



The Importance of Improving the Knowledge and Education of the Population Living in Rural Areas for the Creation of Sustainable Tourism Products and Services

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Abstract

The development of tourism businesses based on private homesteads in rural areas is an essential economic tool in solving the social and economic problems of the local population. Changes caused by globalization and new trends in the development of the modern world make it increasingly necessary to preserve cultural and historical features. Preservation of traditional agricultural activities using tourism business in rural areas is a unique opportunity for the formation of niche and exclusive tourism products, as well as for not forgetting historical activities and for creating new jobs in rural areas. In Adjara, one of the regions of Georgia, the tourism business in rural areas is developing inconsistently. State bodies do not participate in the intensive and sustainable development of tourism in rural areas. There is no rural tourism business development model according to which accommodation, food, and other related service elements would be formed. The local population with little knowledge and less intellectual capacity creates low-quality tourism products in rural areas. The problems mentioned above lead to the slow development of tourism in rural areas, due to which the rural population is still actively experiencing many economic issues. The purpose of this work is to show the importance of raising the education of the rural population for the sustainable and intensive development of the tourism business in Adjara, which will contribute to the rapid growth of tourism in the rural areas and solve the socio-economic problems of the local population. The

article discusses the challenges related to the sustainable development of tourism in rural areas, which refers to the lack of education in the relevant direction of the local population. The article presents the original ways of solving the above-mentioned problems. As a research method, we used the method of systematic analysis and questionnaire, in which we studied the tourist facilities located in the villages of Adjara, and the knowledge and skills of the local population in the direction of business management. Based on the research objectives, a questionnaire was developed in advance by us, which included the research statements. The main part of our research was to collect information about the education of people living on the homestead, which is a prerequisite for sustainable and intensive development of tourism business in rural areas.

Keywords: Education, Rural tourism, Socio-economic problems, Ecological Awareness

Introduction

The formation of tourism business in rural areas is related to the formation of complex products and services. Tourism in rural areas is an economic instrument for improving the economic and social conditions of the local population. The local population directly participates in the provision of tourist services in rural areas. As a rule, the local population does not have the knowledge and education necessary for the proper formation of tourism in rural areas. Training the local population by developing special training programs and manuals is the function of state organizations that work on the sustainable and intensive development of tourism in rural areas. In the article, we discuss the development and importance of the education program for the rural population in Adjara. The paper will also discuss the methodical educational techniques needed for training the local people involved in tourism in rural areas. Retraining and educating the population living in rural areas are associated with specific challenges. The article will present part of the results of the quantitative research carried out by us, where the level of education of the people living in Adjara and related issues will be shown. At the end of the paper, specific and practical recommendations will be given, which must be taken into account by the state bodies tasked with the sustainable and intensive development of the rural tourism business in Adjara. The aim of the article is to highlight the problems of sustainable and intensive development of tourism business in rural areas of Adjara Region caused by the lack of education of local people in entrepreneurial activity. At the end of the article, recommendations are developed, the consideration of which will contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism business in the mentioned rural regions.

Literature Review

The proper development of tourism business in rural areas requires appropriate entrepreneurial education. Sustainable and intensive development of tourism in rural areas is associated with several challenges that only people with good entrepreneurial education can overcome. Entrepreneurial education should be taught to students in higher education institutions where tourism business and management are taught; the authors talk about these and other essential issues in the article entitled: What about entrepreneurial skills? (A. D. Daniel, R. A. Costa, M. Pita, C. Costa, 2017)

Increasing the education of the population living in rural areas in terms of entrepreneurship will contribute to the sustainable and intensive development of tourism business in rural areas. The involvement of the local population in entrepreneurial activities in rural areas provides much more effective economic results. The mentioned issue is well discussed in the paper entitled "Entrepreneurship in rural regions: the role of industry experience and home advantage for newly founded firms". (A. Habersetzer, M. Rataj, R. H. Eriksson, H. Mayerm. 2021)

The education of the population living in rural areas is related to certain specifics. The development of pedagogy and relevant teaching methods, the formation of the language of teaching acceptable to the population, and the specifics and features of the building of theoretical and practical tasks are presented in the book of Barbara Gross Davies. The lifestyle, work characteristics, and culture of people living in rural areas are different. Therefore all the aspects should be considered during the development of the population education program development. Sharing the teaching techniques presented in the mentioned manual will contribute to the practical training of the rural population and the development of the necessary skills for the tourism business in them. (B.G. Davis, 1993)

In his work, the author discusses the emergence of the issue of environmental awareness from a historical perspective. Fabio Corporal talks about the necessity of urgent formation of ecological consciousness. Sharing the mentioned materials is also necessary for the population living in rural areas, so they understand the need to preserve and protect nature. (F. Corporal, 2021)

Many state and private universities offer educational programs in product knowledge and business management. These training projects have become especially popular in the last 30 years to form entrepreneurial culture and understanding among young people. The article discusses the impact of entrepreneurial education on the motivation of future entrepreneurs. (H. Oosterbeek, M. Praag, 2010)

With the involvement of the state organizations in the rural regions, developing the necessary skills for raising the education of the rural population

and receiving tourists should be done by developing special training programs. The sharing of teaching methods and techniques presented by the author will allow the organizers of training in rural areas to get results and raise the local population's awareness and knowledge of business management.(J.Ateljevic, S.J.Page, 2009)

The main goals of the formation of tourism in rural areas are to improve the economic condition of the local population and promote the recovery of the people living in the city. Villagers involved in the rural tourism business should know the role, purpose, and function of rural tourism. Knowing these details is necessary for tourism to be sustainable. Raising the ecological awareness of the local population will also contribute to the formation of high-quality products in rural areas and an eco-friendly environment. To properly develop tourism in rural areas, it is necessary to form ecological awareness among the local population. (M. Kociszewska,2014)

Rural development and encouraging local youth to participate in rural life are important issues that are becoming increasingly important. In the work entitled "Rural communities as a context for entrepreneurship: Exploring perceptions of youth and business owners" the advantages of the development of own business by local residents in the village and the involvement of young people are presented. The research presented in the article on stimulating the population living in rural areas to do business was an important issue for our article.(M. R. T.de Guzman, S. Kim , S.Taylor, I.Padasas. 2020)

In her text, Natalia Bayona talks about the importance of laying the foundations of tourism education among young people. In the work, the author talks about the problems in tourism, which are mainly caused by the lack of appropriate qualifications. The author emphasizes that the goal of modern educational programs should be to awaken entrepreneurial motivation and desire among young people. The author also considers the formation of sustainable and green tourism as a new opportunity for modern man to be significant.(N. Bayona, 2021)

Tourism businesses in rural areas should be formed with sustainable approaches. Rural tourism is a compassionate direction of tourism because it includes local human, cultural and natural resources. Business and manufacturing sustainability principles should be taught in higher education. An article by XinyanZhang and PimtongTavitiyaman provides vital recommendations on how sustainability issues should be considered in higher education programs.(X.Zhang, P. Tavitiyaman, 2022)

Methods

The research presented in this paper was conducted in May-June 2022. In the first stage of the research, the demand for tourist products in rural areas of Adjara by Georgian and foreign tourists was studied. Determining the demand for tourism products in rural areas was crucial for us to determine whether there is interest in tourism products in rural areas of Adjara region. As in all business activities and tourism, the existence of a demand for products determines the importance of the formation of these products. Education of the population in rural areas is meaningless if there is no demand for tourism products. The research method used was random sampling. The study of demand showed that there is a great demand for tourism products in the tourism market in rural areas of Adjara. Based on this, we decided to study the human resources in the rural areas that are needed to create the desired tourism products. As a method of said research, we used questionnaires and selected a specific rural association in which we studied homesteads. For the research, we prepared a questionnaire in advance, which included the research questions.

In the survey, the selection was self-made, because we offered all the homesteads in the region to participate in the survey, and from 157 of them we received confirmation during the interview. During the research process, we interviewed the homestead owners in the form of individual interviews, the data obtained were divided into specially prepared tables and analyzed according to the established rules of data processing. I would like to mention here that before starting the research, we received statistical data on the number of homesteads and also the demographic data of the village from the regional management of the villages we studied. The homesteads surveyed by us compared to the data provided by the relevant state bodies amounted to 43%, that is, we examined almost half of the existing homesteads, which allowed us to get accurate and reliable data about the social, cultural, demographic problems in the region. Based on the analysis of the obtained results, we found out the educational problems of the rural population. Based on the analysis of the studies mentioned at the end of the article, we have developed recommendations; if they are implemented, it is possible to improve the education of the population living in rural areas and create environmental awareness.

Results and Discussion

A new challenge for modern states is to ensure the health of the population and to create a culture of recreation in nature. City dwellers have to live in a polluted environment and in a dense traffic network, which is the cause of many diseases. Today, the development of tourism in rural areas of Georgia, including Adjara, is uneven. Tourist facilities in rural areas (non-

traditional rural tourist facilities) that meet sanitary standards are costly and not designed for the income of the population living in Batumi. On homesteads positioned as tourist facilities, cleanliness and safety standards are violated and entertainment, relaxation and health programs for vacationers are not taken into account, which indicates the ignorance of the local population about the emergence of tourist products. The above-mentioned problems lead to a low interest of the local population in tourism products in rural areas.

Environmental protection and ecological issues are acute in Georgia. Due to the difficult social and economic environment in the country, environmental issues continue to be neglected. A clean ecological environment is necessary for the existence of a healthy society. Pollution is particularly severe in cities and urban areas, and the health of the population is imperative here. Therefore, in order to form a modern and healthy society, it is necessary to create ecological awareness and a culture of rural recreation among the population living in the city.

The culture of relaxation in nature on weekends and holidays contributes to the restoration of mental and physical strength, rest and relaxation.

Tourism products and services in rural areas are created by local people who do not have the knowledge and training to develop rational and sustainable services that have less impact on nature and also focus on the health of vacationers. Teaching local people about the need to create an environmentally friendly environment will further promote the understanding and development of tourism in rural areas. The most important principle in developing tourism in rural areas should be health care as the basis of services. To this end, local people should first understand the role and importance of tourism in rural areas. People living in rural areas need help to understand the above issues, for which the relevant organizations should take responsibility.

Rural tourism is a specific tourism direction in which the culture, hospitality, history and traditions of the population living in rural areas are translated into tourism products. Rural tourism combines natural, cultural, historical and human resources. This paper discusses in depth the role of human resources in the sustainable and intensive development of rural tourism.

One of the main objectives of tourism development in rural areas is the health and recreation of the population living in the city. Sustainable tourism in rural areas means creating natural, rustic tourism products aimed at people's recreation. People living in rural areas are not well versed in business creation and management. In rural areas, local people do not have the knowledge and experience to create environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism products. For this, it is necessary to improve the education of rural people and conduct training.

After getting acquainted with prosperous rural tourism businesses, we have established some basic conditions that contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism.

In rural areas, the tourism business is built by homestead owners and their family members. In order to save costs and money, they participate in all organizational matters related to tourists' accommodation, catering, entertainment and recreation. Based on international experience, there are some requirements for the staff that must be taken into account when designing correct and health-oriented tourist services.

Requirements for the competence of personnel, which is necessary for the formation of ecologically sustainable tourist services in rural areas.

- Education of the population in environmental protection and rational use of natural resources.
 - Knowledge of the local population in environmental issues
 - Knowledge of business waste treatment and disposal rules
 - For the formation of interesting and unique tourist products, the local population must be familiar with the history and culture of the region.
 - Respect and tolerance of people of different cultures and backgrounds
 - Knowledge of international languages at the communication level.
- Hospitality and friendliness towards tourists.

The intelligence of homestead owners and their tendency to upgrade their qualifications.

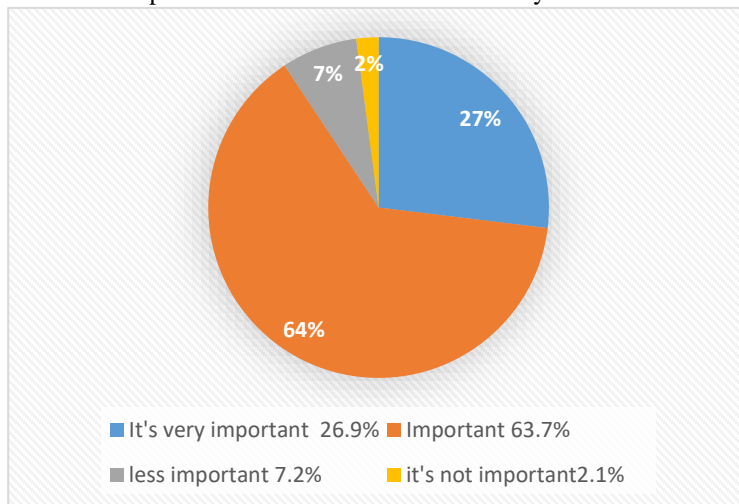
Tourism business in rural areas includes many activities; during the event's formation, the local population should have education in the following directions.

- Knowledge of environmental regulations and legislation
- Characteristics of drinking water, nearby rivers and lakes.
- The remnants of flora and fauna in the surrounding forest. Ensuring less impact on the natural environment so as not to disturb the area of existence of animals.
- Principles of compliance with safety standards during fishing, camping, and the formation of hiking routes, as well as environmental protection issues.
- The need to use only ecologically clean products when preparing dishes intended for tourists.
- Among the local population, it is necessary to select conscientious, punctual, and healthy personnel who do not have harmful qualities. Having the mentioned human qualities is essential for the owner of the

homestead, as an example of an armed lifestyle for the population living in the city.

Above, we have discussed in detail the conditions that must be met by the local population for the proper organisation of tourism in rural areas and the directions in which they must be educated. As part of our research, we have studied the demand of potential customers for tourism products in rural areas of Adjara to find out whether there is a demand or not, so that the discussion on the issues of educating the rural population becomes more logical and practical.

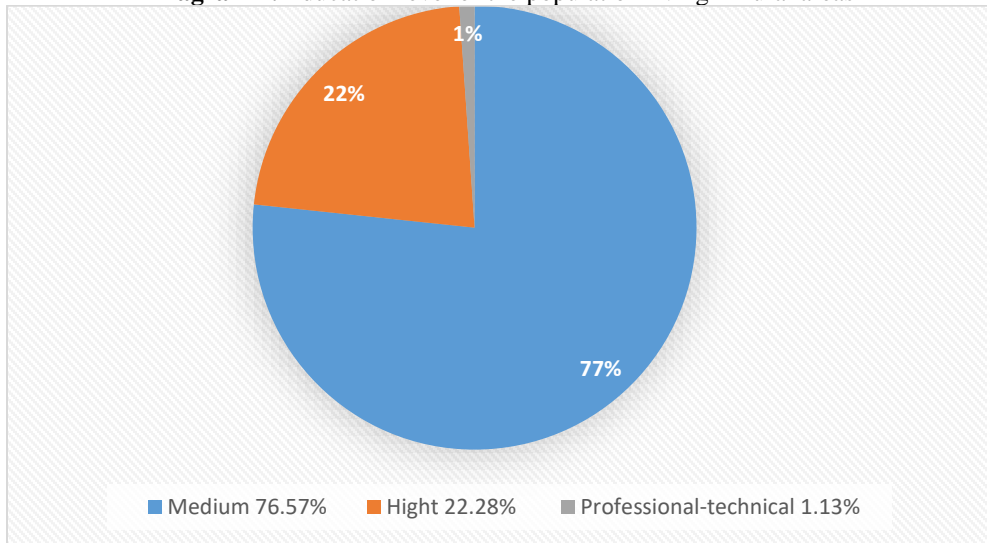
Diagram 1. The respondents' attitude about the necessity of recreation in rural areas.



As seen in the diagram, there is a tremendous demand for tourism products in the rural areas of Adjara among the population living in the city. The majority of respondents, 63.7%, believe that rural tourism is essential for people's health. 26.9% consider it very important, while 7.2% consider it less important. The unnecessary tourism in rural areas for human health was indicated by only 2.1% of the respondents.

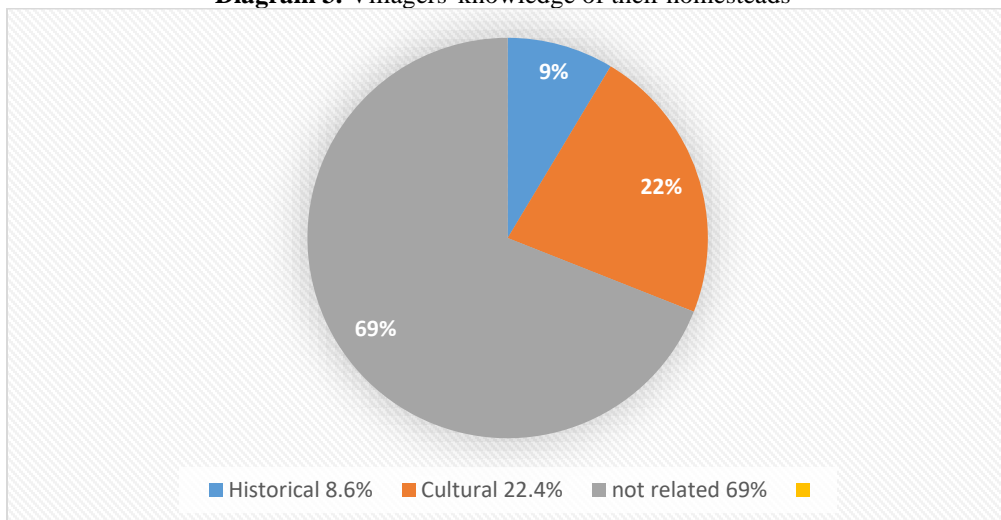
As the diagram shows, the demand for tourism products is high in rural areas. In order to create tourism products and services that satisfy the demand in the market, the local population must have appropriate knowledge and education. According to the research we conducted, the objective was to obtain information about the level of education and knowledge of the rural population. It was to determine to what extent the farm owners are ready to receive tourists and offer them quality tourist services.

Diagram 2. Education level of the population living in rural areas



As shown in Figure 2, 76.57% of the villages we studied have secondary education. 22.8% have higher education and 1.13% have vocational-technical education. As the diagram shows, the population has a relatively low level of education, which leads us to believe that they cannot create quality tourism products without proper training and support. Historically, the homesteads in the Adjara region were characterised by cultural and historical resources; almost every homestead was associated with a myth, story, or event. Our goal was to find out if the homestead owners knew the history of their estate and the events associated with it.

Diagram 3. Villagers' knowledge of their homesteads



As can be seen from the diagram 3, according to the absolute majority of the population, 69%, the homestead is not connected with any cultural-historical event. 22.4% of the respondents state that their homestead is connected with cultural events.

8.6% of the respondents state that the homestead is connected with historical events.

Based on the research results, we can say that the severe economic and social problems in the Adjara region have led to the cultural decline of the population. The migration of the local population and the disruption of the traditional cultural and historical lifestyle of the villagers have caused history and culture to be forgotten. It can be concluded that the population living in rural areas will not be able to independently manage the existing tourism demands and create quality rural tourism products.

Restoration of cultural and historical resources in rural areas is possible when professionals are involved in developing tourism in rural areas and restoring forgotten stories. Providing resources to generate additional economic income for the population living in rural areas will increase the awareness and interest of the population in education, and young people will return to the village, which will allow rural areas to continue their traditional economic and cultural life.

As part of the work on this article, we have developed general recommendations that will contribute to increasing the level of education of the population in the rural area and, consequently, to the sustainable development of the tourism business in rural areas. The development of tourism business in rural areas by itself contributes to the solution of socio-economic problems not only in a particular village and region.

Recommendations, the consideration of which will contribute to raising the education of the population living in rural areas and the formation of high-quality eco-friendly tourist services.

The state body tasked with the sustainable and intensive development of the tourism business in rural areas should take care of the training of the local population living in rural areas in the appropriate direction. Within the framework of the model of sustainable development of tourism business in rural areas, the principles of retraining rural residents should be created. These principles should include:

- Use of international practices for training the rural population. Finding or training the necessary specialists in the direction of retraining.
- Development of an educational methodological manual for the population.
- Conducting systematic training among the local population to develop ecological awareness.

- Acquaintance of the provisions of the World Health Organization for the rural population regarding tourism in rural areas
- Develop specific work programs that clearly describe where? and how and to what extent training will be provided.
- Teaching sustainable approaches to improving residential houses and homesteads for the local population.
- Studying the formation of high-quality tourism products and services for the local population in rural areas.
- Teaching the specifics of providing services to foreign and local tourists.

Conclusion

The proper development of the tourism industry in rural areas is a complex issue and involves many aspects. If we share the international experience of tourism business development in rural areas, we will see that state organizations create appropriate programs on the basis of which tourism business development in rural areas takes place and, accordingly, socio-economic problems in rural areas are solved. In this article we have talked only about one component that is necessary for sustainable and intensive development of tourism business in rural areas, namely the importance of increasing the level of education of the population living in rural areas in entrepreneurial issues. Taking a particular rural region as an example, this article describes the problems and suggests original ways to solve them.

In addition, the main objective of the article was the problem of improving the education of the population living in rural areas in relation to the tourism business. The origin of any activity is the human being. Human resources are invaluable for the development of any business. Human resources and education are of great importance for the development of the tourism industry in rural areas, as this activity is carried out using unique natural, cultural and historical resources. The correct transformation of said resources into tourism products and services requires in-depth knowledge and care in order not to damage the natural ecological and cultural environment and to keep it intact.

The article discusses the problems of the level of education of the population living in rural areas, their ecological awareness and the need to understand the essence of tourism in rural areas in order to build a sustainable tourism business. The article provides practical recommendations and advice that will help raise the educational level of people living in rural areas, which in turn will help increase the demand for tourism products in rural areas. Raising the level of education of people living in rural areas and creating sustainable tourism products will help protect and preserve the unique natural and cultural environment. Education of the rural population should be an

essential part of rural tourism development, which should be provided by the relevant state authorities.

Rural tourism is a unique economic tool whose proper and intensive development contributes to the solution of social and economic problems in rural areas. A prerequisite for the sustainable development of the tourism business in rural areas is the improvement of education of the population living in rural areas in entrepreneurship issues. Training and educating rural people on rural tourism products and services will contribute to the emergence of high quality tourism products in rural areas, which will increase the flow of tourists to rural areas. The increase in tourist flow to rural areas will contribute to the development of rural infrastructure and roads. In addition, the active development of tourism in rural areas will contribute to the employment of young people in rural areas, the preservation of traditional economic activities and the protection of local culture.

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