background in order to gain a deep and better understanding, not only of the Services Growth, but most importantly, how the Tourism sector is affected as part of the particular development. Companies and countries that have the ability to identify the trends and adapt rapidly to the new environment, are more likely to fully take advantage of the opportunities provided in the marketplace, and create further positive environment in order to ensure that this will be beneficial for the entire society, and promote the Tourism as a major growth element (WEF, 2015). As a result, the role of Services Industry constitutes an opportunity as well as a challenge that needs to be exploited.

2.13. Marketing: LETS Industry, Emotional Storytelling, and Happy Stories

Marketing constitutes an indeed powerful tool for the LETS (Leisure, Events, Travel, & Sports) Industry which enables it to communicate all its activities and effectively promote all the areas that focus on the strategic

development of the particular industry. As a result, companies and countries need to ensure all that in order to gain advantage of the opportunities provided in the current marketplace. ‘Emotional Storytelling’ has in recent years emerged in the LETS Industry and several Marketing Campaigns have emerged in order to ensure that their stories shall be communicated.

Some of these stories refer to global organizations that have invested enormous amount of money in order to ensure that this will be developed. The following examples are only some of the ‘Emotional Storytelling’ that have in recent years managed to grab the world’s attention and provided the companies and the countries that have implemented them with several benefits:

- i. *Travel Oregon – ‘Only Slightly (More) Exaggerated’*: The objective is to promote Oregon’s natural beauties as well as mythical creatures, through a two-minute video, that provides some incredible ‘Emotional Storytelling’ for the entire region and promotes it as a powerful Tourism destination;
- ii. *China Airlines – ‘What Travel Brings You’*: Exceptional Marketing strategy has been used in order to focus on the younger generation and attract them into the Chinese market. High impact on YouTube has managed to enhance the country’s image as an emerging Tourism destination, promote a new image, and enhance its overall position in the global marketplace;
- iii. *Mount Pearl – ‘The Mount Pearl Anthem’*: The specific Marketing campaign reveals how ‘Emotional Storytelling’ can lead to a substantial impact to the Hospitality industry of a small town in the shores of Canada, in North Atlantic. With a rap song, and twenty spots, Mount Pearl has effectively managed to promote its natural beauty and become a hot-spot for the younger generations,

boosting the region's overall economy, and create a positive environment for the entire regions;

- iv. Thomas Cook – ‘The Man Who Wakes Up in a Different Bed’: Despite its recent and unfortunate closure, Thomas Cook has in early 2019 managed to develop a successful Marketing ‘Emotional Storytelling’ campaign which has enabled it to promote its Hotels and the Destinations that were ‘at the time’, dealing with the company. At the same time, this reveals that even successful companies and destinations, must ensure that their Marketing Campaigns need to be designed and communicated on time in order to ensure that these will be successful and avoid problems such as that of Thomas Cook, which can indeed be considered as ‘Too little, too late’. Hence, this must become a tough lesson for contemporary Marketers in the demanding LETS industry;
- v. *Faroe Islands – ‘Closed for Maintenance’*: Volunteer Tourism has been experiencing massive growth during the last decade, providing the opportunity to countries to exploit all there are natural beauties. Small countries such as Faroe Islands have successfully managed to develop these kind of Marketing ‘Emotional Storytelling’.

2.14. Marketing and the Decision-making for the Intangible Services

The decision to purchase a travel product or service is influenced by the fact that it cannot be seen, examined and compared before being acquired. As this is Intangible, makes it even more difficult and creates a massive need by the Tourism and Hospitality Marketing professionals to ensure that the provided Services shall be characterized by specific attributes that will make them exceptional for the customers and clients, in order to be have added value. As

the Services are characterized by four five major traits, such as Intangibility, lack of Ownership, Inseparability, Heterogeneity, and Perishability, the need for the Marketers of delivering exceptional Services is greater than ever before in the demanding Tourism industry.

Tourism professional Marketers must ensure that they offer the right Services that will be divided into two major categories; the Core and the Peripheral Services. Providing a powerful set of both the services not only enhances the business' ability to increase its Revenues and Profitability, but most importantly, to effectively influence the 'Buying-decision Making Process' which goes through some major stages such as the (i) the Need for Awareness, (ii) Information Search, (iii) Evaluating Alternatives, (iv) Purchase Decision, and (v) Post Purchase. All of them are of an equal importance and must be critically evaluated by the Marketing professionals in order to develop Services that will lead to unique experiences and will not only reflect, but also, exceed the customers' expectations.

Influencing the Buying decision is of a great importance for the Marketer professionals in the Tourism industry. The impact on both the Industry and the individual businesses is obvious and can lead to several benefits, both financial and non-financial; hence, Marketers are called-upon implementing the right actions.

2.15. Marketing and the Sensitivity of Demand in the Tourism Industry

The Tourism Industry is highly affected by the basic Rule of the Economy, that of the Demand and Supply which can have a substantial impact on how the Marketing professionals can develop their overall Strategic policies; hence, manage to effectively reach to their potential customers. As a result of the particular identification, the need for gathering statistical Data from the

relevant Services, is of a great importance, calling for the contemporary Marketers to focus on the cooperation with these Services

One of the major issues that affect the Marketing practices in terms of Demand, is considered to be related to the Duration of Stay, as this deals with other several business Tourism elements, such as the type of Accommodation offered to the visitors. The particular identification raises some important issues such as “...the microeconomic determinants of the length of stay...the estimation of a conditional demand function model highlights the explanatory power of the tourist's sociodemographic profile and of holiday characteristics, as well as the sensitivity of the length of stay to price changes.” (Alegre & Pou, p. 1343).

In addition, the Marketing professionals must also take into serious consideration the Demand that arises as a result of the existing competition in several levels. This can refer to local, regional, and even global levels, as they all can have an impact on the overall Demand. The role of IT is indeed important in this procedure as it enables the potential customers to reach and evaluate several options with different characteristics, serving different customers. All the above-mentioned elements create further challenges and obstacles; however, at the same time, creating new opportunities for particular Tourism, especially when this is concerned with emerging economies.

2.16. Marketing and Innovation in the Tourism Sector

Marketing activities can serve towards several scopes and provide a number of Benefits that can have a substantial impact in the Tourism industry, given the fact that the Industry is going through several challenges. One of these Benefits refers to the Innovation in which the Marketing professionals have a great role as they provide the rest of the organizational departments with the relevant marketplace information, leading them to the designing and

development of new Products and Services that will serve both existing and potential customers, leading to the relevant sustainable competitive advantages, which constitute a major requirement for all businesses, and of course for the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

The concept of Innovation has attracted the attention of several respectable authors that have provide a clarified identification of the overall Innovation concept. The examination of these authors clarify that Innovation is directly associated with the concept of Marketing and calls for the Marketing professionals to ensure that this will become an essential part of their overall long-term activities. Therefore, Innovation can be defined as a process that provides added value and a degree of novelty to the organization, suppliers and customers, developing new procedures, solutions, products and services and new ways of marketing.

The identification of the Innovation concept and its obvious relationship with Marketing creates further needs for a deeper exploration of how both can be combined in order to provide the relevant benefits to all the organizations, regardless of their place of operations. Innovation is far from being an option for organizations, it is a necessity.

This is even more important, for the SMEs as they have limited productive resources (Human, Technological, Financial, and Land). In addition, lack of accumulated human capital, is also considered as an existing obstacle that can lead to potential problems for the SMEs and their ability to strategically focus on the development of Innovation. In order to overcome the above-mentioned problems, the SMEs need to ensure that they will establish solid relationships with all the Stakeholders and provide them with the ability to create a positive environment and cooperation in the long-term, which is much needed for such Innovative actions.

SMEs in the Tourism industry cannot neglect the role of Innovation as the increasing globalization and competition requires from them to develop the relevant relationships with external associates that will provide them with the adequate support which is essential for ensuring that this will be developed in the best and most effective manner. Despite the market confusion that exists, the need for Innovation cannot be undermined as this can create several obstacles and drive the SMEs away from their strategic intentions.

In order to ensure that Innovation shall be effectively developed, the Marketing professionals in the Tourism and Hospitality industry must focus on the development of a particular process that will lead them towards the accomplishment of their objectives. The examination of the extensive Marketing and Innovation literature has identified that several authors have proposed a broad range of approaches in order to enable Innovation. However, they all have some common traits which focus on the need for the Marketing departments to clearly understand that Innovation must become a part of their overall activities; however, this concerns all the departments; hence, the cooperation of the entire organization is essential in order to ensure its successful implementation.

Drury and Farhoomand (1999) have identified “The stages of the process of adopting innovation” which is made-up of five particular Stages. Based on the particular proposal, the Innovation must consider the following elements that have been critically identified and been evaluated as important, and providing the relevant basis for the professional Marketers to focus on the Innovation development:

- i. *Stage of knowledge gathering*: Companies need to ensure that obtain the appropriate market understanding that will enable them to develop the right Products and Services. This will lead to the

better market understanding, as well as Segmentation that will ensure the Innovation success at the long-term;

- ii. *Stage of Persuasion:* Marketers must develop a well-clarified strategy that not only inform customers and help them understand the need for the Product/Service, but will also be persuaded for the need to have the particular Product. This is more important for the Services industry, in which the role of Experience plays a key-role;
- iii. *Stage of Decision-making:* Innovation must be able to understand the right moment in which the potential customers will take their decisions. Timing is crucial and can indeed influence both the companies and the customers to identify the real Innovation value;
- iv. *Adoption:* Marketers need to ensure that beliefs and cultures are effectively influenced. Being ethical and acting on a base of principles can influence the adoption stage;
- v. *Confirmation:* the economic, organizational, and behavior elements must match the overall expectations, ensuring that this will become beneficial for the Innovation process and the company as well.

2.17. Marketing and Modern Requirements for Standardization

The role of Standardization has been a controversial one as Marketing has been affected by Globalization and the need for the companies to choose between Standardizing their Products/Services across the global marketplace, or Adapting these Products/Services to the particular needs and requirements of the targeted markets. Standardization vs Adaptation in the Hospitality industry affects a number of parallel issues such as the need of the HR to be trained according to the particular standards that are set by the Hospitality organizations whilst operating in various geographical regions that are characterized by different levels of education, income, and religious.

The need for standardizing particular aspects of the business operations and Products/Services carries legal requirements that concerned with the overall Quality. In addition, this is associated with how outputs are produced, "...select the most appropriate standards deliverable for particular outputs... appreciate what is involved in the development and approval..." (Hatto, 2012, p.2). It is therefore, important for the Marketing professionals to ensure whether they will choose between the two approaches, or at which level each one shall be implemented, shall they decide to focus on both approaches, by taking into consideration the impact of the particular market that they are operating within, as each one carries its own unique characteristics.

The ISO strategy for services (2016-2017) constitutes an important tool for the Services Industry and has identified some particular objectives such as the Communication & outreach and Understanding market interests. The impact of ISO is vital for the Services industry and as such, it must be evaluated by the Marketing professionals in the Tourism industry.

2.18. Chapter 2 Conclusions

Chapter 2 has focused on the examination of the Marketing concept and how this can have an impact on the Hospitality and Tourism industry. The examination has led to some important outcomes that are considered to be vital for the operations of any given contemporary business, with a particular focus on the Hospitality industry in which Marketing plays a key role on its overall development, given the impact of globalization as well as the IT which enables Marketers to develop their activities.

Marketing can provide several benefits that need to be clearly identified by the professionals and the companies in the Hospitality industry. These benefits have clearly been identified to have a practical application on both the large corporations (MNC) and the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Due

to the lack of productive resources for the SMEs, the development of effective Marketing activities remains a real challenge.

Marketing can be used as an ‘Emotional Tool’ as several tourist destinations have used it in order to promote these destinations. This has a practical application for small towns, countries, as well as MNC. Emotional Marketing must become a part of the Hospitality industry and for the Marketing professionals in order to ensure effective promotion.

Marketing Myopia has been identified as a real threat for the professionals and they need to identify that the focus must be placed on their customers rather than just the company. Threats need to be eliminated and this must become a priority for the Hospitality industry. In order to do that, professional Marketers must ensure that effective Innovation and the Marketing Myopia will not have a negative impact.

3. Chapter 3: Marketing Applicability for Rural Tourism - HORECA industries in Rural Areas

3.1. Introduction to the HORECA Industries

The HORECA Industries are identified as companies in the Hotel, Restaurants, and Catering business, and has been developed by the Dutch *Uniforme Voorwaarden Horeca* and is translated into English as *Uniform Conditions* for the previously mentioned. This identification provides a clarified understanding of the role of both the HORECA Industry and the uniformed conditions that must be placed at a practical level in order for the industry to develop the appropriate policies related to Marketing. As a result, a high-level of critical thinking is required for its further exploration on both literature review and practical levels, as they both carry an equal importance. The role of HORECA has been an important one during the last decades and several countries have managed to develop it and take advantage of the provided

opportunities and enhance their overall competitiveness, as HORECA constitute an integral part of the overall Tourism industry. Therefore, this needs to be clearly evaluated of a primary importance in order to enable the best possible understanding of how HORECA Industry must be approached through a comprehensive strategy and play its overall important role.

The content offered by the HORECA can extend to a great spectrum; hence, making it a challenging one to identify; however, this broadness creates the opportunity to expend the study, identify new ways of how it is operating, what really affects it, in both positive and negative manner. In addition, the examination of the HORECA Industry leads to the early identification that the concept of Management and Business Administration is of a major concern in order to ensure its long-term development.

3.2. Marketing in the HORECA Industries

The concept of Marketing has been found to have a primary role of any given industry in the contemporary business marketplace, as this is related to both the Products and Services industries that in several occasions provide a mixture of the two, making the development of the Marketing Plans an important challenge which requires from the Marketing professionals to be clearly focused towards their final goal. As a result, this can become a driver for the identification of the particular Marketing approaches that are applied within the HORECA Industry, and what skills and competences are required in order to develop these strategies.

In addition, the role of the Marketing in the Tourism area, in which the most of the HORECA Industry businesses belong, can also be considered as a major key-success driver as this can provide these businesses with the relevant knowledge and know-how, and attract the appropriate productive resources such as the Human, Land, and Information Technology. The particular identification

is considered to be of a primary importance as this is also related to other issues such as the Feasibility of the Plans, the concept of Communication and how this will affect the ability of all parties involved to avoid possible misunderstandings.

The impact of Communication in the Marketing development attracts special attention as this is concerned with a number of important stakeholders, both internal and external and provide the HORECA Industry to ensure that this will enable the successful strategy implementation. Communication within the internal departments is considered as of a major importance as this can boost productivity and profitability.

De Bree (2017) has focused on the concept of Marketing in the HORECA Industry and proposed that Marketing strategies and the Marketing Mix must be part of their organizational culture, as this can lead to a number of benefits that can lead to both financial and non-financial benefits, all these must be critically approached. In addition, the author has clarified that the Marketing Mix in the HORECA Industry must be based on the following 6Ps that are essential in order to effectively address the problems, challenges, as well as to take advantage of the opportunities that exist in the marketplace and need to be exploited by the Marketing professionals.

Therefore, the following 6 Ps have been proposed:

Product/Service: The level of Quality that is offered to the customers, and how this anticipates to the customers' expectations and specific requirements in order to provide the appropriate value. Being the most important part of the Marketing Mix, and having an exceptional quality, the Product must become the driver for the rest of the elements. Provided that the HORECA Industry offers a combination of both Products and Services, this primary Marketing Mix element must receive the appropriate attention;

Price: The Price must reflect the specific Product attributes and also be in alignment with what the customers are expecting. Provided that the Price is the only element that generates income and the rest are leading to cost, the impact of the Pricing strategy is vital for the HORECA Industry as this can have an impact on the overall clientele. The Pricing Strategy must be developed taking into consideration the contemporary approaches as the HORECA Industry is considered to be highly price-sensitive, making the particular issue of a great importance; hence, the relevant attention must be ensured;

Place: The physical Location of the HORECA businesses is essential for their growth as this has to ensure accessibility, and be in compliance with the relevant regulations. In addition, the Place must be developed with the appropriate décor that will boost its revenue, attract the right people, and also, be in alignment with the rest of the strategic objectives. In addition, the HORECA Industry must take advantage of the contemporary approaches and ensure that the presence on the Internet through a comprehensive

Personnel: The role of the Personnel is essential and self-evident, as without their own contribution, no strategy can be developed in the HORECA Industry. In addition, the businesses must ensure that they will provide the Personnel with all the relevant equipment and professional training in order to ensure that they will meet all the requirements;

Presentation: The Presentation of both the Food and Beverages can have a substantial impact on the businesses' operations and can provide them with the relevant sustainable competitive advantage. In addition, this can have an impact of how the consumers perceive the overall Quality level, as the Presentation creates the relevant feelings and perceptions;

Promotion: Last but not least, promotion provide the ability for the individual businesses, and the entire HORECA Industry, to reach their

customers with the usage of the appropriate skills and marketing tools. It is important for the businesses, especially for the SMEs to ensure that their promotion will indeed be effective, especially when this concerns their presence in the Social Media, as uploading any of their material needs to be the appropriate one in order to avoid possible mistakes and legal implications. Consequently, need for training is essential for the entire HORECA Industry.

3.3. Marketing Applicability for Rural Tourism

The hotels, as the most important part of the HORECA industry, need to ensure that they will develop the relevant Marketing activities that will enable them to boost their competitiveness, and create the best possible environment for both the external and internal stakeholders, and drive them forward, as this is essential due to the increasing competitiveness of the industry's globalized environment. As a result, Sustainability must be at the frontline of these policies, as this approach can provide the Marketing professionals in the Hotel industry with the appropriate clarified direction; hence ensuring the Marketing's success at the long-term.

In order to implement such Marketing Activities, the Hotel Marketing professionals, must focus on some particular principles that will enable them to exploit all their skills, core competences, and capabilities, leading them to the best possible results. Therefore, the following are identified:

- i. *Implementing Policies to Cost Zero Efficiency:* It focuses on improving the Hotels' activities, performance, productivity, revenue, and profitability, without the creation of any additional cost; hence, making it more competitive, in terms of both Quality and Pricing. This is essential as the need for improvement cannot be taken lightly and affects a number of activities around the organization. The implementation of such activities that will retain

the overall cost at the minimum possible level, entails a number of other relevant actions such as the Economies of Scale.

Consequently, planning and designing the particular actions is of a crucial importance and allocation of the appropriate resources is required;

- ii. *HORECA Sustainability Construction:* Total focus on the concept of Sustainability is required by the HORECA Industry, as this will enable all individual companies to drive their activities towards the same direction, and enable them to cooperate in particular areas in which can be considered as mutually beneficial. The long-term focus on the particular element can help the entire industry to focus on emerging issues such as the need for developing ‘Green Products and Services’ is now greater than ever before. In addition, this could help towards educating their customers; thus, enhancing their overall trust towards both the HORECA Industry and the individual companies. The environmental benefits are enormous for the HORECA companies that can increase the consumption and revenue and provide the adequate further opportunities that will expand the overall Sustainability;
- iii. *HORECA, Politics and Lobbying:* Just as in other Industry, lobbying, in order to influence the Politic decisions, plays a key role and this calls for the HORECA Marketing professionals to ensure that they will develop the appropriate network that will indeed become beneficial. In USA alone, the HORECA Industry spent over \$33 million in lobbying in order to effectively promote its demands and create the appropriate legal environment that will enable it to become more effective. The particular identification reveals how important lobbying is, as part of the overall HORECA Marketing activities. Given the fact that this took place during the

last USA Presidential Elections, clearly identifies of how the HORECA Industry should focus on the issue in order to effectively achieve the relevant benefits.

All the above raise the importance for applying these activities in the Rural Areas, in which the above measures can be identified as more difficult, for a number of reasons that are related to the lack of several important elements such as the financial, human capital, know-how, network, and of course, expertise. All these create some massive challenges that need to be clearly identified and developed in order to achieve its objectives, which of course, one of them concerns the ability to focus on the Lobbying element. The cooperation with all the Stakeholders, both internal and external is considered another major challenge for the industry in the Rural Areas, in which the Marketing professionals must develop their activities, and ensure that Competitiveness shall remain in place. The Tourism principles require from the Rural areas to develop Marketing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) policies with a number of stakeholders such as:

- Sector-specific associations: Enables them to cooperate with professional bodies and trade unions, hence; enhance the overall level of professionalism;
- HORECA HR Organizations: In order to ensure that the HR will become part of the overall policies, and be trained effectively in order to improve the level of Service;
- Educational institutes: Focus must be paid on those dealing with the HORECA Industry in order to provide them with the best possible new employees, and create new job opportunities;
- Economic development and city planning offices: To ensure that cooperation with the local authorities will be implemented as these possess the right know-how.

Source: Avraham et al. (2016).

3.4. Product Quality Consistency and the role Marketing

The concept of Quality has in recent decades attracted the attention of all major economic industries, providing the opportunity to both the professionals and the academic scholars to focus on it, identify its value in the overall business operations, and identify its impact as a major strategic tool that can offer several benefits and a sustainable competitive advantage for both the individual businesses and the Industries at large. By definition 'Quality is the ongoing process of building and sustaining relationships by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling stated and implied needs'.

This identification provides the initial, however, comprehensive overview, of the role of Quality, and how this must be applied in the business operations, and of course, to develop a deep critical thinking and how the HORECA Industry can focus on it in order to ensure that the competitive advantages shall indeed be applied.

In order for the HORECA Industry, especially in the Rural areas, due to the reasons that have been previously mentioned and are referring to the lack of several productive resources, the Marketing professionals must ensure that they cooperate with the rest of the business' departments in order to implement Consistency in their Products and Services. This important as it can offer the ability to appeal to both the existing, and most importantly, to the potential customers and clients, with a higher-level of confidence regarding the offered Products and Services. This is essential for the professional Marketing operations, and consequently, calls for the Marketers in the HORECA Industry to strategically focus on the particular element in order to ensure that Product Quality Consistency shall be applied by all personnel in all departments.

The Quality Consistency in the HORECA Industry must focus on five particular elements-definitions of Quality, that they all carry a particular value and must be clearly understood by the entire organization, and most importantly, by the Marketing professionals, as based on these, they will be able to develop and offer the appropriate Products and Services.

Therefore, these elements-definitions, refer to the following:

- i. *Transcendent definition:* Excellence is at the heart of any Product or Service development, enabling the Marketers in the HORECA Industry to offer the best possible options to the customers;
- ii. *Product-based definition:* Quantities of product attributes must be ensured, having an impact on both Tangible and Intangible elements. The right Quantities can affect pricing;
- iii. *User-based definition:* Fitness for intended use refers to the development of the Products and Services in a way that will ensure the effective promotion;
- iv. *Value-based definition:* Quality vs. Price refers to the need that the Quality of the Products and the Services offered to the customers to reflect to the right price. This will ensure value for money;
- v. *Manufacturing-based definition:* Conformance to specifications refers to the need that the Products and Services offered must be fully compatible to the pre-set specifications.

All the above-mentioned are indeed important, the relevant focus is required by the Marketing professionals, and their application by the HORECA Industry can offer the relevant benefits in terms of Productivity, Profitability, Revenue, and of course customer satisfaction.

3.5. Total Quality Management in the HORECA Industry

In order to ensure that all the above shall be developed in the best professional and efficient manner, the concept of Quality together with the previously identified definitions, Marketers must develop other related important elements regarding the Quality concept. This identification mainly refers to the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) which is according to the explanation provided by the International Organization for Standards (IOS, 2020) “TQM is a management approach for an organization, centered on quality, based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long-term success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the organization and to the society.”

TQM plays a key-role in the development of effective Marketing activities as it provides deeper understanding of how the Products and Services must be developed due to three major reasons that are obviously associated with not only the Marketing concept, but also, with the HORECA Industry as well as the Rural areas and the businesses operating in them. These major reasons refer to the:

- i. Total: Quality involves everyone and all the activities performed in the company; hence, creating the need for the Marketers to take the appropriate actions towards it;
- ii. Quality: Conformance to the requirements (meeting Customer Requirements) must be ensured in order to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction;
- iii. Management: Quality can and must be managed, and this is the duty of all professionals in the HORECA Industry, with the role of the Marketing professionals to be at the heart of these activities.

3.6. The Dedication of Entrepreneurs in the Rural HORECA Industry

One of the most important aspects that are needed for an Entrepreneur to succeed in the business environment, especially when this is considered with an extremely challenging industry, such as that of the HORECA Industry, and more specifically in the Rural areas, it is the level of dedication that the Entrepreneur allows to the work and how this can have an impact on the overall operations, performance, productivity, revenue, and profitability of their businesses. Therefore, all these play a massive role as they characterize the true Entrepreneurs, as Managers, as well as Leaders. Therefore, all these are considered as major issues that need to be identified and developed in order to ensure the impact of dedication of the Entrepreneurs in their businesses, with focus on the HORECA Industry in the Rural industry.

In recent years it has been identified that one of the major issues that holds back from development the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas, is the lack of 'Dedication' which is considered to be something that cannot be undermined, calling for these professionals to adopt such focus on their businesses in order to ensure that they will become successful. Importantly, this is associated with both the public sector as the provider of the background and the private sector which refers to the business people, calling for the entire industry to focus on the implementation of the appropriate strategies that will tackle the problem. According to several business authors such as Daft (2015) and McDonald (2007) business and marketing dedication refers to the state that the business person is committed to his/her work, allows time, effort, and patience, in order to see the objectives becoming a reality. Also, this is directly associated with the concept of Leadership, and how Entrepreneurs are able to apply these skills in their business environment.

In order to succeed, an Entrepreneur in the Rural areas, in order to ensure that dedication shall be applied at all times, must possess some other major characteristics that are indeed crucial and can play a fundamental role towards the overall development. Some of these traits, which however, are not limited, refer to the following:

- i. *Passion* for the work as this is considered as a milestone that can enable sustainable growth, empower the rest of the organization, obtain clarified understanding, and become the driver that will attract new investors that will be able to take the business to the next level and become more competitive. This can also extend to the need to ensure Vision within the organization;
- ii. *Ethical* as this will enable the business to develop based on specific principles that are fundamental for any given contemporary organization, and most importantly, be able to ensure that the right organizational culture shall be developed amongst all employees and the rest of the stakeholders;
- iii. *Open-minded* as this will provide him/her to obtain valuable information and feedback from the rest of the employees, and adopt the right ones in order to create the right environment and empower the rest of the organization. This can eventually lead to higher levels of employee loyalty. This is exceptionally linked to the SMEs, hence, creating the right environment for applying it to the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas, something which for the current work is evaluated as of a major importance and can enable further understanding of how dedication can be applied and evaluated in the particular businesses.

The Lack of Dedication can be considered as one of the most important problems for the Rural areas and their economic development as the business

owners are in fact forced to dedicate a lot of time to other jobs, that in many cases are parallel to their businesses, as these businesses, do not make the sufficient income for them and their families, creating several problems that are eventually transferred to these businesses, with an obvious negative impact. Therefore, this calls for these Entrepreneurs to identify these problems and implement the appropriate strategies that will tackle the problem at all its stages, and at all operational levels, as this is essential for the overall growth, especially for those SMEs that are in remote areas.

In addition, ‘Lack of Dedication’ and focus on other parallel activities can have other serious negative impact on the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas, which can also be considered as crucial for their development and cause problems in terms of financial development and Human Resource dedication; indeed, all very important for these businesses. Hence, some of these refer to the following that are considered as important:

- i. *Setting of Standards* that will enable the businesses to operate based on particular levels, as this is vital for any given business, especially when the business environment is highly sensitive and competitive, making these companies rather vulnerable for the external ‘intruders’;
- ii. *Human Resource Management (HRM) and Job Satisfaction*, which is related to how the Entrepreneurs dedicate the time and rest of the efforts, both financial and non-financial, to develop their workforce, in such manner that will enable them to obtain the best people.

Source: Kerr, Kerr, & Xu (2017).

3.7. Better use of the Marketing Process in Rural Tourism

The previously mentioned identifications, regarding the ‘Lack of Dedications’ by the Entrepreneurs of the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas which constitute a serious obstacle in their long-term development and have been critically evaluated as a major issue why companies, especially the SMEs in the particular areas, provide the opportunity to explore other ways of development. These ways are mainly referring to the identification of Marketing incentives that will enable the designment and development of alternative forms of Tourism that are indeed very important as this will establish the sense of Creativity and Innovation, that are considered to be of a primary importance for the particular HORECA Industry in the Tourism areas.

As a result of that, the HORECA Industry must develop a set of skills and procedures that must be part of the overall organizational strategy, and these must be disseminated within the entire organization in order to have a comprehensive understanding as well as participation. This will give the opportunity for the entire Human Resource to develop its critical thinking skills and abilities. Therefore, the need for the organizations to focus on the development of their Human Resource through the Marketing activities, is more essential now than ever before, and provides several benefits to these organizations that can manage to develop them as part of their long-term strategies.

Some of the issues that the improved Marketing process in the Rural areas, in regards of the HORECA Industry are aiming towards ensuring some important productive resources, such as financial, human, technological, and other relates elements. As a result of that, the following Marketing activities are considered as a better use of the Marketing Tools:

- i. *Customer Relationship Management (CRM)*: This refers to a company's strategic approach for managing its relations with the existing and potential customers, and this of course, refers to both internal and external customers. These two references are providing the marketing professionals to develop better relationships with stakeholders such as the Governmental departments, banking institutions, the local communities, and social organizations (as the external customers). In addition, the employees can act as internal stakeholders, and the development of the relevant policies are indeed considered as crucial for maintaining a high level of relationships with these departments. In addition, in order to ensure the appropriate CRM, contemporary professional Marketers must enhance their understanding in acquiring the right IT, namely the Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRMS). These CRMS enable the Marketers to collect a massive amount of Data, analyze it, and consequently, to transform it into meaningful information. This analysis can assist the professional Marketers in the Rural areas, to understand their customers' needs and requirements, and help them develop further actions that can be related to the offered Products and Services. Furthermore, the CRM and the CRMS can help the Marketers to use the information in order to develop more specific and personalized, if required, Products and Services One of the issue that is also considered as a major element in the CRM process, refers to the ability of the companies to implement the emerging trend of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) which enables the Marketers to ensure that they will retain their communication at all times and gather the appropriate feedback.

- ii. *Co-Creation*: This can be considered as the natural extend of the CRM and refers to the ability of the Marketers to develop the appropriate environment of trust between the relevant organizations and their stakeholders, both internal and external as they both have an equal importance for the contemporary organizations; consequently, for the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas. The ability to Co-Create Products and Services with the rest of the stakeholders can provide the Marketers with several benefits for the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas. These are mainly concerned with being focused; hence, avoiding refraining from developing wrong Products as this can be really costly, not only in terms of productive resources such as those of the human, technological, financial, and land; but most importantly, can harm the overall business brand image. All these must be critically approached and evaluated by the contemporary Marketers in order to ensure that the CRM will not remain at a theoretical level, but this will extend to a more practical implementation. Furthermore, the ability to focus on C-Creation of Products and Services can lead to better overall performance as the Marketers will be able to have direct access to the know-how and the accumulated knowledge of their stakeholders, especially the external ones. This access will enable them to have a better marketing understanding, develop their internal procedures, train and motivate their Human Resource, based on their stakeholders' knowledge and own needs and requirements. All these need to become an integral part of the Marketers approach, develop the relevant skills, and ensure that the CRM will lead to the Co-Creation as a major part of their contemporary Marketing activities.

3.8. Beyond Marketing

Marketing is indeed an important element that enables the contemporary Marketers to develop their unique skills and competences that will take them to the next level, that of the ultimate customer satisfaction. Therefore, this is indeed important for the Rural area HORECA Industry, which needs to go far ‘Beyond Marketing’ in order to meet the relevant contemporary requirements and be in alignment with the market trends; hence, creating a brand-new environment between themselves and their customers. According to Deloitte (2019, p.89) focuses on the concept of ‘Beyond Marketing’, identifies the role of the Information Technology, emphasizes the need for strategic development and clarifies that “Their goal is to transform marketing from a customer acquisition-focused activity to one that enables a superb human experience, grounded in data. In experiential marketing, companies treat each customer as an individual by understanding their preferences and behaviors.”

In addition, the Deloitte Report clarifies that in order to ensure that in order for the companies to manage and take them ‘Beyond Marketing’ requires the close internal cooperation of the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and the Chief Information/Digital Officer is of a vital importance and creates the opportunity for their departments to engage in activities that will indeed be socially responsible, will be extrovert, engage all their stakeholders in the sense of them promoting activities through their organization, and implement such a culture, that will ensure success in the long-term. In addition, the Report clarifies that one of the major keys in developing ‘Beyond Marketing’ strategies, is the focus on the ‘Marketing Black Box’ in which the departments will attempt to unlock customers’ mind, and create the appropriate actions. All these are essential for the creation of such approach by the HORECA Industry, and this must be clearly developed.

Going ‘Beyond Marketing’ requires from the Marketing professional to develop a set of other activities that are indeed directly related to the concept of Marketing; however, in several times the Marketing professionals, especially those in the HORECA Industry neglect their importance, leading to several problems to their companies. This is an indeed important identification, which can develop the need for critical thinking and, of course, the specific exploration, of the particular elements that can create substantial difference to the operations of the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas.

Writing services, including press releases, newsletters, and brochure or web content is considered to be one of these major issues as it enables the companies and the entire industry to develop better and stronger relationships with all the external stakeholders. Lack of doing this can hold the companies back, and neglect the fact that they need to keep in touch with their audiences about a number of issues, and not solely with their Products and Services. In addition, lack of identifying the particular issue can create further obstacles such as not understanding the role of ‘Soft Selling.’ Kenton (2019 – Online) pays exceptional attention to the concept of ‘Soft Selling’, has identified its impact in the contemporary marketplace and suggest that “Soft sell refers to an advertising and sales approach that features subtle language and a non-aggressive technique. A soft sell is designed to avoid angering potential customers and pushing them away. Because soft selling is a low-pressure, persuasive and subtle sales technique, it may not result in a sale the first time a product is presented but helps to encourage.” This identification provides the ability to gain better understanding of how ‘Soft Selling’ can enable the entire HORECA Industry Marketing professionals to exploit their core competences and skills, and drive their organizations forward; hence, there is a clarified need to focus on the issue.

Furthermore, going ‘Beyond Marketing’ requires further activities from the HORECA industry Marketing professionals, especially for the SMEs, in order to promote other business functions, such as the training of the business owners in managerial operations that require specific knowledge, and in most occasions, the owners of these businesses, not only do not have the skills to conduct the efficiently, but they may not even understand the need to do that. Therefore, there is clarified need for the professional Marketers to focus on these issues and promote other parallel activities that they can have substantial benefits for all the people involved in these procedures.

In addition, another major element that can enable Marketers in the HORECA Industry, is the ability to identify the need for developing the appropriate Seminars and Conferences, and other relevant events that will focus on providing the relevant information to the HORECA Industry, especially those that operating in SMEs, and more specifically, in the remote and Rural areas. It is important for the Marketers to ensure that Going ‘Beyond Marketing’ is not a simple procedure, is not only related with single businesses or a particular region, but most importantly, it is essential to understand that bringing professional people and business together constitutes a major challenge that creates the need for these professionals to strategically engage in such actions.

As a result of all the above identifications, it is clear that ensuring the concept of Going ‘Beyond Marketing’ requires specialized knowledge that derives from rolling research that can help the professionals to identify trends and needs that exist in the marketplace, and also, gain a clarified understanding of the concept of ‘Personalization’, which to a great extent, is considered to be the new ‘P’ of the traditional Marketing-Mix (4Ps) and the extended Marketing-Mix (7Ps), that are all considered to be equally important (WSJ, 2019).

3.9. Collaborative Marketing in the HORECA Industry in Rural Areas

Developing a HORECA Industry business, especially in remote and Rural areas is an ever-challenging aspect that needs to be clearly identified by the Entrepreneurs, in order to ensure that they will develop the appropriate knowledge and skills that will provide give them access to new and emerging opportunities that exist in the contemporary marketplace. This Collaboration is not only essential for the Rural areas, but most importantly, is of a strategic importance, as it has been found to have a great impact on the development of the businesses that operate in these areas. This identification concerns the businesses that operate in the ‘Agro-tourism’; hence, operating in the HORECA Industry.

In a recent study (2019) conducted in Montenegro, which is currently a candidate in accessing the European Union as a full member-state, it has been identified that the country has managed to develop relevant activities with some important global organizations. The country developed these activities through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development (MTSD), in collaboration with the Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije (as the local official partners) and the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (as the international partners). This collaborative activity, which has a clearly marketing concept, has led to some particular benefits for several industries in the Agro-tourism and the final Report clarifies that “ Following the successful completion of the IPARD accreditation process, Montenegro now has two additional EU measures to implement: Investments in physical assets in agricultural holdings¹⁷ and Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products” (FAO/EBDR, 2019, p.17).

The above-mentioned Marketing Collaboration activity has identified several benefits related to the Agro-tourism that have all been found to have substantial impact in the country's Tourism development in the particular areas. Their identification provides the opportunity to gain further understanding of how further Marketing activities can be developed, and it also creates more understanding of how Going 'Beyond Marketing', can be established. Therefore, the following have been identified:

- i. The Intangible Assets: Referring to a country's culture that needs to be part of a comprehensive Marketing strategy for the Rural areas in order to manage to exploit their unique skills and characteristics in areas such as Gastronomy and Handicraft. As it has already been identified within the current work, Intangible Assets require specialised knowledge and activities.
- ii. The discrete Role of Women: Women are considered to be a major challenge for the Rural Tourism industry, and of course, this concerns the HORECA Industry, as there is a significant need for both the economy and the women and engage in Entrepreneurship.
- iii. Young People: The Report identifies that specialized Marketing initiatives are promoted in order to enable the relevant motives to Young People in order to remain in their areas, or even return back, as a large number of villages are dying.

All the above are only some of the aspects that have been identified to have been developed through strategic Marketing initiatives, and as a result of this, the role of Collaborative Marketing is evaluated as a major challenge for the HORECA Industry, in order to develop activities that will drive them forward.

3.10. HORECA and Organizational Culture

One of the most important challenges for the Rural areas and the HORECA businesses operating within the particular areas, is to develop the appropriate ‘Organizational Culture’ which according several approaches such as that of Schein (2010, p.9) “Organizational culture includes an organization’s expectations, experiences, philosophy, as well as the values that guide member behavior, and is expressed in member self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. Culture is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid.”

This definition is critically evaluated as a milestone for the overall operations of the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas, and the major question that applies in the particular industry, is to what extent do these companies, especially the SMEs possess the structure and the knowledge to develop such activities. This is even more important since especially since issues such as ‘Lack of Dedication’ as well as lack of other productive resources such as human, technological, financial, and land, constitute real obstacles for the development, not only for the Marketing activities, but for the rest of the operational actions.

Reinhart (2014) clarifies that in order to develop the Organizational Culture in the HORECA Industry, companies need to ensure that they will focus on issues related to Human Resource (Hire and Train with Care and Foster Commitment), as well as with the external stakeholders by Develop a Story and Bring it to Life. All these can help the Marketers develop activities spontaneously; hence, becoming more effective. As a result of that, the need for clarified focus on the Organizational Culture must be place at the heart of the overall strategies.

3.11. Marketing and Development of Sustainable Forms of Rural Tourism

Marketing has an undoubtedly an increasing role in the HORECA Industry in the Rural areas, and of course, this role is expanded in many other industries in the Rural and remote areas; this has been extensively and in detailed developed within the current work, covering a broad range of issues related to the two major actors, the Tourism and Marketing. However, another major issue that can have a great deal of impact on the Tourism in the Rural areas, and consequently, covering the HORECA Industry, is that of the ‘Alternative Forms of Sustainable Tourism.’ This is an issue that needs to be clarified and developed in order to provide the appropriate understanding of these types, and of course, how these can become the core of the Marketing activities of the Rural areas.

Alternative Tourism has attracted several approaches, but in general it refers to the engagement of visitors in activities that enable them to go beyond their traditional activities, have a more direct and personal interaction, and in many times, this can be at a professional or even on a volunteer basis. In addition, Trends and Adventures are only some of the rest of the activities that constitute some major element of the alternative tourism, making a real challenge for both the visitors and the businesses, creating further strategic challenges for the Marketing professionals in the HORECA Industry as well as the entire Rural areas.

As a result of all the above issues, the Marketing activities, considering both the conventional and those that have been clearly identified in the concept of Going ‘Beyond Marketing’ must be taken into consideration as they can provide the ability to become more focused, create the opportunities to engage all productive resources, and apply both efficiency and effectiveness.

Agro-tourism – This refers to attracting people and organizations in Rural and remote areas in order to gain a better experience in terms of accommodation, Food and Beverage, Culture, as well as Handicraft. As this has a positive and increasing trend in several countries, through Marketing activities, the need for a clarified focus on its development is greater than ever before as it can assist the rest of the mentioned alternative forms.

Adventure Tourism – This form refers to applying the right Marketing activities in order to attract visitors that not only wish to experience in the Agro-tourism, but most importantly, they want to expand this activity in developing other actions such as engaging in practical activities such as farming etc. This can have a great impact and can enable the Rural areas to become even more focused in their Marketing activities in terms of Promotion.

Religious Tourism - Each Rural area can develop the appropriate Marketing strategies in order to take advantage of the culture and the Religious heritage and attract the right people. As Religious Tourism is concerned with a lot of different religions, focusing on the particular element can develop a long-term sustainable development.

All the above are only some of the alternative forms of Tourism that can be developed and create the right environment for the professional Marketers to ensure that both the Rural areas and the HORECA Industry operating in these areas will contribute to the economy and the social development. Of course, the above list is not limited and a lot of other forms of alternative tourism exist, such as the Events & Conferences, and the Medical. However, the message is clear. The Marketing boundaries are endless for the Rural areas, and they need to be exploited in the best possible way in order to lead to the expected outcomes.

3.12. Chapter 3 Conclusions

Chapter 3 has focused on the examination of the impact of Marketing in the HORECA Industry with a special focus on the Rural and other possible remote areas that they face several challenges, such as lack of lack of the main productive resources such as the financial, human, land, and technological. All these productive resources play a key-role in the long-term success.

Marketing development in the HORECA Industry constitutes a real challenge for professional Marketers as they have to develop a set of influential activities that they will take the Industry forward, and enable it to take advantage of all the possible opportunities. The concept of Marketing Mix has been identified to have a massive role, as the mixture of Products and Services provided in the HORECA Industry, creates further challenges that they enable the companies to exploit all their core capabilities.

Another major challenge is the ability of the HORECA Industry to identify all these opportunities and strategies that will enable it to expand, and reach, the new trend, that of the Going 'Beyond Marketing' which requires creativity and innovative approach. Developing the particular concept is of a major importance and can provide several benefits and open new markets for the HORECA Industry.

The development of Alternative Sustainable Forms of Tourism creates further opportunities and provides Marketers the ability to ensure that the Rural areas will exploit all their capabilities. Agro-tourism, Adventure, Religious, Events & Conferences, and the Medical, are only some of these that they can be linked to the HORECA Industry and the Rural areas and provide several financial benefits and create the opportunity to open new markets, and also help towards creating new jobs.

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