



**ASSOCIAÇÃO DE POLITÉCNICOS DO NORTE (APNOR)
INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE BRAGANÇA**

**The competitiveness of the Republic of Moldova and North Region
of Portugal rural tourism and its potential to attract tourists**

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Final Dissertation submitted to *Instituto Politécnico de Bragança*

To obtain the Master Degree in Management, Specialisation in Business
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Paula Odete Fernandes (PhD)

Cristina Cosciug (PhD)

Bragança, February 2017.



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Abstract

This conceptual research proposes that the popularity of tourism destinations can be enhanced by a combination of the factors of competitiveness and attractiveness. The competitiveness elements are derived from the supply side and the attractiveness from the demand side of tourism. The purpose of combining these perspectives is to come up with a holistic understanding of the destination popularity dynamics. The input of both tourists and tourist facility operators is necessary for any destination to manage and enhance its competitive advantage. Tourism researchers have investigated destination attractiveness and destination competitiveness as separate and unrelated concepts. This research proposes, as main objective, that the evaluation of tourism destinations can be approached by symmetrically conceptualizing destination attractiveness and destination competitiveness as related and complementary dimensions. This approach allows comparisons to be made about the congruency between what the destinations invest in and what visitors are looking for in a tourism destination. It is thus purpose to analysis and evaluate the competitiveness of the Republic of Moldova and the North Region of Portugal rural tourism and its potential to attract tourists.

Analysis carried out on the period of 2013 and 2015 on the number of overnight stays of tourist potential of rural tourism, which has grown in small quantities for Moldova, comparing with Portugal, which registered a major increase. Is possible to say that Moldova is declining after data on accommodation and the number of rooms offered. It was concluding there are competitiveness in the tourism rural in centre region of Republic of Moldova and there is competitiveness tourism rural in the northern region of Portugal, answering to the main objective of the study.

Keywords: Tourism Destination; Rural Tourism; Competitiveness; Republic of Moldova; Portugal.

Resumo

Este trabalho de investigação apresenta que a popularidade dos destinos turísticos pode ser reforçada por uma combinação dos fatores de competitividade e atratividade. Os elementos de competitividade estão alocados ao lado da oferta e os elementos de atratividade do lado da procura do turismo. O objetivo de combinar essas perspetivas é conseguir uma compreensão holística da dinâmica de popularidade de um destino turístico. A entrada de turistas e operadores turísticos são elementos necessários para qualquer destino, no sentido de gerir e aumentar a sua vantagem competitiva. Investigadores de turismo investigaram a atratividade do destino e a competitividade do destino como conceitos separados e não relacionados. A presente investigação tem como propósito analisar e avaliar os destinos turísticos possa ser abordada através da conceção simétrica de atratividade e competitividade de destino turístico como dimensões relacionadas e complementares. Essa abordagem permite comparações sobre a congruência entre o que os destinos investem e o que os visitantes procuram num destino turístico. Neste sentido, foi assim propósito analisar e comparar a competitividade dos destinos turísticos da República da Moldava e Região Norte de Portugal relativamente ao turismo rural e verificar o seu potencial para atrair turistas.

Análise efetuada debruçou-se sobre o período de 2013 a 2015, analisando o atual e potencial número de dormidas para o turismo rural, que tem crescido em pequenas quantidades para a Moldávia, em comparação com Portugal, que registou um grande aumento. É possível dizer que a Moldávia está em declínio após os dados sobre o alojamento e o número de quartos oferecidos (taxa de capacidade). Conclui-se, ainda, que existe competitividade no turismo rural na região centro da República da Moldávia e na região norte de Portugal, respondendo, assim, ao principal objetivo do estudo.

Palavras-chave: Destino turístico; Turismo Rural; Competitividade; República da Moldávia; Portugal.

Abstract

Această cercetare conceptuală propune ca popularitatea destinațiilor turistice poate fi îmbunătățită printr-o combinație a factorilor de competitivitate și atractivitate. Elementele de competitivitate sunt derivate din partea ofertei și atractivitatea din partea cererii de turism. Scopul combinării acestor perspective este de a veni cu o înțelegere holistică a dinamicii de popularitate destinație. Este necesară introducerea de turiști și operatori facilitare turistică pentru orice destinație de a gestiona și de a spori avantajul competitiv. cercetătorii din turism au investigat atractivitatea destinației și competitivitatea destinației ca concepte separate, și care nu au legătură. Această cercetare își propune, ca obiectiv principal, că evaluarea destinațiilor turistice poate fi abordată prin conceptualizare simetric atractivitatea destinației și competitivitatea destinației ca dimensiuni și complementare aferente. Această abordare permite realizarea de comparații cu privire la congruența între ceea ce destinațiile investi și ceea ce vizitorii sunt în căutarea într-o destinație turistică. Este, prin urmare, scopul de a analiza și de a evalua competitivitatea Republicii Moldova și Regiunea de Nord a Portugaliei turismului rural și a potențialului său de a atrage turiști.

Analiza efectuată pe perioada anului 2013 și 2015 cu privire la numărul de înoptărilor potențial turistic al turismului rural, care a crescut în cantități mici, pentru Moldova, în comparație cu Portugalia, care a înregistrat o creștere majoră. Este posibil să spunem că Moldova este în scădere după ce datele privind cazarea și numărul de camere oferite. Acesta a fost de încheiere există competitivitate în turismul rural în regiunea centrală a Republicii Moldova și este turismul rural competitivitatea în regiunea de nord a Portugaliei, răspunzând la obiectivul principal al studiului.

Cuvinte cheie: Destinație turistică; Turismul rural; competitivitate; Republica Moldova; Portugalia

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Erasmus, just from the simple word you can tell it's an experience worth trying one of the most beautiful periods experienced that leave deep footprints in the life of a student. So for me it was one of the most interesting explorations so far. Although at first I was afraid of the difference in culture, mentality, customs or language, I knew that unites us rather important historical aspect and we decided to go in that corner of the north of Portugal, to see what's on there. Besides the fact that I was impressed by the beauty of the country, especially the city Lisbon, where I had the opportunity to meet new year 2017 a strong impression remained in after visiting the westernmost point of Portugal Cabo da Roca, the spectacular site is on shore steep but you're on the ocean waves hitting the shore power. You actually feel like the world ends there. I particularly like the world out there and how they "care for tourists". Here I met teachers who are eager to help and understand that you are a foreign student revenue. Erasmus is truly a unique experience where you can test your limits, to redefine your horizons and rediscover yourself, to make new friends all over the world and travel. Erasmus is a unique opportunity and once we have the chance to go, must take advantage of it. For this adventure a sincere thank you I want to say teachers who helped and guided throughout the time spent in this semester for all new knowledge assimilated dedication and practice.

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Acronyms

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

BE - Belgium

BG - Bulgari

CAP - Common Agricultural Policy

DU - Germany

ES - Spain

EU - European Union

FR - France

IT - Italy

MD - Moldova

MSA - Market Share Analysis

NL - Netherlands

NTO - National Tourism Organization

OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

pp. – percentage points

PLC - Public Limited Company

PT - Portugal

RO - Romania

RU - Russia

SO - Specific Objective

UK - United Kingdom

UKr - Ukraine

USA - United State of America

WTO - World Trade Organization

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Introduction

Tourism is presented as a complex activity with a multitude of facets, with significant economic load, positioned at the crossroads of several branches and sectors of the economy (Minciu, 2000). Destination competitiveness could be associated with the ability to deliver an experience that is more satisfying than that offered by other destinations. Pearce (1997) posit destination competitiveness as the techniques and methods that can be used to analyse and compare the diverse attributes of destinations in the context of planning. The evaluation of the major destination components can provide a better understanding of the competitiveness of such destinations. It is also a very rival area, which course tourism players to give better customers services in order to stay competitive.

In rural tourism, an escalating niche in the tourism market, numerous elements of environmental constructs, such as natural resources, cultural heritage, infrastructure, environmental quality and environmental preservation, fulfil a key role in promoting the sustainability and competitiveness of rural tourism destinations. Moreover, the regards of regional fellowships toward tourism extension impact its prosperity or flop.

Therefore, this research regarded rural tourism destination competitiveness of Republic of Moldova and Portugal within regions. The conclusions of this research also give useful data to tourism intermediaries and policy planners about the significance of environmental attributes and community maintenance in direction of the extension of tourism destination competitiveness, especially in the scope of rural tourism.

In this sense, the purpose of this research is to assess rural tourism accommodation establishments and tourist destinations for Portugal and Moldova. It is a comparative study between two countries on rural tourism, whose results will be presented in the final conclusion.

To answer to the main objective, the evaluation of the both countries was performed under an analytical tool, Market Share Analysis, proposed by Faulkner (1997). For the calculation of the Market Share Analysis, it was used varying the overnight stays in the Portuguese rural areas, empowered by the National Institute of Statistics, for the period from 2013 to 2015, and indexes of number of tourists visiting rural areas, overnights spend by them and number of entities participating in rural tourism for Republic of Moldova. Also these indexes (used for Republic of Moldova evaluation) were used for comparison between Republic of Moldova and Portugal.

Sections of this research are organized in the following order. Section 1 is general information on tourism in a whole and rural tourism in particular. Section 2 characterization and development of rural tourism: Republic of Moldova versus Portugal and analysis SWOT. Section 3 reviews research methodology and objective of the study, as well as description of data collection and data analysis from rural tourism context. After that Conclusions, limitations and implications of this study as well as suggestions for future research are presented.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Tourism Destination

Study trips for tourists is important for several reasons. Thus, for destination countries it is vital to know where they come from tourists. If you know where it comes from tourist market, marketing plans can be improve to attract potential travellers. Places that, according to some authors represent, heart "of tourism, are known in the literature as the destinations.

Word destination comes from the Latin and means location. This term has become widely used in the late 90-ies of XX century. In the foreign literature, there are two approaches to determining the "destination".

In the first approach is describe as a destination area has defined borders (Ryabov, Zabaeva, & Dracheva, 2015). According to another view destination - a geographical area, with its appeal to tourists. That is, in the foreground category of appeal that may be different for different groups of tourists. For example, tourists of all ages, income, interest, resting on a limited area (Camping, hotel), may have quite divergent travel destination.

Some are more attracted to the beaches and the sea, others – Historical sites and museums, for the third important leisure and entertainment, etc. Thus, the destination attracts travellers for a temporary stay, as it has the characteristic features that are not available in their countries of residence. Industry tourism this place is for settlement (accommodation) catering, leisure and entertainment, and retail sale of goods tourism demand and souvenirs and so forth.

However, far from any area can be attribute to the destination. To place (territory) could be called a destination it must meet the following basic requirements (Ryabov, Zabaeva, & Dracheva, 2015):

1) The existence of a specific set of services necessary for the adoption of tourists, and it must be exactly the set of services and the quality, that tourists expect, getting offered him touring product. Such first set are:

- Delivery (transport) to the destination and back. Currently customer requirements for quality of service and comfort of transportation increase, and their implementation should be mandatory;

- The possibility of accommodation (Hotel, camping, cottages and so forth.) and food (restaurants, cafes, bars, etc.) with the corresponding level of service;

2) The availability of sites that could be of interest tourists. It was on this occasion there is a competition between destinations. The interesting place in terms of opportunities to see and learn.

More new, relax and have fun, the higher its ranking among competitors and, accordingly, the more it frequented by tourists;

3) The availability of information systems; that are necessary tool for product promotion in the tourist market. Before all this is the ability to access the information of computer reservation systems and reservations.

You can draw the following conclusion: destination - a territory, offering a range of services that meet the needs tourist, satisfy its demand for transportation, accommodation, meals, entertainment, is the purpose of his journey. Destinations can be primary and secondary.

The primary destination of its appeal is the client interested to visit it and therefore the main goal - to satisfy this interest for a certain, fairly long period of time (for example one week).

The secondary destination (or stopover) is a place, which is inevitable stop on the way to the primary destination.

The main objective of the secondary destination - the satisfaction of the desires of tourists for one or two days. It is, on the one hand, is only required to stop on the way of the primary destination, on the other hand, it may also be for tourists visiting place for several days for sightseeing. Therefore, the secondary destination is to attract more tourists, but for a short time.

It is necessary to note one more fact that is important. Primary destination always characterized by a certain location nearby (such as Disneyland), the secondary must always conveniently located with respect to transport communications.

As defined by Ryabov, Zabaeva, and Dracheva (2015) tourism shows a system composed of the following elements:

- compact geographically;

- touristic;

- industry tourism;

where geographical component includes three basic factors:

a) region, "giving birth" to tourists;

b) transit region;

c) region tourist destination.

Romanian researcher (Stancioiu, 2000) determines the destination as place or geographical area where a visitor or tourist stops either for an overnight stay or for a period, or the end point of the holidays of tourists, whether they are traveling for tourism or business (Stancioiu, 2000).

Destination catalysts constitute about uniting maintain and propel all sectors of the tourism industry, transport, accommodation, food and leisure, being a complex and specific element of tourism (Stancioiu, 2000). It believes that tourist destinations are compact complex products, such as parks tourist hotels and holiday village club type. They are often run by one commercial company, which rents space to another commercial firm, beauty salon, bars, clubs, shops etc.

Also, are considers as tourist destinations in all continents. In order to be considers destination, a place must have tourism potential properly and meet at the same time, and other requirements related to infrastructure, goods and services complementary, what can increase attractiveness, differentiating destinations and determining target markets attention to be directed towards tourism companies.

Depending on the options tourist expectations and how for holidays, when destinations are pursued a number of determinants. Infrastructure and services offered as one of these elements.

Another element is the degree of culture and geographic location of an area and its people, traditions, lifestyle and social relations.

Advertising also represents a key element in the presentation and marketing of tourist destinations. Through the advertising forms an image in the minds of potential consumers about the tourism product. It happens that sometimes it differs from the actual image, which often leads to a failure of tourist activity.

Also as a form of advertising, but something deeper, a destination image can be influenced by myths and events that occur within the borders.

There are several different destinations depending on the tourists and administrative units that take responsibility for them (Stancioiu, 2000):

- Independent states - club-type hotels, holiday villages;
- Villages, cities - urban tourism and agro-tourism (rural tourism);
- Areas that have a specific theme, such as national park sites;
- Regions defined by administrative boundaries or zone name;
- Countries;
- Groups of countries (Caribbean) and continents.

According with the same author, tourist market there is great competition between tourist destinations to attract more tourists. It is clearly observe intensified marketing activity stimulated by authorities and tourism companies, which aims to build and strengthen a positive image as the tourist destination.

Their image depends largely on personal experience of consumers of transmission by word of mouth, history, mass media, but the most important seems to be the way-advertising offer meet the needs and expectations created.

Unlike attractions considered generally single units, locations or their image depends largely on personal experience of consumers of transmission by word of mouth, history, mass media, but the most important seems to be the way-advertising offer meet the needs and expectations created.

Different attractions considered to be generally single units, places or geographical areas small and easily defined, based on a single feature distinctive tourist destinations are areas wider, which include a number of individual attractions, such as and services offered to tourists (Stancioiu, 2000).

Between attractions and destinations, there is obviously a strong link: usually existence of stimulating the development of major attractions of destinations, whether the attraction is a beach, a theme park or an amusement park. With the development of the destination side are born other attractions designed to exploit the market better.

Attractions around some develop numerous services and tourist facilities (accommodations, food, transportation systems, support services and information for tourists, etc.).

A series of tourism activities using real attractions as "raw material", on which they depend. For example, sunbathing depend on the existence of beaches and water sports on the existence of bases or marinas etc.

Attractions can be classified into two main categories: primary and secondary. The main attractions are generally those that constitute the main reason for taking a trip, which constitute a vital resource for developing favourite activities, places where tourists (or visitors) spend most of their holiday. Unlike the main attractions, the side are usually the places visited on the way to or from the main attractions, their role being to interrupt a trip longer, or to make a change (variation) over a travels. If a beach can be a typical main attraction, like an amusement park and a restaurant - rest or a handicraft centre can be only two possible examples of side attractions (Stancioiu, 2000).

To increase revenue received from visitors or tourists, the main attractions are the many developed a series of services designed to persuade visitors not to be tempted by the other side attractions located elsewhere.

The area over which it can exercise one attraction may be restricted, local, can be regional, attracting visitors from an entire region of a country or may be national or even international. There are quite a few attractions that have zones of influence national and international influence are those with even less (such as the Pyramids of Egypt, the Grand Canyon, an amusement park Disney events like the Olympics or World) (Stancioiu, 2000).

Most natural attractions (excluding beaches) are found in rural areas. Home to seaside resorts, by tradition, amusement parks, recreation and marinas. However, there are two categories of urban areas, which house attractions. Thus, on the one hand, cities and municipalities historic house numerous religious buildings (cathedrals, churches), health centres and where it organizes numerous cultural events, and on the other hand, there are industrial cities, where you can perform major sporting events and exhibitions, tourism can be used as a solution to urban regeneration (Stancioiu, 2000).

Attractions can cause destinations and travel services, by building structures of tourist attraction around. It is particularly suggestive in this respect, the comparison of attraction with a grain of sand around which grows a pearl, symbolizing tourist destination.

Most successful destinations of the world have developed from a major attraction. Thus, the fame enjoyed by the town of Luxor, in Egypt, is due to the existence of pyramids and Sphinx, small and easily defined, based on a single feature distinctive tourist destinations are areas wider, which include a number of individual attractions and Tourist services (Stancioiu, 2000).

Between attractions and destination, there is obviously a strong link: usually existence of stimulating the development of major attractions of destinations, whether the attraction is a beach, a theme park or an amusement park. With the development of the destination side are born other attractions designed to exploit the market better.

1.2. Tourism Competitiveness

1.2.1. Tourism and Competitiveness: Definitions

In tourism literature, the concept of competitiveness has been applied to different destination settings and types as well as expanded into the sustainability of destinations. Thus, carta in marketing plans and promotional strategies such as price, quality, image, and sustainable tourism have been discuses. The success of integrated quality management of tourism destinations and price-based promotions as a value increasing strategy has been considering for destination competitiveness (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). This discussion is focused on how to determine and develop the future directions of destination competitiveness. As of yet, detailed future directions and instructions for destination competitiveness have not been fully investigated.

One of the main aims of tourism planning and development is to create more valuable tourism products and services for potential or current tourists so that destinations and their communities receive social and economic benefits. But there is a need for a clearer understanding of the ability of the tourism destination to compete effectively in an increasingly saturated market (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The planning and promotion of tourism destinations should be guide by a thorough analysis of the destinations' competitive factors and development strategies (Hassan, 2000).

A number of studies have introduced and applied the concept of competitiveness in the area of tourism destinations (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Hassan, 2000). The focus of most studies were on investigating how destination competitiveness can be sustained as well as enhanced while maintaining a market position among other destination competitors. Moreover, studies have investigated the key environmental factors, determinants, or strategies that affect the enhancement of destination competitiveness. Especially, it has been discussed that since tourism destinations involve multi-faceted components of natural/cultural resources and a multiplicity of businesses, a systematic framework or analytical model for destination planning and development is necessary (Hassan, 2000).

Figure 1 displays the main elements of destination competitiveness as falling into several major categories.

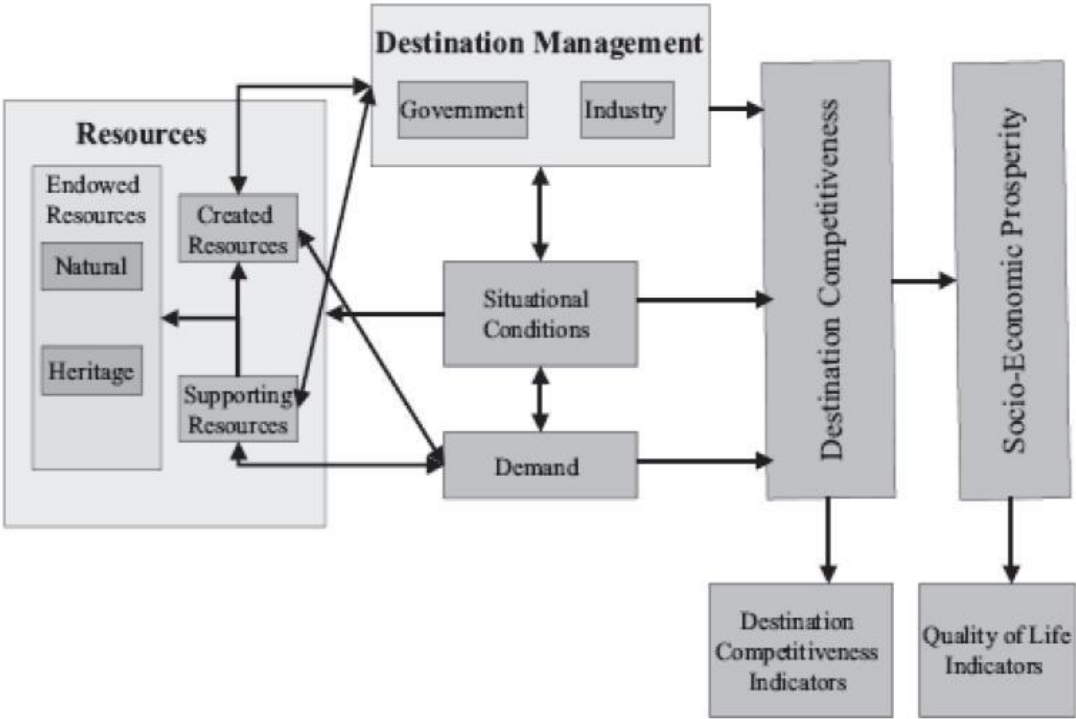


Figure 1. The Dwyer & Kim's Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness.

Source: Dwyer and Kim (2010, pp. 55).

Inherited and Created Resources are each allocated their own box, as is Supporting Factors and Resources. These three boxes are, in turn, grouped within a larger box. Together, these factors provide the various characteristics of a destination that make it attractive to visit and the foundations upon which

a successful tourism industry is established. Together, they provide the basis for destination competitiveness.

Destination Management factors are those that can enhance the appeal of the core resources and attractors, strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the supporting factors and resources and best adapt to the situational conditions (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The category includes the activities of Destination Management Organizations, Destination Marketing Management, Destination Policy, Planning and Development, Human Resource Development and Environmental Management.

The model contains a separate box for Demand Conditions. This category comprises three main elements of tourism demand-awareness, perception and preferences. Awareness can be generate by various means including destination-marketing activities. The image projected can influence perceptions and hence affect visitation. Actual visitation will depend on the match between tourist preferences and perceived destination product offerings (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Situational Conditions are forces in the wider environment that define the limit, or influence the potential of destination competitiveness. These forces can moderate, modify or mitigate destination competitiveness by filtering the influence of the other groups of factors and thus may be positive or negative in their influence on competitiveness.

The box representing Destination Competitiveness is linked backwards to the various determinants of competitiveness and forwards to one representing Regional/National Prosperity indicating that destination competitiveness is itself an intermediate goal toward a more fundamental aim of socio-economic well-being for residents. Each of these objectives is associated with a set of indicators. Indicators of Destination Competitiveness are many and varied and comprise both subjective attributes (destination 'appeal', 'scenic beauty') as well as those that are more objectively determined (destination market share, foreign exchange earnings from tourism). Indicators of National/Regional Socio-Economic Prosperity relate to Key macroeconomic variables including productivity levels in the economy, aggregate employment levels, per capita incomes, rate of economic growth etc.

The integrated model of destination competitiveness retains a good deal of the (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000) framework but there are some significant differences as is possible to see in the following table.

Table 1. Differences between Ritchie & Crouch’s model and Dwyer & Kim’s model.

Integrated Model	Crouch-Ritchie Model
<p>Endowed Resources Natural Resources Cultural/Heritage Resources Created Resources Tourism infrastructure Special events Range of available activities Entertainment Shopping</p> <p>Supporting Factors and Resources General Infrastructure Quality of Service Accessibility of Destination Hospitality Market Ties</p> <p>Destination Management Destination Management Organisation • Coordination • Provision of information • Monitoring and evaluation Destination Marketing Management Destination Policy Planning, Development Human Resource Development Environmental Management</p> <p>Situational Conditions Destination Location Competitive (micro)Environment • Capabilities of Firms • Strategies of Firms • Industry Structure and Firm Rivalry Global (macro) Environment • political/legal/regulatory • economic • sociocultural • technological</p> <p>Security/safety Price competitiveness</p> <p>Demand Conditions Tourist preferences Awareness of destination Destination image</p>	<p>Core Resources & Attractors Physiography and Climate Culture and History Market Ties Mix of Activities Special Events Entertainment Superstructure</p> <p>Supporting Factors & Resources Infrastructure Accessibility Facilitating Resources Hospitality Enterprise</p> <p>Destination Management Marketing Finance and Venture Capital Organisation Human Resource Development Information/Research Quality of Service Visitor Management Resource Stewardship</p> <p>Destination Policy, Planning, Development System definition Philosophy Vision Audit Positioning Development Competitive/collaborative analysis Monitoring & evaluation</p> <p>Competitive (micro) Environment</p> <p>Global (macro) Environment</p> <p>Qualifying & Amplifying Determinants Location Interdependencies Safety/security Awareness/image/brand Cost/value</p>

Source: Dwyer and Kim (2010, p. 5).

The following explanation was supported in Dwyer and Kim (2010):

1. The integrated model includes some types of determinants missing from the Crouch and Ritchie model:

The distinction between inherited (endowed) and created resources, explicitly drawn in the integrated model, but not in the Crouch-Ritchie model, seems to be a useful one, which has policy significance. As Crouch and Ritchie they recognize, destination competitiveness will depend importantly on both types of assets. In the integrate 'market ties' are included among the Supporting Factors and Resources, rather than under Core Resources and Attractors as in the Crouch-Ritchie model.

The integrated model explicitly recognizes Demand Conditions as an important determinant of destination competitiveness. Tourist awareness of alternative destinations, their perceptions of different destinations, and their perception of the extent to which the destination's product offerings will meet their needs, are critical to tourist flows. A destination's product must develop in a way that 'matches' the evolving consumer preferences, if the destination is to enhance or even maintain competitiveness. The Crouch-Ritchie model seems to neglect the demand side of competitiveness determination. Focus on the supply side determinants gives an incomplete picture of destination competitiveness.

The integrated model explicitly recognizes that destination competitiveness is not an ultimate end of policy making but is an intermediate goal toward the objective of regional or national economic prosperity. It therefore explicitly allows for selected performance indicators of both Destination Competitiveness and National Prosperity to be highlighted.

2. The integrated model does not provide a separate box for Destination, Policy and Development but subsumes this determinant type under Destination Management. Thus, in the integrated model Destination Management includes 'those factors that shape and influence a destination's competitive strength' as well as those that 'create an environment within which tourism can flourish in an adaptive manner'. The category Destination Management now comprises five major dimensions: Destination Management Organization, Destination Marketing Management, Destination Policy, Planning and Development, Human Resource Development and Environmental Management.

3. The category, 'Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants' in the Crouch-Ritchie model is now relabelled "Situational Conditions".

In the integrated model, the competitive (micro) environment and the global (macro) environment are included among the Situational Conditions. This is consistent with Strategic Management theory wherein firms operate within two types of external environments: an industry (micro) environment as well as a more remote (macro) environment.

In the Crouch-Ritchie model 'interdependencies' between destinations are included as a separate heading under Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants whereas in the integrated model they are recognized to relate to the ease of combining travel to different destinations, that is, accessibility attributes, and so appear under that element of Supporting Factors and Resources.

The Crouch-Ritchie model includes awareness/image/brand among the Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants. In the integrated model visitor awareness is included as a Demand Condition. The image and brand of a destination also have relevance for Demand but they are acknowledged also to be fashioned by Destination Marketing Management, a major sub category of Destination Management.

4. The integrated model groups some of the elementary determinants of destination competitiveness differently than does the Crouch-Ritchie model.

The Crouch-Ritchie model lumps all infrastructure together under the label 'superstructure' and includes this among the Core Resources and Attractors. In contrast, the integrated model distinguishes between tourism infrastructure and general infrastructure and allocates only the former to Created Resources. General infrastructure does not have tourist pulling power as such and is therefore included among the Supporting Factors and Resources.

The Crouch-Ritchie model includes 'Enterprise' under Supporting Factors and Resources. The integrated model includes enterprise within elements of the Competitive (Micro) Environment. This acknowledges the views of Porter and others who have argued that the strategies of firms and organizations in the home country, and its competitive environment generally, provide the context for productivity increases. In the integrated model, in deference to Porter's Five Forces Analysis of Competition (Porter, 1990), the Competitive (Micro) Environment is discussed under three headings: the capabilities of destination firms, their strategies, the extent of competitive rivalry and collaboration among firms, with the customer environment included under demand conditions.

The Crouch-Ritchie model does not have a separate attribute of 'shopping'. The shopping sector is subsumed under mix of activities in that model. In contrast, the integrated model recognizes the importance of shopping as a major attraction in its own right and one which can impact substantially on visitor flows. 'Shopping' is included in the integrated model with other Created Resources such as tourism infrastructure, special events, range of available activities and entertainment.

Quality of Service, which is included under Destination Management in the Crouch-Ritchie model, appears under Supporting Factors and Resources in the integrated model. This is to regard service quality, associated with hospitality, as one of the foundations upon which a successful tourism industry is established.

Finance and Venture Capital, included under Destination Management in the Crouch-Ritchie model is regarded as an element of the Competitive (Micro) Environment within Situational Conditions in the model presented here.

5. The integrated model attempts to provide a more realistic display of the linkages between the various elements of destination competitiveness than does the Crouch-Ritchie model. Thus, certain of the boxes drawn have two way arrows between them indicating interactive, rather than one way, effects. Thus, for example, a destination may create certain resources (e.g. accommodation) to harmonies with its natural assets. The types of natural assets, in turn, may determine the appropriate type of tourism infrastructure development. A destination's core resources (inherited and created) can influence the types of Supporting Factors and Resources that are developed and these, in turn, provide an important foundation for the tourism industry. Similarly, there are two way flows between the various other major elements of the model, Destination Management and Demand Conditions.

1.2.2. Models and Destination Competitiveness Indicators

Having developed a framework for destination competitiveness, the next step is to present indicators of competitiveness and was develop by Dwyer and Kim (2010). For the purposes of the present study, a set of indicators of competitiveness was selected.

These indicators were identified from the major elements comprising the generic destination competitiveness model as just discussed. The selected set of indicators was also based on discussions at workshops held in Korea and Australia during April and May 2001. The respondents were selected from databases of tourism industry stakeholders in both Australia and Korea and comprised industry operators/peak groups, government officials and tourism research academics).

In Australia, industry workshops were held in both Bris-bane and Sydney. An invitation was sent to major industry stakeholders requesting them to send a representative to the workshop. In Korea focus group meetings, which were comprised of academia, travel business sectors (travel agencies, hotels, theme parks), and government officials, were held in Seoul three times to identify important indicators which can be applied to destination competitiveness. In Australia, 14 industry stakeholders attended a Sydney workshop while nine attended its counterpart in Bris-bane.

Although these numbers are not large, the interactive discussion provided the researchers with extremely useful input into model development and survey development. Participants at these workshops identified the important indicators of destination competitiveness falling under the main elements of the destination competitiveness model. A symposium was held in Sydney on 17 July 2001 to discuss findings and feedback from industry stakeholders. The symposium suggested research limitations, further research, and policy implications from findings.

It must be emphasised that there is no single or unique set of competitiveness indicators that apply to all destinations at all times. For any given factor underlying destination competitiveness, any number of indicators may be employed as measures. And for any given destination, different indicators of competitiveness will be relevant. At best, the investigator can highlight certain indicators for discussion. Some examples of relevant indicators are presented in Table 2. These indicators are only some of those that are relevant to determining destination competitiveness. There is a myriad of indicators that can be employed at any given time.

As noted, individuals may differ in their perceptions of the same 'objective' reality (Carroll & Chang, 1970; Ritchie, Crouch & Hudson, 2001). The indicators of destination competitiveness, under the various elements comprising the competitiveness framework, can be categorised according to whether they are 'objective' or 'subjective'. Thus, we can, for example, classify these key indicators according to whether they are 'hard' or 'soft' measures. 'Hard' measures are those that are 'objectively' or 'quantitatively' measurable. These would include the economic performance indicators in the final column of Table 2.

Examples of 'hard' measures of a destination's competitiveness, in respect of, say, natural resources, would be indicators such as the size of areas devoted to national parks and nature reserves, topography, average mean temperatures, sunshine levels, number of coral reefs etc. In contrast, 'soft' measures are those that relate to visitor perceptions and thus tend to be more 'subjective' or 'qualitative' in form. 'Soft' measures of a destination's competitiveness in natural resources would be those relating to 'aesthetics', 'grandeur', 'beauty', and so on.

More research needs to be devoted to distinguishing the different types of measures appropriate to the different indicators of competitiveness. The World Economic Forum, in its development of country competitiveness indices, has always emphasized that no reliable measures exist for such competitiveness indicators as the efficiency of government institution, the sophistication of local supplier networks, or the nature of competitive practices (Porter, 1990). An initial attempt to distinguish 'hard' and 'soft' measures for tourism competitiveness has been undertaken by Ritchie and Crouch (2000) for various dimensions of the Crouch-Ritchie model of destination competitiveness.

No single table could list all of the dimensions of competitiveness or the associated indicators. We have listed some of the main dimensions and indicators only. Moreover, the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' measures is one of degree. Some measures have both a 'hard' and 'soft' feature. For example, the 'uniqueness' of flora and fauna can be determined objectively with reference to whether they exist in the same forms in other locations (koalas, for example, are found only in Australia). But some flora and fauna may not be perceived by the tourist to be unique and thus may play no role in generating visitor flows.

Table 2. Indicators of Destination Competitiveness (cont.).

Endowed Resources

Natural

- ˆ Comfortable climate for tourism
- ˆ Cleanliness/Sanitation
- ˆ Natural wonders/Scenery
- ˆ Flora and fauna
- ˆ Unspoiled nature
- ˆ National parks/Nature reserves

Culture/Heritage

- ˆ Historic/Heritage sites and museums
- ˆ Artistic/Architectural features
- ˆ Traditional arts
- ˆ Variety of cuisine
- ˆ Cultural precincts and (folk) villages

Created Resources

Tourism infrastructure

- ˆ Accommodation quality/variety
- ˆ Airport efficiency/quality
- ˆ Tourist guidance/information
- ˆ Local transport efficiency/quality
- ˆ Visitor accessibility to natural areas
- ˆ Convention/Exhibition facilities (capacity/quality)
- ˆ Food services quality/variety

Range of activities

- ˆ Water based
- ˆ Nature based
- ˆ Adventure activities
- ˆ Recreation facilities
- ˆ Sports facilities

Shopping

- ˆ Variety of shopping items
- ˆ Quality of shopping facilities
- ˆ Quality of shopping items
- ˆ Value for money of shopping items
- ˆ Diversity of shopping experiences

Entertainment

- ˆ Amusement/Theme parks
- ˆ Entertainment quality/variety
- ˆ Nightlife

Special events/festivals

Supporting Factors

General infrastructure

- ˆ Adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitor needs
 - ˆ Health/Medical facilities to serve tourists
 - ˆ Financial institution and currency exchange facilities
 - ˆ Telecommunication system for tourists
 - ˆ Security/safety for visitors
 - ˆ Local transport systems
 - ˆ Waste disposal
 - ˆ Electricity supply
-

Table 2. Selected Indicators of Destination Competitiveness (cont.).

Quality of service

- ' Tourism/Hospitality firms which have well defined performance standards in service delivery
- ' Firms have programmes to ensure/monitor visitor satisfaction
- ' Visitor satisfaction with quality of service
- ' Industry appreciation of importance of service quality
- ' Development of training programmes to enhance quality of service
- ' Speed/Delays through customs/immigration
- ' Attitudes of customs/immigration officials

Accessibility of destination

- ' Distance/Flying time to destination from key origins
- ' Direct/Indirect flights to destination
- ' Ease/Cost of obtaining entry visa
- ' Ease of combining travel to destination with travel to other destinations
- ' Frequency/Capacity of access transport to destination

Hospitality

- ' Friendliness of residents towards tourists
- ' Existence of resident hospitality development programmes
- ' Resident support for tourism industry
- ' Ease of communication between tourists and residents

Market ties

- ' Business ties/trade links with major tourist origin markets
- ' Sporting links with major tourist origin markets
- ' Ethnic ties with major tourist origin markets
- ' Religious ties with major tourist origin markets
- ' Extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry

Destination management organisation

- ' NTO acts as coordinating body for private and public sector tourism organisations
- ' NTO effectively represents views of all tourism stakeholders in tourism development
- ' NTO liaises effectively with private sector in tourism policy, planning and development
- ' NTO provides statistical information as input to tourism policy, planning and development
- ' NTO strategically monitors and evaluates the nature and type of tourism development

Destination marketing management

- ' Reputation of NTO
- ' Effectiveness of destination positioning
- ' Strength/Clarity of destination image
- ' Efficient monitoring of destination marketing activities
- ' Effective packaging of destination experiences
- ' Links between destination tourism organisations and travel trade
- ' NTO identification of target markets
- ' NTO strategic alliances with other NTO
- ' Destination marketing is based on knowledge of competitor products
- ' Present 'fit' between destination products and visitor preferences

Destination policy, planning, development

- ' Existence of formal long-term 'vision' for tourism industry development
 - ' Destination 'vision' reflects resident values
 - ' Destination 'vision' reflects tourism industry stakeholder values
 - ' Tourism policy conforms to a formal destination 'vision'
 - ' Tourism planning and development conforms to a formal destination 'vision'
 - ' Tourism development is integrated into overall industrial development
 - ' Ongoing tourism development is responsive to visitor needs
 - ' Extent to which research findings are integrated into tourism planning and development
 - ' Inventory of most significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in destination
 - ' Identification of major competitors and their product offerings
 - ' Community support for special events
-

Table 2. Selected Indicators of Destination Competitiveness (cont.).

Human resource development

- ˆ Public sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training
- ˆ Private sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training
- ˆ Training/education responsive to changing visitor needs
- ˆ Range/quality of tourism/hospitality training programmes

Environmental management

- ˆ Public-sector recognition of importance of 'sustainable' tourism development
- ˆ Private sector recognition of importance of 'sustainable' tourism development
- ˆ Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage
- ˆ Research and monitoring of environmental impacts of tourism

Situational Conditions

Competitive (micro) environment

- ˆ Domestic business environment in destination
- ˆ Management capabilities of tourism firms and organisations
- ˆ Extent of competitive rivalry between firms in domestic tourism industry
- ˆ Level of cooperation between firms in destination tourism industry
- ˆ Links between tourism/hospitality firms and firms in other industrial sectors
- ˆ Entrepreneurial Qualities of local tourism stakeholders
- ˆ Access to venture capital
- ˆ Tourism/hospitality firms operate in ethical manner
- ˆ Firms use computer technology/commerce to achieve competitive advantage

Destination location

- ˆ Perceived 'exoticness' of location
- ˆ Proximity to other destinations
- ˆ Distance from major origin markets
- ˆ Travel time from major origin markets

Global (macro) environment

- ˆ The global business context
- ˆ Political stability
- ˆ Legal/Regulatory environment
- ˆ Government policies for tourism development
- ˆ Economic conditions in origin markets
- ˆ Sociocultural environment
- ˆ Investment environment for tourism development
- ˆ Technology changes

Price competitiveness

- ˆ Value for money in destination tourism
- ˆ Exchange rate
- ˆ Air ticket prices from major origin markets
- ˆ Accommodation prices
- ˆ Destination package tour prices
- ˆ Price of destination visit relative to competitor destinations

Safety/Security

- ˆ Level of visitor safety in destination
- ˆ Incidence of crimes against tourists in destination

Demand Factors

- ˆ Destination awareness
- ˆ Destination perception
- ˆ Destination preferences

Market Performance Indicators

Visitor statistics (numbers)

- ˆ Number of foreign visitors
 - ˆ Growth rate of foreign visitors
 - ˆ Market share of destination – world, regional
-

Table 2. Selected Indicators of Destination Competitiveness (cont.).

ˆ Shifts in market share
ˆ Average length of stay
ˆ Rate of revisit
Visitor statistics (expenditure)
ˆ Expenditure of foreign visitors (FX receipts)
ˆ Growth rate of expenditure of foreign visitors
ˆ Share of destination in total tourism expenditure – world, regional
ˆ Shifts in expenditure share
ˆ Foreign exchange earnings from tourism as percentage of total exports
Contribution of tourism to economy
ˆ Contribution of tourism to value added (absolute values and percentages, and rate of growth)
ˆ Domestic tourism
ˆ International tourism
ˆ Contribution of tourism to employment (absolute numbers; percentage of total employment and rate of growth)
ˆ Domestic tourism
ˆ International tourism
ˆ Productivity of tourism industry sectors
Indicators of economic prosperity
ˆ Aggregate levels of employment
ˆ Rate of economic growth
ˆ Per capita income
Tourism investment
ˆ Investment in tourism industry from domestic sources
ˆ Foreign direct investment in tourism industry
ˆ Investment in tourism as percentage of total industry investment (and trend)
Price competitiveness indices
ˆ Aggregate price competitiveness indices
ˆ By journey purpose
ˆ By tourism sector
Government support for tourism
ˆ Budget for tourism ministry
ˆ Budget for NTO
ˆ NTO expenditure on destination marketing (comparison with competitors)
ˆ Support for transport infrastructure
ˆ Industry programmes accessed by tourism industry
ˆ Tax concessions
ˆ Subsidies to industry
ˆ Export marketing assistance
ˆ Vocational education skills/training for tourism industry

Source: Dwyer and Kim (2010, p. 400).

1.3. Rural Tourism Concept

Daily tourism becomes more and more popular global leisure activity and has been emerged as one of the most dynamic and fastest growing industries all over the world, which represents around 6% of international trade in both goods and service and contains 30% of the world's export of commercial services (Daniloska & Mihajlovska, 2015). In both developed and developing countries, tourism is supposed to be a vital mean of growth in economic, social and cultural activity and regions development

(Hall, 2004). It is also a highly competitive environment, which forces tourism players to provide better services for customers in order to stay competitive.

In practice economic, social or geographic a special place is occupied by what is called rural tourism, agro-tourism, (green tourism) or tourism rural areas (Nistoreanu, 2003).

It is a phenomenon that has developed over time, and for European countries, especially those in Europe, this is not a new phenomenon. He practiced in a spontaneous manner were relatively organized, but has become lately an extension particular, closely in line with the expansion of urban phenomenon, with opportunities growing movement and not least the financial resources of population.

Rural tourism is an economic activity, seen from the perspective that is part of the largest economic sector (tourism) and part of the economic base of rural settlements. At the same time, it is a way of preserving natural and human qualities of a geographic space, an education and improved quality of life for those who practice this active (Nistoreanu, 2003) .

A general definition would be that rural tourism is tourism activity carried out in rural areas, seen in all its complexity. This activity must ensure the survival of specific values of this area and satisfy the interests of those providing tourist services, but also those who are beneficiaries (Petrea,1999).

Defining rural tourism by introducing the concept of rural area is apparently extremely clear, but the variety of natural conditions and socio-economic level hotels, resulted in an application diverse concept of rural area - linked to population density and buildings, how land use, the operating structures and ownership structure and type of households or traditional structures of the population.

For the purpose of psychologists, rural tourism is a special form of tourism in which the emphasis is on the human side. The tourist is considered as a true guest, friend and human contact (dialogue and exchange of impressions) is paramount. Tourists must respond to this hospitality by respect and consideration for the rural community (Sallard, 1998).

Sociologists believe that rural tourism can be practice in going rural. Tourist life will know the man (peasant), everyday life, cultural countryside. Therefore, tourist facilities in rural areas should be exclusively rural community, one able to keep unaltered rural areas (Petrea, 1999).

According to some authors in the European Union (EU) there are two trends (Christian, 2012):

- a) If the profits made from tourism activity incumbent local community using the concept of rural tourism or tourism in the country and if they return, farmers exclusively use the term agritourism;
- b) The second trend is based on the variety of elements that constitute the tourist offer. It uses the term rural tourism when the rural culture is the basic component of the tourism product offering. According to the item (belonging to rural culture) which holds the largest share is used and the concepts of agro-tourism, green tourism or ecotourism gastronomic, equestrian, nautical, historical, cultural etc.

It follows therefore, that rural tourism is a form of tourism that provides the tourist direct contact with the physical and human environment of the countryside and give him the opportunity to know and participate in the daily life of the local population. Rural tourism has a strong cultural and educational vocation, and of particular importance for the preservation of cultural values and identity of rural communities (Christian, 2012).

Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund offer necessary support for improving the competitiveness of tourism and quality on a regional and local level.

Infrastructure that is being created for tourism is supporting local development and creating or maintaining work places even in regions that are described by the fading of industry or rural activity or where urbanism is being resurrected (Christian, 2010).

This is why tourism is an important tool for the integration of less developed regions or for allowing them access to equal benefits that accompany economic growth.

Tourism industry has an important role in the global economy as an indicator of economic status (Liu & Wall, 2006), it has the role to reduce unemployment, create national income, raise the level of population's welfare etc.

Sustainable development for local communities should aim to improve the residents' quality of life by optimizing local economic benefits, protecting the natural and built environment and providing a high-quality experience for visitors.

It was mention that, in the large field of Tourism and Nature or 'green tourism', besides ecotourism, the agritourism is a complementary activity in the rural development process, which makes the agricultural activity profitable as it combines agriculture and tourism, improves natural resources, contributes at the rural area socially and economically (Fratu & Gruia, 2012).

In many developing countries, agriculture is vital for sustainable rural development and it is recognized as a main mean for reducing poverty and ensuring economic growth. In this sense, reducing poverty in rural areas depends significantly on sustainable agricultural development.

However, agricultural development should be considering not only by increasing production but also in the sense of developing rural society.

Agritourism is when a native person or local of the area offers tours to their Agriculture Farm and allows a person to view them growing, harvesting, and processing locally grown foods or any product the person would not encounter in their home country.

Rural and Agritourism are alternatives to bad practices, not just trips; their purpose is to stop things like dynamite fishing, destruction of forest, wearing out the soil, etc.

Rural tourism is a trip based on the desire to discover nature, with the purpose to meet the host culture and discover its habits, traditions.

Another positive effect of rural tourism is that it helps the local community to increase its income and it offers employment opportunities, without the least damaging effects on the natural environment (Goodwin, 2011).

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. WTO used rural tourism concept for defining that tourism product that gives to visitors a personalized contact, a taste of physical and human environment of countryside and as far as possible, consent them to participate in the tasks, traditions and lifestyles of local people (WTO, 2002).

According to WTO, it is considered as part of rural tourism a wide range of activities like climbing, riding, adventure tourism, educational travel, sport and health tourism, arts and heritage tourism.

Rural tourism is a trend in Europe and is in a continuous growing. WTO (2002) estimates an annual growth of approximately 6% of rural tourism comparing with 2% growth of tourism in general. In a number of Southern and Eastern European countries the growth was strongly, more than 20%, due to some transformations which took place in the countryside and agriculture as a results of recently involved in the European Union. The specific features of rural tourism are (WTO, 2002):

- First, it is concentrated in rural areas.
- Second, it is based on small-scale and traditional activities and enterprises, environmental aspects and heritage.
- Third, it is related to small-scale buildings and settlements
- Fourth, it relies on traditional qualities of the countryside and develops slowly under the control of local people.
- Lastly, it reflects the complexity of the rural environment and has several different forms.

In European countries, rural tourism became an important segment of tourism. The EuroGites (2003) conference in 2003 reported that there were more than 200 thousand providers of Farm and Village Tourism registered in Europe, with more than 2 million beds.

A Euro barometer survey on "Europeans on Holiday" showed that more and more people are interested not only in "sampling" new places but also in discovering different forms of tourism, placing greater emphasis on quality products, on more environmentally and culturally sensitive forms of tourism and on shorter but more frequent trips, while a significant number of Europeans (23%) choose the countryside as the most preferred tourism destination (EC, 1998).

Rural areas and agricultural fields are two concepts that are usually used one instead of another. However, rural areas are multifunctional dynamic systems. They include different land use and activities such as settlement, transportation, industry, forestry, tourism and recreation. With the post-industrial revolution, urbanization and increased leisure time, tourism and recreation activities in rural areas have also increased (Bhuvanewari, 1999).

On the other hand, in the restructuring process of economy in rural areas, one of the most obvious effects is the necessity to create job opportunities alternative to agricultural sector. In this respect agro-tourism, as part of rural tourism, is a valued option protecting the rural environment, sustaining small-sized enterprises and providing income and job opportunities (Bhuvanewari, 1999).

Agritourism is defined by the movement of people in a rural unpolluted, located in a picturesque area, complete with accommodation for at least 24 hours and consumption of food and non-specific, complete with cohabitation and integration in rural society seen in all its complexity (Bhuvanewari, 1999).

Agritourism, which is defined as 'any tourism or recreation enterprise on a working farm' or 'form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms' can be seen as a new income source for agricultural societies (Upchurch & Josiam, 2000).

Within the context of agricultural tourism there are services such as outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing, kitesurfing), educational experiences (wine tasting, cooking classes), entertainment (festivals, and hospitality services (staying at the farm). In this context, advantages of agricultural tourism can be summarizing as follows:

- Helps to protect the agricultural areas, cultivation lands and rural landscape.
- Creates diversity in agricultural pattern and job opportunities in rural areas.
- Provides opportunities for marketing the agricultural products.
- Increases welfare level of local people.
- Establishes social and economic relations between urban and rural dwellers.
- Provides a bridge between rural and urban areas.
- Meets the tourism and recreation needs of urban people.
- Increases the respectability of agricultural activity from the urban peoples' point of views.
- Introducing agricultural activities to urban people is a way to educate urban people in the sense of contribution of agriculture to quality of life and economy.

In addition to the above-mentioned advantages of rural tourism, are the principles determined for tourism industry in the Rio Declaration in 1992 (e.g. protection of ecosystem, harmony with nature, creation of job opportunities for local people). In the context of sustainable rural development, agriculture as a

tourism and recreation source can be deemed as an opportunity for rural areas (Bran, Marin & Simon, 1997).

Brief history of development of rural tourism. Empirical forms of tourism within rural areas since Antiquity, related to conducting pilgrimages to holy places, making bathrooms or participating in various festive events.

Evolution of human society has led to increasing travel and knowledge inevitably characteristic of rural areas. The first forms of organization of rural tourism in Europe is due painters who, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they realized works with subjects from rural life.

In the modern era, especially after 1960, interest has grown in population for leisure, tourism became an important economic activity. Besides data provided by the World Tourism Organization show a substantial increase in the number of tourists worldwide to over 450 million in 1990 to almost 700 million in 2001. The forecast for 2010 is about 1 billion, and for 2020 by 1.5 billion. In the world ranking the first 15 tourist destinations in 2001 stands USA (12.7%), Germany (10%), UK (7.9%), Japan (5.7%), France (3, 8%), Italy (3.1%), China (Hong Kong especially 2.7%), Netherlands (2.6%), Canada (2.5%), Belgium (2.1%), Austria (1.9%), South Korea (1.5%), Sweden (1.5%) and Switzerland (1.4%) Besides data provided by the World Tourism Organization show a substantial increase in the number of tourists worldwide to over 450 million in 1990 to almost 700 million in 2001. The forecast for 2010 is about 1 billion, and for 2020 by 1.5 billion. In the world ranking the first 15 tourist destinations in 2001 stands USA (12.7%), Germany (10%), UK (7.9%), Japan (5.7%), France (3, 8%), Italy (3.1%), China (Hong Kong especially 2.7%), Netherlands (2.6%), Canada (2.5%), Belgium (2.1%), Austria (1.9%), South Korea (1.5%), Sweden (1.5%) and Switzerland (1.4%) (UNWTO, 2014).

Certainly, among tourist destinations in these countries, with special weight in international tourism include rural areas.

According to the European Union, a quarter of the EU population travels to a rural area within their holidays. Moreover, while focusing on natural and cultural resources, rural tourism provides visitors with an alternative to 'sun and sand tourism'. Recently instead of three S (sun, sea, sand) - come three L (landscape, lore, leisure). If considered in a wider environment of a destination's frame this orientation gives tourism providers the possibility to vary and supplement their offers whilst spreading the advantages of tourism more extensively (Sharpley, 2002).

Now it is time to raise the question connected with the meaning of 'rural areas', because each country gives various values to that term. For example, in some European countries such as Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France, the term rural locations represent diver's spaces, coastal and mountain areas. In Italy, for example, this term attributes to rural locations that are neither urban nor sea, but contains mountains. In Ireland and the UK, rural locations are actually all non-urban

spaces. In Spain, Portugal and Greece, there is a trend to understand the rural parts, used for rural production (Biany, Sirbulescy, & Chirila, 2013).

Continuing speaking about rural tourism, it is needed to clear up differences between rural and urban tourism, which are presented in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Differences between rural and urban tourism.

Rural tourism	Urban Tourism
takes place in an open space	an acute lack of space
rural settlements have less than 10 000 inhabitants	Over 10000 people
is sparsely populated	Extremely populated
outdoor activities	Indoors
underdeveloped infrastructure	Well defined
family businesses	national or international scale
activities extended to agriculture	Independent
distance between work and home is small	Significant
influenced by seasonality and agricultural works	is less affected by seasonality
number of people who attend rural areas is small	Significant
relationships between host and tourist are personal	Formal
amateur management	Professional
equipment and old buildings generally	New
relaxing atmosphere, quiet, new, no templates	trends of industrialization, automation and oversimplification, lack of personalization of services, reducing tension and keeping warm hospitality and urban stress

Source: Adapted from Barbu (2013, pp.127-128) cited by Karalkova (2016, pp.8).

It is difficult to obtain summary statistics of tourism in rural areas based on the numerical parameters of residents. For example, the population point from UK where the 7000 population lives will be ranked as the rural area, while in Austria it will be included in the Urban Tourism Statistics. At the local level, it is common to classify geographic units by the proportion of their population that is rural into the following three kinds: predominantly rural (50%), significantly rural (15-50%) and predominantly urbanized regions (15%), (OECD, 1994).

From the other point of view, rural tourism should be seen as a continuum of various types of tourism subject to the region/location where it occurs. That is, the inquiry for rural tourism is immediately connected with the distinct feature of rural locations. It looks like rural regions not far from urban locations are very likely to present several urban tendencies, whereas circumferential rural locations whereas attracting lower levels of tourists can propose more possibilities for more rural-specific tourism activities.

For example, farm tourism is characteristically rural, whilst cultural tourism is usually an urban type of tourism. In contrast, wellness tourism located in the middle of these two forms of tourism (Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014).

But still in spite of development of different types of tourism and especially grows in rural tourism sectors in these latter days it needs a huge governmental and civil support. The principal concept here is laying in an idea of sustainable development of rural locations. The conception of sustainable development in on the whole has been around for centuries but it was not till 1987 that established use of the term 'sustainable development' received international consideration and acknowledgment, when it was determined as development that meets the necessities of the present without compromising the opportunity of next generations to meet their proper needs. It goes without saying that here such concept as provision of balance between the economies, the environment and society are included.

In financial terms, rural tourism not only grants complementary revenue for agricultural producers and farmers, but it also facilitates either employment conservation or job formation for the population within rural locations. New working places are typically obtainable not only in hotels and catering services, but also in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage exegesis (Daniloska & Mihajlovska, 2015).

Politicians as institutions often put much expectations in tourism as an instrument for rural elaboration. Escalating world tourism is an effective source of revenue and employment and in some cases, one of few accessible options (Sharpley, 2002). In many European countries, rural tourism is very popular nowadays, and they even have a special classification system of tourist accommodation units. It goes without saying, that rural tourism is a booming tourism industry in many parts of the world, but mostly in developed countries, and has essentially expanded since the 1970, either in terms of demand or of supply (Lane, 1994, 2009). In most countries, there are regulations at national level, and only in Belgium, Spain and Italy regulations at regional level exist, and in Finland, there are not regulations of this nature at all.

The classification of lodging tourism units connected with rural tourism is as an encrypted type such as to synthesize the degree of comfort and the range of services based on reputation, moral climate and a set of requirements, criteria and norms of services. Not only classification frames vary from one Member State to another, but also there is a considerable multiplicity of forms of tourism accommodation units with lodging connected with rural tourism (Foris, 2014).

Table 4. Types of tourism structures related to rural tourism accommodation and classification categories used in the different States of the European Union (cont.).

No.	Country	Types of accommodation tourism units	Classification categories/Structures types
1	Austria	Guest House, bed and breakfast, Apartment	1 - 5 stars
2	Belgium	Guest room, open-air, Recreation Complex (structure), holiday	1 - 5 stars
3	Bulgaria	Complex (and religious) holiday, Family Hotel, Bungalow and Camping, houses for rent, rooms, vacation homes and houses	Complex (and religious) holiday: 3 - 5 stars, Family Hotel: 1 - 3 stars, Bungalow and Camping: 1 - 2 stars, Houses for rent: 1 - 3 stars, Separate rooms, holiday homes and houses: 1 - 3 stars
4	Cyprus	Tourist village, Tourism villa, camping Ground, Traditional House (Hotel and Apartment Hotel), Tourist Apartment	Tourist village, Tourist Villa: Deluxe, A, B, C - categories Camping ground A, B, - categories Traditional House (Hotel and Apartment Hotel), Tourist apartment: no stars Other categories: Star Hotel and Guesthouse
5	Croatia	Camping and other types of accommodation: rooms and apartments	1 - 5 stars
6	Czech Republic	Bed and breakfast, Camping, Cottage, Bedroom for Hikers	1 star: Tourist 2 stars: Economy, 3 stars: Standard, 4 stars: First class, 5 stars: Luxury
7	Denmark	Hostel	1- 5 stars
8	Estonia	Guest house, tourist villages and camps, holiday home, apartment for visitors, B&B	1 - 5 stars
9	Finland	Chalets	-
10	France	Camping, rooms, Houses, Holiday Villages Tourist Villages, Residential, Residential Amusement Parks	Accommodation classified pursuant valid norms by July 2009: Hotel 0 stars. Tourist residence: 1 - 4 stars. 1 - 5 stars
11	Germany	Guest houses, bed and breakfast, Inn, Tavern etc.	G-classification
12	Greece	Main structures: furnished apartment, Camping-secondary structures: rooms for rent, furnished apartments, furnished house and mansion	- Furnished apartments and rooms for rent: 1 - 5 stars, -Camping: A, B, C categories
13	Ireland	Guest House, Hostel for holiday, Holiday Camp, campers and camping, Holiday Cottages, holiday apartment	-accommodation units (Guest houses): 1 - 4 stars - accommodation units Guest houses) - ungraded, with symbols U,N, R
14	Italy	non-establishment: B&B, Youth Hostel, private House, Alpine Refuge-outdoor shelters-tourist village, Camping, these categories may vary from one region to another	- Most regions have adopted a system based on six categories of classification: from 1 star to 5 star Deluxe, based on a minimum required score of each category, -10 regions using a system based on 5 categories of classification: from 1 star to 5 stars deluxe based on classification criteria.
15	Latvia	The Guest House, the-Other categories: Camping	Guest House: I-IV categories, Camping: I-III categories
16	Lithuania	The Guest House, the-other: camping, rest home, nursing home, for health center, tourist center, the home of free time	Guest House: 1 - 4 stars

Table 4. Types of tourism structures related to rural tourism accommodation and classification categories used in the different States of the European Union (cont.).

No.	Country	Types of accommodation tourism units	Classification categories/Structures types
17	Luxembourg	Hotel	1 - 5 stars
18	Malta	Holiday village guest house, B&B establishment	Holiday Village: 2-5 stars, Guest House: standard or comfort, B&B establishment: 2-3 stars
19	Great Britain	Hotel: Hotel-guest accommodation units: B&B, House, farmhouse, Inn, Restaurant with rooms, Campus-Hostel: Hostel accommodation, Activity, sleeping cabin, shed, Camping-self-catering apartment, Caravan, holiday-holiday park: camping and tourist Park tourist village -	There are four classification systems, distributed for: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Most of the systems is based on the star system. England: 1-5 stars, Scotland, Wales: 0-5 classes
20	Holland	Camping and Bungalow Park	1 - 5 stars
21	Poland	Bed and breakfast/guest house, Camping, tourist Home, Bivouac Pension: 1-5 stars, Camping: 1-4-star Guest House/House for tourists, the bivouac: I-III categories	Pension: 1-5 stars, Camping: 1 – 4 - star Guest House/House for tourists, the bivouac: I-III categories
22	Portugal	tourist structures: Inn, tourist village (holiday), tourist Apartment (holiday) Holiday Villa, tourist structures in rural areas (cabins, structures for agritourism, rural hotels), Camping and caravans-hosting local units	- tourist structures: Inn: located in a national park or monument of public interest: the 4- star hotel, located in a building of regional or local public interest or historical or architectural value: 3-star tourist village: 3-5 stars, tourist Apartment
23	Romania	Hostels, tourist complexes, apartments and rooms for rent, bungalow, cottage, camping, tourist village, a tourist stopover, apartments and camping,	- tourist and agritourist pensions pensions: 1- 5 daisies (flowers)-bungalow, cottage, apartment or tourist rooms for rent: 1 - 3 stars camping, tourist village, a tourist stopover, apartments and camping type: 1 - 4 stars
24	Slovakia	Guest House-Apartment, holiday village, Camping and campsites, private accommodation	Guest House: standard and budget (economic), which correspond to categories of classification of the hotels of 1, 2 and 3 stars, House-apartment: 2-, 3-star holiday village: economic, medium, superior Camping and campsites: four classes, private accommodation: rural tourism and agritourism
25	Slovenia	Pension, Inn, Campground, apartment, 1st floor, Holiday House, private rooms, accommodation at the farm House	Camping: 1 - 5 stars, Pension, Inn, second floor, Holiday House, private rooms: 1 - 4 - star accommodation on the farm House: 1 to 4 apples.
26	Spain	Camping, private rooms, retreat, guest houses, rural homes	Secondary group: -private rooms, rural Houses: 1 - 3 stars-guest houses: no category. In some regions, the grading system can be included in a "higher class" for private rooms and rural Houses-silver stars.
27	Sweden	Hotel, Hotel Garni	1 - 5 stars
28	Hungary	Bed and breakfast, camping, holiday house, hostel, tourist board	1 - 5 stars

Source: Adapted from Foris (2014, pp.41-43) cited by Karalkova (2016, pp.10)

2. Characterization and Development of Rural Tourism: Republic of Moldova versus Portugal

2.1. Rural Tourism in Republic of Moldova

Moldova is situated in the central part of Europe the capital is city Chisinau. To the north, east and south is surrounded by Ukraine, and west is separated from Romania by the Prut River. Moldovan territory area is 33846 km², of which 92.3% of the total territory of the country belongs to the rural area (31 239 km²). The lands occupied by the water are 81 500/ha. Forest-green area located in nature reserves and protected areas is 450.5 thousand hectares. Forests occupy an area of 12.5% percent (Sali, 2013).

Tourism is one of the areas with the largest profits in countries with rich tourism potential exploited. Currently, the contribution of tourism to the national economy of Moldova is relatively insignificant, caused by the existence of untapped tourism potential, as also because of low global visibility of the country. To obtain a tourism economic efficiency is necessary to develop existing tourism product, awareness of the importance of tourism development for local development, diversification of services, and development of economic incentive mechanisms (including tax) agents within the industry.

One of the important forms of tourism that can bring direct benefits to rural communities, creating new jobs and additional income to farmers, rural tourism. In this aspect, the period in question were carried out activities on the development of rural tourism, being determined list of objectives and national tourist routes.

According to opinion of some researchers, Moldova as a tourist destination has a great potential for its visitors, as evidenced by the increasing of tourist arrivals in Republic of Moldova by an average of 7% per year, beginning from 2012 year (www.statistica.md). The country's tourism product is a complex environment, both natural and created by humans (heritage, cultural activities, and visitor services).

Since 1972 In Moldova there were created 5 scientific reserves (with the total surface of about 19 400 ha), 63 natural reserves, forests, and mixed herbs (over 8009 ha), 41 landscape reserves (34 200 ha), 13 resource reserves (523 ha), 288 monuments of nature - geological and paleontological, hydrological, botanical (2906 ha) in addition, in the republic there are 433 trees taken under state protection and 269 species of animals and plants included in the Red book of Moldova (Florea, 2005).

In order to protect the nature that is the basis for developing of rural tourism there were adopted various legislative acts such as Land Code no. No 828 from 25.12.1991, Forest Code nr. 887 from 21.06.1996, Law of the Republic of Moldova on Environmental Protection nr.1515-XII from 16.06.93.

Of goals anthropological most visited are religious (54 monastic complexes, churches) and spas, some of which are equipped with additional services such as equipped beach, boat stations, sports fields, indoor sports facilities, summer terrace, bar, shop for a rest and to promote comprehensive rural sector as a result of practicing rural tourism.

In the context of rural, little promoted are mansions. Much of our villages, former boyars' estates, mansions still today nobles. Some have been converted into museums, hospitals or schools, others are forgotten. As some goals cultural-historical tourists unfortunately 70% of the Fund are destroyer, and some are not even mentioned (Tarhon, 2013).

Table 5. Applicability rural landmarks.

Nr.	Lens Types	The practical application	Number/ Quantity
1	Lakes	Canoeing, fishing rest beach	12
2	Rivers	Fishing, rafting, kitesurfing	250
3	Structures with functions of tourist accommodation and meal serving	Cycling, equestrian, gastronomic tourism, master (handicrafts, gastronomy), hunting, recreation, gathering medicinal plants, historical shows,	274
4	Scientific reservations	Ecological tourism, bird watching	2
5	Health resorts	Health tourism, leisure	7
6	Exclusive wine farms, specialized in receiving tourists	Tasting, wine purchase, recreation, organization harvest, create your own bouquet of wine, brochures, publications with recipes from the harvested crop, sports competitions	10
7	Mansions	Excursions, archaeological tourism,	47
8	Rocks	Tourism exotic, photography, climbing,	7
9	Caves	Speleology, adventure	10
10	Forestry	Adventure, Hunting	56,3 thousands /ha

Source: Adapted from Climenko, Trombițki and Andreev (2002, p.?).

Harnessing the old mansions and their promotion by placing them in the rural tourism product or trips can become targets as a basis for development of rural tourism sector by broadening the spectrum of tourist attractions in Moldova.

Thus, rural Moldova has a different value targets that can be use in tourism activities. Rural tourism sector in Moldova is quite varied and very affordable. All this is thanks to the rich cultural heritage and tourism and rural tourism activity pays special attention to services provided at European, standards but without forgetting the authenticity and specificity of rural tourism.

Wine tourism presents itself an important part of rural tourism, especially for Moldova, which is located between the main border wine routes, has plantations rich grapes, climate fine and components cultural and historical, and has all the prerequisites for organizing development of wine tourism. For centuries, Moldova has gained rich traditions of growing grapevine and wine production. Currently the country operates 142 wineries. 23 of them have experience and facilities in terms of receiving visitors. Here tourists can take cognizance of wine production technology, to track how are bottled and of course, sample the finished product. By their quality, many of the wines produced in our country enjoys a good reputation internationally (Cosciug, 2014).

At the end of the century, there is an increased demand for tourism in rural areas. The causes of this guidance have economic nature, return to nature, from family to group work, curiosity and desire for knowledge. Share in motivational factors have air cure, recreation and sports, water sports, horseback riding, hiking, hunting and fishing. At the basis of all these services and activities is of course the accommodation service, which aims to create conditions through its contents and comfort for housing and leisure traveler. This service is present in rural areas as a complex activity arising from the exploitation of accommodation capacities and consists of a grouping of benefits offered to the tourist, during their stay in accommodation. Development and quality accommodation service in villages is dependent primarily on the existence of a technical infrastructure for accommodation (villas, holiday villages, campsites, etc.) appropriate with adequate facilities, offering tourists ideal conditions meet, where applicable, and other functions. Secondly, the accommodation service is influenced by staffing the accommodation capacity of the accommodation. Accommodation in rural households inside the advantage that they are integrated in terms of socio-economic and cultural environment in the countryside. The degree of integration in rural areas depends on the quality of accommodation offered location (traditional and typical site) and by the reception given by the owners and the community in general. Pursuant to the above, we can conclude that the majority of accommodation in rural areas are designed as an additional service to basic services and activities. Most accommodation in rural areas of Moldova are the agro and guesthouses and holiday villages with camping areas, less meet hotels, hostels for visitors, other accommodation. Currently in rural areas of the country, there is a shortage of accommodation structures that provide quality services at free prices, the majority being made up of pensions and agritourism, and holiday villages. In principle, all of accommodation number is slowly

growing, registering significant increases. A better situation presents holiday villages and similar structures that throughout the period of the tourism industry in rural areas following the way of a secure growth development (Cosciug, 2014).

Holiday villages in Moldova, structure and functionality, should equate tourist villages, is those entities well established that, outside of its functions politico-administrative, social, economic and cultural meet, seasonal or throughout the year, and the function of hosting tourists to spend a vacation. Such characteristics villages must satisfy one or more of their motivations rustic tourism, is preserving traditions, to have a historical past, have scenic areas. The advantages are obvious existence of tourist villages. Tourism activity grows by attracting new population groups: young people, families with children, and people with lower incomes. The staff working in these facilities is minimal or reduced to the accommodation owners. Moldovan villages there are enormous possibilities for conversion into tourist villages. Hospitable and hardworking people are happy guest in their homes in villages in tourist areas, curative and environmental areas. In addition, unfortunately, there are many abandoned houses in our villages or uninhabited, temporarily or permanently, which can be arranged with minimum investment to receive guests. Besides households with accommodation possibilities, they represent the second category of accommodation base for tourists visiting tourist villages, holiday or just for a weekend (Lazăr, 2004).

The small number of tourists and overnight stays in accommodation mentioned is due to several causes. First, it should be noted that many of those who are resting, doing during certain holidays or vacation, some prefer just days' weekend, while others are in transit and tourism are not able to remain in the area several days. An important conclusion is that tourism in rural areas is characterized primarily by seasonality. In the three summer months - June, July, and August - the values are significant in number of tourist arrivals. In tourism, the seasonality concerns on the one hand, the incomplete use of the technical, material and labor, negatively influencing the cost of tourism services and their quality, and on the other hand, the low level of satisfying the needs of consumers, affecting thus the development of tourist traffic.

Moldovan rural agricultural communities and picturesque villages, serve as an important source for tourism (Lazăr, 2004):

- Accommodation services in traditional areas;
- Provide opportunities for visitors to engage in pursuits and activities;
- Familiarity with folklore, entertainment and traditions;
- Presentation of handicrafts with the opportunity to participate in the work itself;
- Crafts providing opportunities for buying.

Moldova are located in rural communities in the vast majority of tourism resources functionality. Investigations showed that these resources include land areas, natural areas protected by the state and a wide variety of cultural monuments - historical.

After exploring these lands began to degrade or uncontrollable by human impact all parts of nature - forests, soils, water, grasslands, meadows - began to lose their natural appearance and structure.

Most tourist areas and resorts in Moldova requires a management plan for launching tourism market. International practice shows that in such cases may be used technique "marketing mix" for the resort as a whole: resources, infrastructure and material base concentrated in one place (Miron, 2005).

Three major legislative program:

- National program "Moldovan Village" (2005-2015) adopted according to Government Decision no. 242 from 17.05.2005
- National Program in tourism "Wine Road in Moldova", adopted according to Government Decision no. 554 from 24.05.2004
- Strategy of tourism development "Tourism 2020, adopted according to Government Decision no.338 from May 19, 2014

Provide an opportunity to be acquainted with the existing tourism potential of rural areas, with tourist resource management features with the rules of the organization of tourist activities and others.

In the strategy of tourism development, "Tourism 2020" is stipulate as major steps that need to be taken to the Moldova tourism became competitive economic sector and developed a balanced:

- 1) improving the legal framework for tourism in accordance with the requirements of the tourist market, adjusted to European standards;
- 2) national tourism potential and promote Moldova's image as a tourist destination;
- 3) development of regional tourism;
- 4) Improve training of specialized staff and the quality of tourist services;
- 5) technological upgrading of the tourism industry through the use of information technology and communications.

Only in the case of using, the aforementioned measures can achieve the competitiveness of rural tourism, which in Moldova has found its fullest expression in the wine tourism, gastronomy, historical, religious, cultural, ethnographic tourism.

2.2. Rural Tourism in Portugal

Situated in the Western part of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal is a country with one of the most antique and sustainable territorial frontiers of Europe (Silva & Leal, 2015). Until the end of the XXth century tourism based on the 'sun and beach' has been the main commodity of the Iberian Peninsula (Loureiro, González, & Javier, 2009). The conception is determined as a paid set of activities and services provided in rural regions, in foundations with family nature aiming at sentence of a complete and varied tourism commodity in rural locations (Agapito, Mendes, & Pinto, 2012).

In the Portuguese case, extension of rural areas had been further strengthened by the country's assumption to the European Union in 1986, whose orientations – particularly the realization of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in which many of the European rural territories were admitted as places for nature preservation and multifunctional areas – led to the amplification of the 'derealisation' process of the country, as well as to the desolation and decadence of many rural areas (Figueiredo, 2008). In these latter days, western and particularly Portuguese remote rural locations are increasingly considered as multifunctional areas, where efficient activities, such as agriculture or forestry, are occasionally as prominent as the (growing) consumption-oriented activities as leisure and tourism (Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012). Besides leisure and tourism, new functions of the countryside contain environmental protection and the conservation of both customs and memories and of the built patrimony and inheritance (Silva, 2012). Those locations are nowadays 'beyond agriculture'. However, around 50% of Portuguese area may be measure as brittle and declining rural locations (Baptista, 2006).

In Portugal, tourism is a strategic sector in the country economy. Indeed, with a view to enhance the destination's attraction for tourism, the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (Ministério da Economia e da Inovação, 2007) pinpointed nature-based tourism as one of the ten national strategic products.

As previously mentioned, the focus is on the region of northern Portugal Boticas village, which lies in the district of Vila Real, in the NUTS (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) III Alto Tâmega, northeast Portugal.

The municipality is divided into ten parishes, which comprise an area of 321.96 km², and according to urban typology (screaming) for July 2014 are considered moderately urban areas (AMU) and 3 rural areas (mainly DAE). In 2011, Boticas municipality's population stands at 5,750 people, including 1,510 residents were located in Union Parish Boticas and Granja (central parish of the city), corresponding to 26.3% of the resident population. This common, like other interior regions of the country was affect significantly by concentration of services and activities in coastal regions (Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro, & Silva, 2016).

Boticas has an availability of endogenous resources with high tourism potential, although they are not operated properly, as demonstrated in the document referred in early 2016 by the Interactive Porto and Northern Portugal Travel Shop, located in Boticas (Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro, & Silva, 2016).

Now, due to embryonic development of tourism in Boticas, accommodation offer is still rare, as indicated by the small number of welcome guests. In terms of hotel activity, the study accommodation (survey to the Guests) conducted in 2013 shows that Boticas had 1,329 guests staying for an average of 1.4 night (INE, 2014). However, the Portuguese surveys do not include all the types of accommodation, which in this context could include a greater number of tourists staying overnight than registered (Cunha, 2013 cited by Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro, and Silva, 2016).

Another weakness in tourism in this region is related to seasonality, which does not facilitate economic sustainability of this activity for much of the year. Between 2011 and 2015, the months that recorded a greater influx of visitors were between June and September (Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro, & Silva, 2016).

In the municipalities within Portugal, like Boticas, climate greatly influences the tourism sector. For example, in June 2012, the region has recorded the highest average temperature (maximum and minimum). The value was above the 1970-2000 average temperature (Institute of Meteorology, 2012 cited by Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro and Silva, 2016). Consequently, the number of visits has increased compared with the average over the period between 2011 and 2015. Boticas reached 5524 visitors last year, especially in July and August, reaching an average of 844 visitors/month. Most visitors were Portuguese (97.5%) and 2.5% were foreigners - 38.2% and 36.0% were French were Spanish (Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro, & Silva, 2016).

It is expected that Boticas the Art Hotel and Spa - opened in 2014 - could help increase the number of visitors. Also, the municipality has been active in promoting tourism in the region, especially in the construction of Nadir Afonso Arts Centre, Archaeological Park and Valley of Tervise Boticas Park - Nature and Biodiversity. These elements can attract more visitors and mitigate weaknesses identified in the general action Pent - National Tourism Strategic Plan (2013-2015) (Ministério da Economia e do Emprego, 2012 cited by Lopes, Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Ribeiro and Silva, 2016).

The majority of the rural visitors in Portugal are old-aged tourists on a day trip who arrived in coach tours, but there are also groups of friends and families (with and without children) who attend the villages absolutely and arrive by car. They often arrive here on the advice of a family member or friend who has said them that 'it is worth a visit', or occasionally, or because they saw the place in a tourist guidebook. But very often in villages houses no longer procure corresponding living conditions as they did before, and they perceive that they can no longer afford to refine them as before, because of binding disciplinary arrangements; there are few young people; unemployment influences on a considerable share of the population of working age; admission to medical aid is usually difficult, because there are no health centres or pharmacies; children have to go to schools in other villages; public transport inclines to be occasional; and tourism income is low (Silva, 2012).

Like in majority of other European countries, rural locations in Portugal have incurred essential changes over the course of latest decades as an outcome of increasingly global socioeconomic movement of

alteration. Even if the results of these processes of alteration that have occurred in rural locations may vary, in accordance with countries and areas, one of its most apparent symbol has been the deprivation of the monopoly enjoyed by agricultural activities. This apparent gave place to a rural no longer seen as a generative area but increasingly represented as an intake and expendable space in which leisure and tourism activities shoulder an overriding part. In consequence of these modifications, many Portuguese rural locations, especially distant ones, are nowadays seen, either in social or in institutional terms, as post-agricultural and intake-oriented areas. These locations may be defined as low solidity spaces, populated by aged, retired and with low degrees of literacy populations. Definitely due to their remoteness and mustiness which configure processes of constancy of definite rural and rurality characteristics (customs, cultural heritages, exemplary architecture characteristics, landscape accompaniment, etc.) that urban populations increasingly value, these locations are nowadays at the centre platform in terms of leisure and visitor's activities (Figueiredo, 2008).

Further, to make the theory more visible, one typical touristic Portuguese village (*Aldeia da Pedralva*) and the activities provided by the creator of this village will be describe. This village was bought and rebuild by a Portuguese manager, who decided to participate in rural tourism business. The major activities are tourists' activity in trekking, biking, bird watching and surfing. Particular programs aligned at seniors conformed these to correspond their participants' capacities. Workshops on photography, Portuguese gastronomy, and yoga classes on the beach are embedded in the activities, which can be also a disjunctive to the partners of bird-watchers, surfers, bikers or trekkers, who are not comfortable with these more physical activities. Because one of the project's goals is transferring regional cognition to visitors, the program's activities feature regional conductors, and the regional grocery shop and saloons utilize local products. Besides, the visitors are also countenanced to interact and purchase fish and shellfish straight from regional fishermen who teach them how to cook it. Moreover, the trail activities goal is to give information about regional history, traditions, products, handicraft and gastronomy (Agapito, Mendes, & Pinto, 2012).

2.3. SWOT Analysis: Republic of Moldova versus Portugal

SWOT analysis is a method used to help design an overall vision of the organization. It presents a list of positive and negative characteristics of the organization analyzed and evaluated its position on the market or in relation to other competitors in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a company in relation to opportunities and threats present at one time given market.

In the following table it is possible to see a SWOT analysis of tourism between Portugal and Moldova (Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 6. SWOT Analysis: Republic of Moldova.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Agroclimaterice favourable conditions;	Technologies and outdated equipment;
Availability of tourist resources of natural and anthropogenic;	Legislation tourist nonaligned European standards;
Implementation of rural tourism projects financed from the state budget;	Lack Tourist Information Office and its subsidiaries in Moldova's diplomatic missions accredited abroad;
Implementation of tourism as a branch of the economy;	Limited number of tour operators and travel agencies and markets that form the local tourism;
Existence at Orheiul Vechi touristic pensions arranged by traditionally;	Low number of accommodation structures in rural areas
There are legal and regulatory framework of tourism;	Own revenues of local government and reduced dependence on transfers from national authorities;
Attractions for varied tourism offer;	Poor quality of road and railroads;
The tourism is managed by a specialized agency directly subordinate to the central government;	Low quality of drinking water;
Good quality snacks and beverages at affordable prices proposed;	Negative demographic trends and shortages of skilled labour;
Variety folklore, traditions and events throughout the year and all over the country.	Impairment of financial resources to promote domain;
	Ignorance of the local population of the importance of measures to protect the natural heritage and cultural objectives.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
. Vicinity with UE;	Deepening negative effects of the global financial crisis and economic downturn extension;
. Traditional Hospitality;	Infrastructure underdeveloped sights of national and international interest;
. Position the strategic benefit of the country (border with the CIS and the European Union);	Low level of knowledge in Europe and the world, of Moldova as a tourist destination;
. No need of visas for citizens of EU member countries, USA, Japan;	Lack of favourable investment climate for investors to develop infrastructure of tourist reception with functions of accommodation and food for rural tourism;
. The large number of events tourist attraction: cultural, artistic, sporting, leisure;	Political instability nationally, expressed by policy incoherence in regional development and / or frequent changes in the regulatory framework;
. Brand known wine country;	Continuous migration of economically active population;
. Availability of unique wine cellars in the world;	Increased frequency of natural disasters and extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change processes.
. The massive penetration of information technology and communications in the sphere of services;	
. Large number of traditions and celebrations that would interest tourists;	
. The high priority given by the Government regional development and decentralization reforms;	
. Creation of clusters, industrial parks and incubators.	

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Table 7. SWOT Analysis: Portugal.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Portugal have many festivals and events that draw both locals and tourists; · Portugal is a developed country with an advanced economy, high living standards and high-quality infrastructure, such as road, according to the "Global Competitiveness Report"; · Tourism is a major source of income for Portuguese; · It offers countless attractions in terms of natural resources and of the anthropogenic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The climate is very fickle with regions and cold, rainy days, but with arid lands, bathed months of sun; · Traffic problems in urban areas aggravated by an excessive dependence on individual automobile transport and rapid urban population expansion; · Poor promotion of Portugal to other countries; · Insufficient diversification of tourist offers for causing impaired growth; · Revenue outside the main season.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Available EU support for the overall modernization and upgrading of the Portuguese infrastructure; · Develop other forms of tourism (e.g., business tourism and congresses); · Promoting the country, creating a positive image. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strong competition in the sub region (e.g., Spain, Italy); · Lack of funds for development of the country; · Declining role of public transport, in particular in urban areas.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In the follow table it will be present some recommendations for both countries in analysis. This analysis is performed supported in the SWOT analysis. The table above presents measures that will help to develop rural tourism fastest and most efficient for its successful development in rural areas is need to promote the natural and human potential in rural areas by training several economic factors. Therefore, addressing an optimal management of the promotion is a prerequisite for efficiency and sustainable development of rural tourism.

Table 8. Recommendations for Moldova and Portugal.

Recommendations for Republic of Moldova	Recommendations for Portugal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arranging tourist space;• Restoration of architectural monuments;• Developing a guide tourist destination in Moldova;• Coverage quality of tourist places;• Improving infrastructure at country level;• Improving the quality of tourism services;• Economic investment in tourism branch;• Country's involvement in various international projects in the tourism theme;• Informing the local population about the importance of measures protecting natural and cultural heritage;• Promoting tourism products more attractive and affordable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and attractive tour packages at an affordable price;• Organizing events to promote tourism offer;• Creating and improving the image of the tourist destination;• Identification of methods to increase the number of tourist packages for local tourists;• Involvement in many projects to improve quality;• Renovation medieval monuments;• Identification of all values and finding all possibilities that may underlie tourism sustainable in natural areas;• Tracking and analyzing domestic and international market requirements for travel diversification and development of tourism activities;• Analysis of resource exploitation with consideration of requirements protective;• Comply with legal rules and regulations, national and international on environmental quality.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is the comparison of situation on rural markets of Republic of Moldova and Portugal to observe the competitiveness of rural markets. The research focuses on forms of rural tourism and its driving forces, its advantages and what makes rural tourism successful. It provides some examples of rural tourism in Republic of Moldova and Portugal. The work gives data about various geographic regions and stages of tourism development. The study also highlights some points for further research and extension of rural tourism.

To analysis and evaluate the competitiveness of the Republic of Moldova and the North Region of Portugal rural tourism and its potential to attract tourists

To answer the main objective of the study there were fixed the follow specific objectives (SO):

SO₁: There are competitiveness in the tourism rural in centre region of Republic of Moldova;

SO₂: There are competitiveness tourism rural in the northern region of Portugal.

3.2. Description of Data Collection

Because rural tourism in Republic of Moldova is quite a new phenomenon, it was necessary to implement different types of research work observed in these countries. Republic of Moldova, a whole was considered the amount of people arriving from different countries over the two years' period (from 2013 to 2015) and the quantity of entities that participated in rural tourism regions (centre). As outbound

countries it was used the main the countries with the largest market share, namely, (Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgari, Italy, Germany).

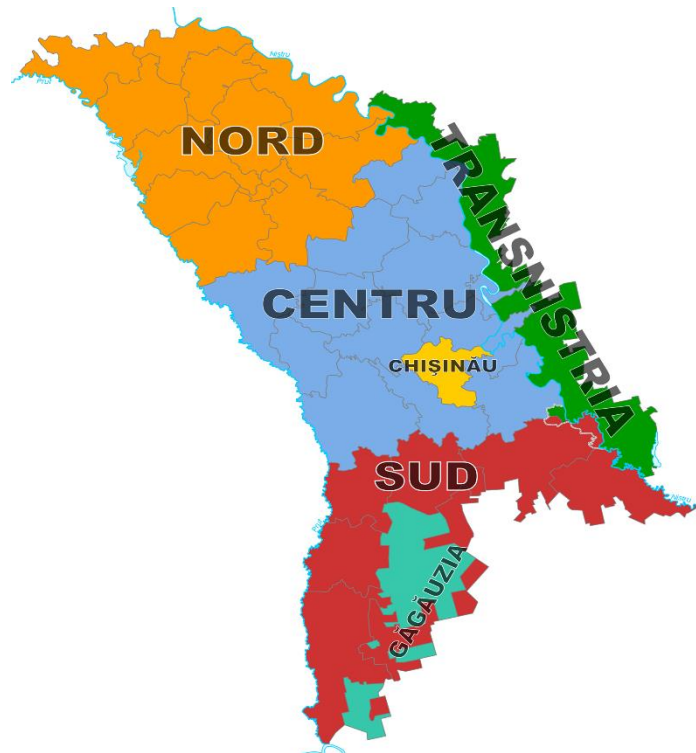


Figure 2. Map of Regions of Republic of Moldova.

Source: www.istoria.md.

Based on information from the Northern region of Portugal, in particular for the period between 2013 and 2015 visitors are countries that spent the highest number of tourist nights in rural areas were chosen. Finally, the entire data set included seven countries (Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Belgium) as main important market share.



Figure 3. Map of regions of Portugal.

Source: Overview map of EU Countries (2016).

In this research it was used the following variables: market bias index; change index; average annual grows rate; market share; number of overnights; number of establishment; number of rooms; loading capacity and the countries. In both cases data were collected on the website of the National Institute of Statistics in Portugal and in Republic of Moldova.

3.3. Description of Data Analysis

During the data analysis to achieve rural tourism competitiveness and for both countries, Market Share Model was implemented. Once this type of analysis provides valuable background for verification of particular target markets and provides valuable diagnostic information for strategic planning. This model was developed by Faulkner in 1997. As implied by the term 'shift-share', the principal objective of the approach is double: (i) to enable a destination's position with respect to its share of specific market to be established; and (ii) to provide a signal of the level to which the destination is improving its position with respect to a specific market relative to total movements in that market (Faulkner, 1997).

The base of this method is an index that observe the movements of the marketplace and variations in the destination's performance with respect to this market. At the same time allowing for the givens that place extensive limits on the destination's general competitiveness.

The main point of this analysis is that it represents results in terms of the change in market share obtained, and it could be seen in the context of general change in the market. At the same time, by centering on modification over a period of time, the opportunity of ephemeral or accidental occasions twisted the picture is diminished.

As it was already mentioned above, for analysis was chosen quantity of nights spent by tourists in rural areas for Moldova Republic and for the northern region of Portugal.

During the research, it was used the following dimensions of the analysis (Faulkner, 1997; Águas, Grade & Sousa, 2003; Fernandes, 2005; Fernandes & González, 2007; Fernandes et al., 2008, Karalkova, 2016):

- (1) An index of market share with respect to each main market or, in other words, market bias index (B); in examined case this index means the degree to which the destination's market share with respect to a specific market deviates from its share of visitors overall. This index is calculated as following:

$$B_{ik} = \frac{\left(X_{ijk} / \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ijk} \right) - 1}{\left(\sum_{j=1}^n X_{ij(k)n} / \sum_{i=j}^n \sum_{j=i}^n X_{ij(k)n} \right)} \quad [1]$$

Where,

B_{ik} , Market bias index for destination i in year k ;

X_{ijk} , Visitors numbers to destination i from market j in year k ;

n , Number of markets (origins) and destinations.

- (2) An index of change (C) in the visitors received from each market relative to the change in that market generally.

$$C_{0-k} = \left[\left(X_{ijk} / X_{ij1} \right) - 1 \right] - \left[\left(X_{jk} / X_{j1} \right) - 1 \right] \quad [2]$$

Where,

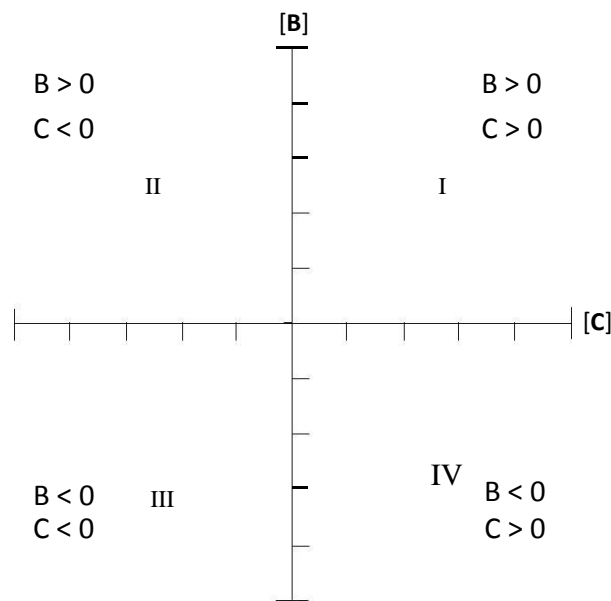
C_{0-k} , index of change of market share between moment 0 and the moment k ;

X_{jk} , total outbound visitors from market j in year k ;

X_{ijk} , visitor quantity to destination i from market j in year k ;

$1 \dots k$, between year 1 until year k .

The most important reason for choosing that method was a possibility to present the value of these two indices in the evaluation within graphs, where Market Bias Index (B) is on the vertical axis and the Change Index (C) is on the horizontal axis (Figure 4). On the plot it is very important to look at the position of each point, here it means one of four quarters, because each quarter has its own meaning.



Note: [B], Market Bias Index.
[C], Change Index.

Figure 4. Market Share Typology.

Source: Adapted from de Faulkner (1997, p. 29).

Follow it will be described the strategies for each Quadrant (Faulkner, 1997; Águas, Grade & Sousa, 2003; Fernandes, 2005; Fernandes & González, 2007; Fernandes et al., 2008, Karalkova, 2016):

- (1) Quadrant I ($B > 0$; $C > 0$) - Performing Markets: where the country's share of the market in analysis exceeds its overall share of the total market and where it has achieved a higher than average growth rate for this market.
- (2) Quadrant II ($B > 0$; $C < 0$) - Stagnant Markets: where the target has a quota market above average but begins to decrease.

(3) Quadrant III ($B < 0$; $C < 0$) - Declining Markets: backgrounds, where the target has a quota of below the market average and reducing continuous.

(4) Quadrant IV ($B < 0$; $C > 0$) - Emerging Markets: origins, where the destination part of a market share is below average, but that is beginning to gain market share.

For analysing the competitiveness of Moldova Republic in the scope of rural tourism, the data was united in Tables according to year (2013 and 2015), countries (Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgari, Italy, Germany and Moldova) under analysis and region (Centre).

For studying the competitiveness of northern region of Portugal in the sphere of rural tourism, the data was united in Tables according to year (2013 and 2015), countries (Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Belgium) under analysis and region (North).

4. Rural Tourism Empirical Results Analysis

4.1. Republic of Moldova Regions Competitiveness

From the index table below we see that in the period between 2013 until 2015 the number of tourist overnights potential of rural tourism increased in small quantity for Moldova in the central region. A notice a considerable increase for Ukraine in the period of 2013 until 2014 we see a remarkable reduction for Germany throughout time who also represents the region with the lowest percentage share. One difference between these two years foresees major growth that is visible to Romania have reached the second place in number of overnight stays registered, then by following Ukraine and Russia.

Table 9. Nights spent in rural establishments in Republic of Moldova and in the center of Moldova.

Countries	2013		2014		2015		Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	
	Moldova	Centre	Moldova	Centre	Moldova	Centre	Moldova	Centre
Moldova	1 262 734	423 121	1 296 343	449 732	1 252 135	453 840	-0,4	3,6
Romania	45 516	38 628	56582	38 478	63 510	40 428	18,1	2,3
Ukraine	18 672	14 920	23060	20115	26 721	23 593	19,6	25,7
Russia	28 862	22 940	20777	17556	24 197	19 569	-8,4	-7,6
Bulgary	3 120	2 703	3320	2775	3 104	2 738	-0,3	0,6
Italy	11 638	10 529	12404	11468	12 017	10 898	1,6	1,7
Germany	12 616	10 886	11019	9508	10 011	8 943	-10,9	-9,4
Total	1 383 158	523 727	1 423 505	549 632	1 391 695	560 009	0,3	3,4
Total of Moldova	1 478 849	612 337	1 514 273	633 103	1 505 071	664 240	0,9	4,2

The results obtained market index calculation Bias, and the change in market share index, are presented in the following table. These values are represented coordinates for destinations in the table below and analyse evolutionary origins following chart shows the main destinations.

Table 10. Analysis of the evolution of the main destinations in the centre region of Moldova.

Country	Market Bias index 2015	Change index 2013-2015	Market share
Moldova [MD]	-17,9	3,99	68,3%
Romania [RO]	44,2	-15,82	6,1%
Ukraine [UKr]	100,1	6,12	3,6%
Russia [RU]	83,2	0,80	2,9%
Bulgary [BG]	99,9	0,90	0,4%
Italy [IT]	105,5	0,12	1,6%
Germany [DU]	102,4	1,56	1,3%

To demonstrate competitiveness is necessary to produce a graph index Change Bias market index and market share for 2015 in the previous section (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Centre Region of Moldova.

In conclusion, shown below countries such bubbles is the market share occupied countries. From here is possible to notice that Moldova is part of the emerging markets, which have below average market share and beginning to gain market share. The graph shows that only Romania has been located in the stagnant market where the target has a quota market above average but begins to decrease. The most countries (Bulgari, Russia, Ukraine, Italy and Germany) are located in the performing market or the so-

called zone of success, the destination has already had a share above the average and now continues to gain market share.

4.2. Portugal Regions Competitiveness

As it was described in the section 3, the following tables for the North region of Portugal in accordance with three years' period where obtained:

Table 11. Nights spent in rural establishments in Portugal and in the north region of Portugal.

Countries	2013 (10 ³)		2014 (10 ³)		2015 (10 ³)		Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	
	Portugal	North	Portugal	North	Portugal	North	Portugal	North
Portugal	400,41	132,847	443,52	131,91	685,41	216,31	30,8	27,6
Germany	78,46	9,681	93,61	11,49	128,83	19,49	28,1	41,9
France	46,28	17,971	58,12	20,61	86,15	32,44	36,4	34,4
Spain	35,79	13,841	47,89	20,85	71,67	31,84	41,5	51,7
Netherlands	45,71	8,557	40,77	8,16	61,16	14,79	15,7	31,5
United Kingdom	34,14	11,948	36,45	11,02	59,87	19,21	32,4	26,8
Belgium	29,04	8,292	34,07	8,92	43,46	10,33	22,3	11,6
Total	670,00	203,00	754,00	213,00	1 137,00	344,00	30,3	30,2
Total of Portugal	745,00	226,00	856,00	240,00	1272,27	383,83	30,7	30,3

It could easily be seen that during the period of 2013 until 2015 the number of overnight stays of tourists who attended rural tourism has increased considerably for Portugal in the North. A lower growth we observe for Belgium, which is the region with the lowest percentage share in the meantime but notice that the largest growth could be visible to Spain and Germany, both Portugal and the North. For all outbound markets, for Portugal and for the North, it was registered a high average growth rates. Spain it was the main market that was registered a high average annual growth rate for both situations, almost 42% for Portugal and 52% for the north region of Portugal. Following the outbound market France, for Portugal was registered 36% and for north region of Portugal 34,4%. The main difference between these two years provides for changes in top 7 countries that are visited; France and Spain reached level 1.

Table 12. Analysis of the evolution of the main destinations in the north region of Portugal.

Country	Market Bias index 2015	Change index 2013-2015	Market share
Portugal [PT]	4,6	-3,23	56,4%
Germany [DU]	-49,9	13,75	5,1%
France [FR]	24,8	-2,08	8,5%
Spain [ES]	47,3	10,16	8,3%
Netherlands [NL]	-19,8	15,80	3,9%
United Kingdom [UK]	6,4	-5,62	5,0%
Belgium [BE]	-21,2	-10,71	2,7%

In the Figure 6, is possible to observe the competitiveness of the outbound markets for the rural tourism in the north region of Portugal.



Figure 6. Analysis of Origins in the Destination North Region of Portugal.

In the figures presented above, summarize formats countries represent market share occupied countries. It can observe that the largest share is represented by Portugal and Belgium minimum. According to the graph, it can see that only Spain is located in the performing market, or so-called success. Some countries (Portugal, France, United Kingdom) are located in the stagnant market that do not progress or the so-called zone of uncertainty, origins where destination has an above average market share but where it is losing market share. The origin Belgium is positioning in the declining market, or failure, origins where the destination has a below-average market share and where it is losing market share. And for Netherlands, this market was situated in the emerging markets, origins, where the destination part of a market share is below average, but that is beginning to gain market share.

To answer the main objective of the study there were fixed two specific objectives, and it is possible conclude, according of analysis of origins in each destination and with Market Bias Index and Change Index, there are competitiveness in the tourism rural in centre region of Republic of Moldova (SO₁), and there is competitiveness tourism rural in the northern region of Portugal (SO₂).

4.3. Comparison between Republic of Moldova and Portugal

While comparing these two countries, it is necessary to mention their territory. Moldova has the territory of 33.846 km², while Portugal occupies the territory of 92 151 km². At the same time in Portugal there are more destinations than in Moldova, and what is more important, two regions are presented with islands.

Table 13 shows that Moldova is decreasing compared to Portugal after data on accommodation units and numbers of rooms offered. The number of visitors depends on the countries bordering the frontier so in Table 9 and 11 it was possible to see that Moldova having borders with Romania which reached second place the number of registered overnight stays, then by following Ukraine, while the number of tourists from other countries is considerably higher for Portugal because all these countries are located in the European Union.

Finally, it was find that Portugal compared to Moldova is considered the most competitive in the field because of the numerous entities involved in rural tourism and the number of foreign tourists who promotes this type.

Table 13. Comparison between countries in 2015.

	Moldova Central region		North region of Portugal	
	%	Total	%	Total
Establishments	66,2%	1 082	37,8%	1 298
Rooms	65,5%	348	37,6%	10 047
Loading capacity (Beds)	62,0%	1 808	36,5%	21 780

Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

The conclusion of the research evaluated the rural tourism accommodation establishments and tourist destinations for Portugal and Moldova, said that Portugal can get considerably higher results in the area examined in accordance with Moldova. To prove this result and applied by the index of competitiveness chart Chance Bias market index and market share, here we noticed that the largest share is represented by Portugal, which is an ideal destination for vacation in my vision and health because -it its many attractions, buildings of special architectural styles, traditions, customs interesting, varied opportunities to practice water sports, a favourable climate for which it was known as the "land of eternal spring". Portugal also are among the most suitable destinations suitable for practicing surf's, which in Moldova is lacking, and this is only the first cause decrease number of tourists who practice rural tourism and a smaller number of users in entities accommodation Republic of Moldova.

After all studies could be easily seen that the period of 2013 to 2015 the number of overnight stays of tourists who attended rural tourism has increased considerably in North Portugal. According with the competitiveness analysis, the results showed that only Spain is located in the performing market, or so-called success; most countries (Portugal, France, United Kingdom) are located in the stagnant market that do not progress or the so-called zone of uncertainty, origins where destination has an above average market share but where it is losing market share. The origin Belgium is positioning in the declining market, or failure, origins where the destination has a below-average market share and where it is losing market share. And for Netherlands, this market was situated in the emerging markets, origins, where the destination part of a market share is below average, but that is beginning to gain market share.

In the case of Republic of Moldova, Moldova is part of the emerging markets, which have below average market share and beginning to gain market share. The results showed that only Romania has been located in the stagnant market where the target has a quota market above average but begins to decrease. The most countries (Bulgari, Russia, Ukraine, Italy and Germany) are located in the performing market or the so-called zone of success, the destination has already had a share above the average and now continues to gain market share.

Analysis carried out previously on the period of 2013 and 2015 on the number of overnight stays of tourist potential of rural tourism, which has grown in small quantities for Moldova, in the central region, according to Portugal, which registered a major increase. An important conclusion is that tourism in rural areas is characterised primarily by seasonality, the highest rate in the summer. Moldova as a tourist destination has great potential visitors as much of it is untapped due to poor visibility and worldwide country. At the end of this research, after all it will be say that research done situation on Moldova's rural markets is comparatively low and that rural tourism is not a source of income for the country, while Portugal offers several advantages in rural tourism successfully driving.

It was possible to conclude there are competitiveness in the tourism rural in centre region of Republic of Moldova and there is competitiveness tourism rural in the northern region of Portugal, answering to the main objective of the study. It was found that in comparison with Moldova Portugal is considered the most competitive in the field because of numerous entities involved in rural tourism and the number of foreign tourists who promote this type.

It is also necessary to underline, that the research was made only for the current three years, because of the lack of necessary information of previous years published in the National Institute of Statistics in Portugal and in Republic of Moldova web site, for both countries. It was the main limitation once is impossible to know the behaviour of the index for the supply and demand tourism in the last five years.

As future research based on the conclusions mentioned above we have resulted areas for the next researches in the field of RM and Portugal rural tourism:

1. To investigate innovations that appear recent times in Republic of Moldova and Portugal.
2. To discover and promote unknown places in rural area of Republic of Moldova and Portugal for tourists for every corner of the world.
3. To promote Moldova as a country that has authentic potential and hidden undiscovered tourists' places.

In the end, I would like to mention that this research has let me look from a different side to the rural tourism of our countries and make a conclusion that despite the fact that Portugal is more competitive than Moldova; my country is undiscovered destination that has big potential for developing tourism in rural areas.

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