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THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS TO RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Anka Roxana PASCARIU¹, Mihaela Iosefina IANCU^{1*}, Dragoş CHENDE¹,
Iasmina IOSIM¹, Tabita Cornelia ADAMOV^{1*}, Tiberiu IANCU¹
University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara

Abstract: *Rural tourism has become an important component of sustainable regional development, offering economic opportunities while preserving the cultural identity of local communities. In this context, traditions and customs represent valuable intangible heritage resources that can significantly contribute to the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural destinations. The present paper analyzes the role of traditional practices, local celebrations, gastronomy, crafts, folklore, and seasonal rituals in stimulating tourist interest and enhancing visitor experiences.*

• Introduction

Traditions and customs reflect the history, values, and cultural heritage of a community. Whether it is traditional food, folk dances, local crafts, or seasonal celebrations, these elements offer visitors a unique opportunity to experience something different and memorable. For many tourists, such experiences are not only enjoyable but also educational, allowing them to better understand the culture and lifestyle of rural areas.

• Material and method

This study is based on a qualitative research approach, aiming to understand how traditions and customs contribute to the development of rural tourism. The research combines theoretical analysis with observations of real practices in order to provide a comprehensive perspective on the topic.

• Results and discussions

The study also shows that traditions and customs contribute to the economic development of rural communities. By integrating cultural activities into tourism, local residents can generate additional income through accommodation services, the sale of handmade products, and participation in events. This not only supports local economies but also encourages the preservation of traditions, as communities recognize their value in attracting tourists. Tourists tend to appreciate experiences that are genuine and closely connected to the local way of life. When traditions are preserved in their original form and presented in a natural context, they create a stronger emotional connection with visitors. On the other hand, when customs are overly commercialized or modified only for tourism purposes, they may lose their authenticity and appeal.

• Conclusions

Traditions and customs play a vital role in the development of rural tourism, offering both cultural and economic benefits to local communities. They provide tourists with authentic and meaningful experiences, helping rural areas stand out in an increasingly competitive tourism market. Through elements such as traditional food, crafts, festivals, and local practices, visitors are able to connect more deeply with the identity and lifestyle of a region.

