

WHERE NATURE MEETS ADVENTURE: TOURIST ACTIVITIES AT DOBROGEI GORGE NATURE RESERVE, ROMANIA

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Abstract

Nature offers the other more landscapes, many of them with the possibility of being used for tourist, recreational purposes. The present study aims to analyze the impact that the Dobrogean geographical area is, where the unique unique deera rhines. The method of analysis is an empirical one, of the questionnaire, which was applied to both the residents and the tourists who visited the Dobrogea Gorges. The results highlight the advantages offered by these geological formations in the satisfaction of consuming tourists of such tourism (adventure, landscape and recreational). The presence of tourists adds income for the locals, who seem to be satisfied with the obtained (local products obtained in the household). The limits of the study are given by the lack of information for a longer duration and official data on the quantities of products sold during a month or year.

Key words: natural landscape, local economy, tourism, calcare

Introduction

The relief of the Central Dobrogea Plateau has a smooth aspect, without great differences in altitude. This aspect is the result of external shaping factors. The central segment of the Casimcei Plateau or Central Dobrogea, reaches higher values in the northern (central) segment. The altitudes decrease slightly in the NW-SE direction. Geological formations are visible as a result of erosion processes created by the valleys. The density of relief fragmentation is low in the wide interfluvial spaces, reaching 0.20 km/km². In the Casimcea basin area, the fragmentation density is higher, reaching 2.5-3.5 km/km². This higher fragmentation can be explained by the presence of post-cretaceous epiprogenic movements that led to the deepening of the valleys (Popescu & Ielenicz, 2003). The Casimcea Plateau presents a varied aspect. Heights gradually decrease towards the south, reaching 150 m. The Casimcea valley creates a distinct gorge relief as it passes through the Jurassic limestone area, hence the common name "Dobrogei Gorges".

This geographical area of Dobrogea is a great tourist attraction, offering those interested in tourism a special landscape. The exploitation of all the existing resources in this area can only be achieved through a tailored publicity and a consistent involvement (Zeľňáková et al., 2017). The natural formations have been a permanent resource for tourism. Existing rural localities in their vicinity, by default, should be involved in the tourism offer (Teodorescu, 2009; Pintilii et al., 2017; Dincă et al., 2015). The non-involvement or involvement in the tourist exploitation of the resources of a given geographical area is determined both by the mentality of the population and by the local administration and management capacity (Teodorescu et al., 2019).

Material and methods

The methods used were empirical questionnaires, 78 questionnaires for locals and 143 for tourists. The complex multi-perspective approach of local development through touristic exploitation of existing natural resources led us to adopt a mixed method using qualitative techniques through semi-structured interviews. These were oriented, in the case of the locals, towards the main products that are being exploited and, in the case of tourists, towards what attracts them particularly to this geographical area. Due to the significant time resources required to perform the fieldwork in order to obtain results, as well as the extensive interview-based surveys conducted in July 2022, led us to select only one touristic attraction - the Dobrogea Gorges, as a representative territorial sample for Dobrogea.

This case study strategy is considered particularly useful in the social sciences when collecting and analysing empirical evidence on a topic and focusing on descriptive and explanatory aspects for the investigated phenomenon, as in our research.

Results

" Dobrogei Gorges" is a protected area. This karst relief, more than two million years old, represents a geographical area whose touristic attraction is unique for Romania (fig. 1). The Dobrogea Gorge offers an impressive landscape due to its geomorphological, palaeontological, botanical and faunal features. The rural area of Dobrogea can also represent an attraction for tourists, but this has not been a priority. In recent years, there has been an attempt to adapt the concerns of the inhabitants towards tourism, by offering services and goods for those who transit the area or for those who wish to visit this karst region, the Dobrogea Gorges.

Any human activity has as a primary result the improvement of the life quality. Part of economic well-being is received income. Most of the locals are low-income earners and farmers (who are oriented towards raising animals and growing plants on fairly sparse areas). They manage to produce enough in order to sell their products to the tourists who visit these places.

The relationship between nature and human is admirable. Nature offers through the created landscape all that could be called tourism in this part of Dobrogea.

The income earned by the residents encouraged them to improve their offer more. The traditional activities is breeding sheep and goats and production of cheese. The most important incomes mentioned by the locals are those related to the provision of meal services, but also the incomes obtained from the selling of some products as organic preserves made in their own farms (fig. 2).

This seems to be the most important source of additional income for the rural population in the vicinity of the Dobrogea Gorges. Cheese is a product that attracts income for the population. Its characteristics are provided by the quality of the milk produced by the animals raised locally (sheep and goats).

What attracts tourists is this unique karst relief, the caves and the local natural landscape. From discussions with tourists who have visited this geographical area, most seem to be attracted by the landscape and the possibility to practice sports.

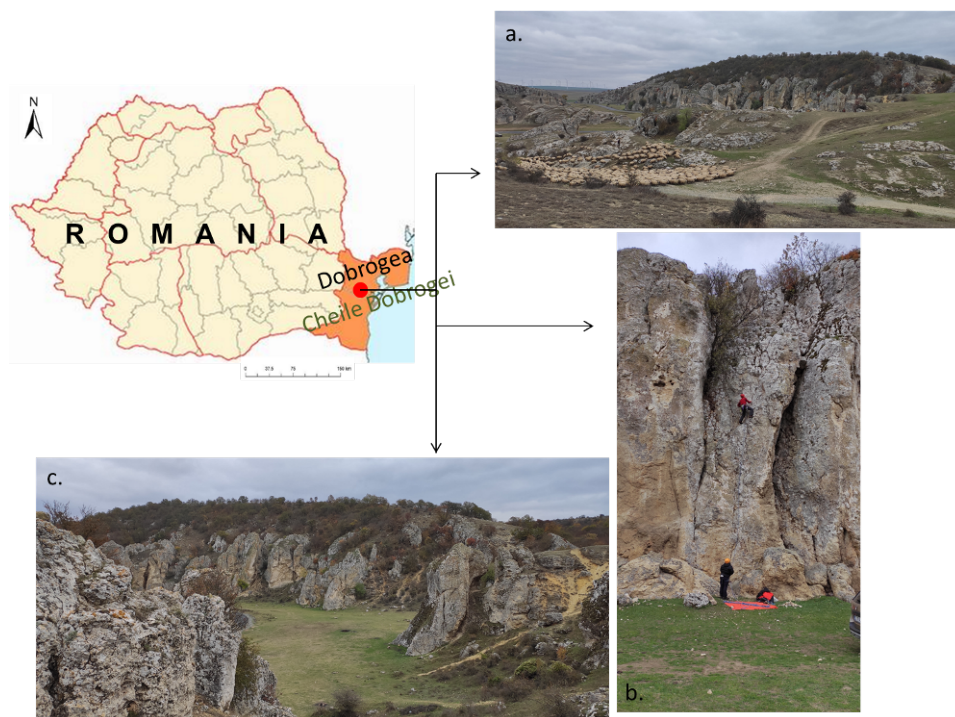


Fig. 1: Localizarea arealului Cheile Dobrogei si principalele activitati si atractii

Climbing is a good option considering the low altitude, but also very accessible for those who want to try this sport (fig. 3). Local products are also an attraction for the visitors.

Discussion

Dobrogea, this eastern geographical region of Romania, located between the Danube and the Black Sea, has been and still is a touristic attraction for its historical vestiges, the Danube Delta and the coastal area. The Dobrogei Gorges Reserve has not been a particular touristic attraction. In recent years, investments have been made in infrastructure, thus facilitating access to this attraction. This

aspect increasing the possibility to develop an important economic field: tourism. The combination of the historical offer and the natural setting can create the most powerful and sustainable form of tourism. Both categories interviewed (locals and tourists) are interested in the development of tourism.

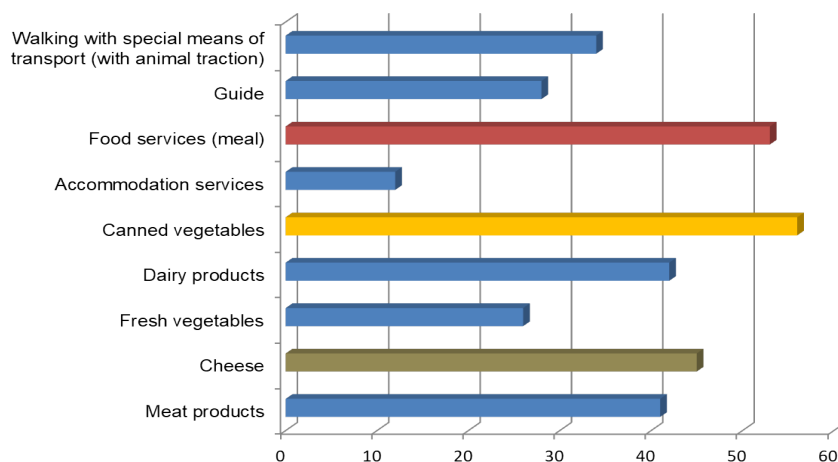


Fig. 2: The importance of the amounts obtained by locals for services and products offered to tourists (78 people)

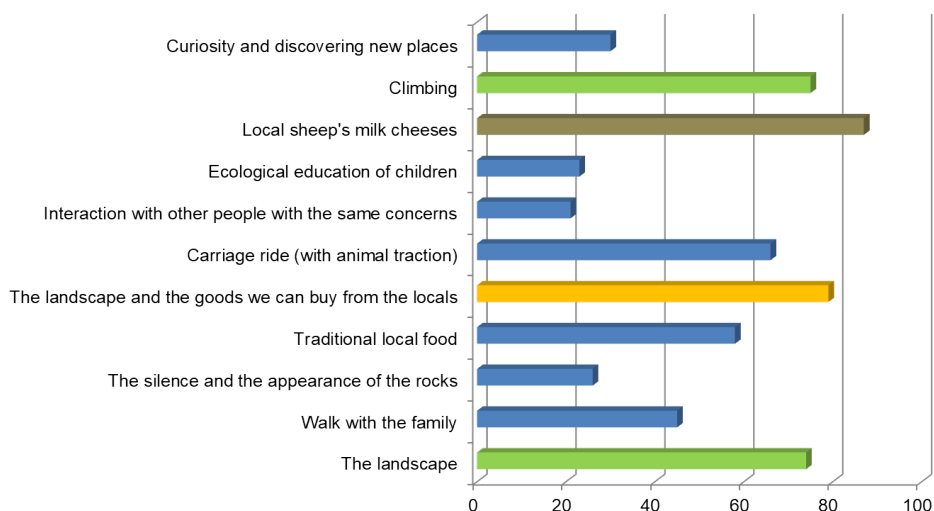


Fig. 3: The main reasons why tourists visit the Dobrogei Gorges (143 people). Many offered multiple attractions.

Answers of residents and tourists following the interviews:

"We live thanks to tourists! I used to work in a canning factory in Tulcea. Now, I am retired and my monthly income is very low. I produce canned food and cheese that I sell to tourists. It's a reason to want more and more tourists to come. I would raise more animals, produce more and earn more!"

(Yusuf, 68 years old, resident of Casian village, retired)

"We're glad people can see how beautiful it is here! Young people, children and old people can come. They can all enjoy what nature has created for us and them! "

(Mihaela, 32 years old, Gura Dobrogei village, teacher)

"This is our first time in Dobrogei Gorges. It is beautiful! We are glad we came and we will definitely return"

(Cristian, 26 years old, Bucharest, plumer)

"We come to the Dobrogea Gorge for the climbing and to enjoy the scenery. We are delighted that the road has recently been paved and new improvements that have been made. The local people are wonderful, and also the nature that they knew how to protect. They know how to keep us coming back!"

(Laura, 48 years old, Slobozia, nurse)

Conclusion

Tourism is one of the main activities in Dobrogea Plateau that is based on natural resources. The natural landscape of Dobrogea Gorges is unique in Romania. Despite this uniqueness, the economic benefits brought to the local population are not consistent. The support from the local community is almost non-existent. The effects of demographic ageing and decrease in industrial economic sector are noticeable here, both in services and local agriculture. Services are an economic alternative for the North-Dubrogean area, but the lack of human resources capable of carrying out this activity means that this natural landscape is not developed and exploited at an appropriate standard.

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Souhrn

Příroda a obyvatelé určité zeměpisné oblasti mohou vytvořit předpoklady pro turistickou oblast. V případě naší studie jsme si jako případovou studii vybrali soutěsky Dobružky. Jedná se o přírodní rezervaci, kde vápence staré více než dva miliony let mohou nabídnout nejkrásnější a nejatraktivnější důvod pro rozvoj služeb a cestovního ruchu. V této zeměpisné oblasti je zaznamenána situace, kdy dochází k demografickému procesu stárnutí obyvatelstva. V důsledku nedostatku pracovních míst je zde cítit i nedostatek příjmů. V tomto případě přichází příroda s životaschopnou alternativou: udržitelným cestovním ruchem. V tomto případě tak můžeme jasně hovořit o přírodě a její turistické nabídce.

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