

Tourists' Expectations– Based Countryside Walking Tourism Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Countryside walking tourism contributes to sustainable rural socio-economic development. The purpose of the research is to observe the possibility of managing countryside walking tourism in a village according to the expectations of tourists during their travel and vacation in rural destinations. The research methodology was based on a descriptive statistical analysis using the survey for gathering data from the rural tourism demand market, and the VICE model for sustainable tourism for getting conclusions. The key result indicated that countryside walking tourism management should consider the tourists' expectations related to the clean environment. It preserved nature as the most influencing factor in the choice of a walking tour in

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rural destinations, and at the same time, it is more important to the female than to the male population. The authors recommend incorporating countryside walking tourism into walking strategies as a part of rural and tourism development policies.

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that not every area is suitable for tourism that natural and anthropogenic resources are limited and that negative climate changes in the future may affect the further reduction of the land for tourism development. The question is whether there is enough ecologically quality space at all. The ecological component of the countryside is perhaps the key link in the chain of sustainable development. Mass tourism uses more and more space for its development, reducing the possibility of its protection. The question of possibilities for increasing the area suitable for tourism development is constantly present. That is why this paper studies a type of specific form of tourism, the development of which requires a healthy environment and a well-organized nature.

Tourism, as an initiator of sustainable development, contributes to each Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) (IISD, 2023; UNWTO, 2023a; Milojković et al., 2023a). The poverty reduction of tourism is led by government institutions according to government policies through stakeholders' networking focused on residents in less developed areas to participate in tourism activities (Gohori & van der Merwe, 2020; Butler et al., 2013; Moyo & Tichaawa, 2017; Lor et al., 2019; Azizpour & Fathizadeh, 2016), involving tourism to drive local socio-economic development, and creating employment opportunities (Milojković et al., 2023b; Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). To improve living standards, most countries develop cities forgetting rural areas (Milojković et al., 2023b; Liu & Li, 2017). Rural tourism arose as a response to the development of urban tourism to meet the needs of urban residents and tourists by using attractions such as rural and agricultural resources and providing recreation, health, and wellness services (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Royo, 2009; Gogonea & Zaharia, 2023). Rural tourism stimulates local economic development and growth, job creation, and overall social improvement, and becomes a crucial part of the rural economy (Milojković et al., 2023a; Su et al., 2022). The development of this form of tourism contributes to employment opportunities for the local community. This type of tourism creates economic, social, and ecological benefits, preserving the natural and cultural resources of rural settlements and influencing their sustainable development. In addition, it supports the synergy between urban and rural development due to rural revitalization (Sharpley & Vass, 2006; Huang et al., 2014).

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