

Article

# The Impact of Agritourism Activity on the Rural Environment: Findings from an Authentic Agritourist Area—Bukovina, Romania

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**Abstract:** Agritourism can be a way of “saving”/supporting a rural area and its authentic resources, and in the case of the Bukovina area, the authenticity degree of its current resources is high. Some of the resources in this area create a sense of “celebrity” among tourists and, at the same time, offer the possibility of bringing some original and authentic products to the tourist market. The purpose of this study is to present an analysis of the Bukovina area in order to analyze the impact of this activity on the local community, pursuing the following specific objectives: identifying the development degree of agritourism activity and the particularities of the agritourism product offered; identifying the motivation behind and impact of this activity, as well as obtaining proposals from those directly involved in the agritourism field; analyzing the extent to which agritourism is a means of capitalizing on local resources and identifying the impact generated over time; and identifying benefits and future directions and their impact on the local community. The case-study method was used to support the research. Based on the research carried out, proposals are made in order to ensure that agritourism activity becomes a possible tool to generate sustainability for the local community.

**Keywords:** agritourism; Bukovina’s rural area; authentic resources; impact; sustainable rural development



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## 1. Introduction

Rural areas feature numerous resources, with a high degree of originality, but, at the same time, they are also spaces in which great disparities are found. The sustainable development of these rural environments [1,2], is a current topic, and the variety in approaches derives from the different particularities and resources. The presentation possibilities of all the positive aspects of rural environments, obviously according to consumer demands, can ensure capitalization on local resources and, thus, support the economic viability of rural communities. One of the possibilities for the sustainable development of the rural environment is agritourism, developed in an ecological manner [3,4].

The practice of alternative forms of tourism has demonstrated an intense growth in recent years, starting from the increase in consumer interest in personalized tourist products, ensuring, in this way, a very high degree of originality. In this manner, agritourism can generate educational and cultural experiences through visits to sites of the production of some agri-food products, strengthening the connections between tourists and locals.

Although the demand for authentic agritourism products is increasing, combining the agricultural field with that of tourism is not easy to achieve, starting from the knowledge that the entrepreneur must possess. In the agricultural field, this involves a good knowledge of culture technology, soils, and marketing possibilities, and in the tourism field, it is necessary to know people, and the degree to which this knowledge is real is the measure of success [5]. It is certain, however, that communities that have genuine, authentic resources

and have managed to combine the agricultural sector with the tourist sector and others beyond it, relying on the capitalization of their specific way of life through agritourism activity [6,7], have not only succeeded in perpetuating some original elements, but have also obtained considerable income [8], generating the “modern updating of localities” as a level of development [9,10].

One such area, where the ancestral living environment and specific traditions have been preserved to this day, is the Bukovina area. This area has many resources, some of which are unique; above all, however, the local communities in this area succeeded in perpetuating their specific traditional way of life. By combining natural resources with the area’s traditional lifestyle and specific crafts or gastronomic products [11], Bukovina offers the tourist market some original and unique products, thereby gaining a sense of “celebrity” in the eyes of tourists [12–15].

The aim of this paper. The purpose of this research was to identify the development stage of agritourism activity in the Bukovina area, as well as the impact generated by this activity on the local community. Thus, two objectives were established:

OB 1: Identifying the development stage of agritourism activity in the Bukovina area and identifying the main elements that bring the area out of anonymity.

OB 2: Research regarding the evaluation of agritourism activity so as to establish possible future directions to ensure rural sustainable development.

Furthermore, we analyzed several aspects/hypotheses:

- the development degree of agritourism activity in the Bukovina area, tracked through the presence of training in the field, the development period of this activity, and the extent in which the specific tourism products include local resources;
- the identification of the motivation of entrepreneurs in the field and proposals to ensure that agritourism becomes “a possible tool to generate sustainability” for the local community;
- the analysis of the extent to which agritourism activities are means of capitalizing on the local land and resources in the case of the analyzed area and the consequences of this process over time;
- the analysis of the benefits and future directions and their impact on future sustainable development.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Because this research is based on the identification of the impact of agritourism activity on the rural environment, the purpose of the theoretical framework is to achieve a brief analysis of rural areas as place of agritourism development and, based on the essential aspects, to achieve a holistic and sustainable approach to agritourism and its impact on the rural environment in different dimensions.

Rural areas are, at the same time, places where the agritourism activities are carried out, the suppliers of raw materials for these activities and the “collectors” of the benefits of the activity. Rural environments have been subjected to numerous studies and analyses regarding the existing disparities between them and urban environments (see Table 1). However, rural environments have many assets [16], which, integrated into different development plans, can help them to achieve modernity [17]. This modern transformation, however, must be undertaken in a communal way [18,19], in a smart manner [20,21], considering the principles of sustainability [22], which in the last half century has become essential in almost all fields, in three broad directions (economic, social, and environmental) [23,24]. The transition from the profiling of the rural environment strictly towards agriculture to other fields of activity is a major challenge, and it is not always overcome. The decline of local economies affects social life, the environment, and other economic sectors. A possible solution to this unfavorable conjuncture, which includes favorable consequences in all three directions (economic, social, and environmental) [25] is undoubtedly agritourism activity [26,27]. Although agritourism is a “small” field [28], it can be a way to integrate the sustainable diversification of rural economies [29], a model of modern rural entrepreneurship [30,31]. This particular field can

offer alternative incomes, relying on traditional products' authenticity to attract consumers, who are saturated with the homogeneity of products.

**Table 1.** The rural area where the agritourism activity is carried out—brief analysis.

| Analysis Levels | Positive Values                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Aspects Which Represent Problems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social level    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ human relationships more close</li> <li>✓ solidarity at a higher level</li> <li>✓ a reduced density of people</li> <li>✓ ensuring the transmission of traditions to future generations</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ number of jobs and orientation towards agricultural fields only</li> <li>✓ reduced possibilities for educational and medical services</li> <li>✓ migration phenomenon and high degree of aging</li> <li>✓ conservative attitudes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Economic level  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ the existence of agricultural land</li> <li>✓ high value of products</li> <li>✓ the existence of authentic products that can be capitalized on through tourism</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ insufficient technological equipment to support profitable agricultural activity</li> <li>✓ abandonment and refractory attitude related to the orientation towards the agricultural field</li> <li>✓ reduced profitability from agricultural activities and marketing difficulties in case of production selling [32]</li> <li>✓ inability to ensure profitability (that is, to sell at prices that cover costs) from agricultural activities</li> </ul> |
| Resources       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ rural natural landscapes</li> <li>✓ well preserved traditions</li> <li>✓ original crafts</li> <li>✓ well preserved rural architecture</li> <li>✓ authentic and antique way of life, important values</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ inadequate infrastructure</li> <li>✓ lack of attention and specialized training for carrying out activities in a sustainable manner; thus, some resources can be put at risk</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

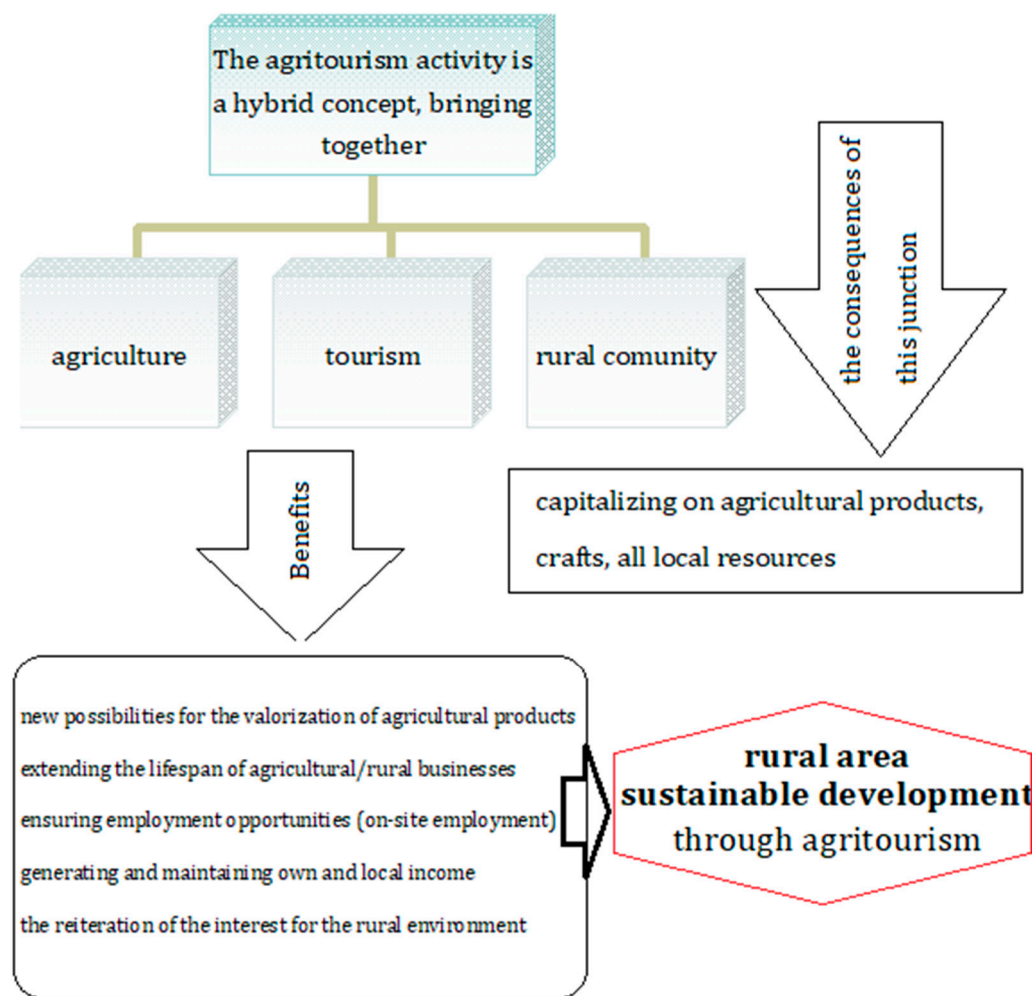
Source: processing and reinterpretation after [33,34].

Obviously, the following questions arise: What is agritourism? Why it is a possibility for the adequate sustainable development of the rural environment? Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate the holistic and sustainable approach [35–37] of agritourism is through its definition (see Table 2 and Figure 1). “Tourism in the rural environment” implies the joining of two terms: rural and tourism. Both of these terms are necessary in the development of the activity, which is perceived as a way of capitalizing on the rural environment. Agritourism is a hybrid concept [38], a form of smart entrepreneurship [39–41], bringing together two completely different fields (agriculture and tourism). The result of this junction is a new opportunity for the direct sale of products from locals' own households/farms [42,43], increases in income for farmers/producers as direct benefits, and the guarantee of quality and authenticity for tourists and of general sustainability for the local community [44,45].

**Table 2.** Agritourism—holistic approach.

| What Is Agritourism?                                                                    | The Main Characteristics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The essence of agritourism considering agricultural activity                            | It is the special activity that unites agriculture and tourism.<br>It is beginning to diversify traditional agricultural activities through the establishment of agritourism businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| The essence of agritourism considering the rural community development                  | Genuine opportunity to strengthen the local economy.<br>The capacity to combine, in a dynamic way several fields (some of which are difficult to carry out even individually).<br>An opportunity for the growth and diversification of the rural economy.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| The essence of agritourism considering its specificity of being a form of rural tourism | The accommodation is made by capitalizing on the surplus accommodation spaces in the farm, boarding house, and villas, with the tourist services integrated into the farm's life (without disturbing the farmer's activity).<br>The food comes from own production, in certain variable percentages, with the services supported by the farm itself.<br>In the case of leisure, the focus is on participating in the life and activities of the farm. |

Source: own prospection.



**Figure 1.** Holistic and sustainable approach to agritourism.

Agritourism activities can be carried out either by offering the three component elements of the tourist product (accommodation, food, and leisure), with specific and appropriate particularities, or by offering elements separately or in groups. In general, agritourism activities can be developed in two major directions:

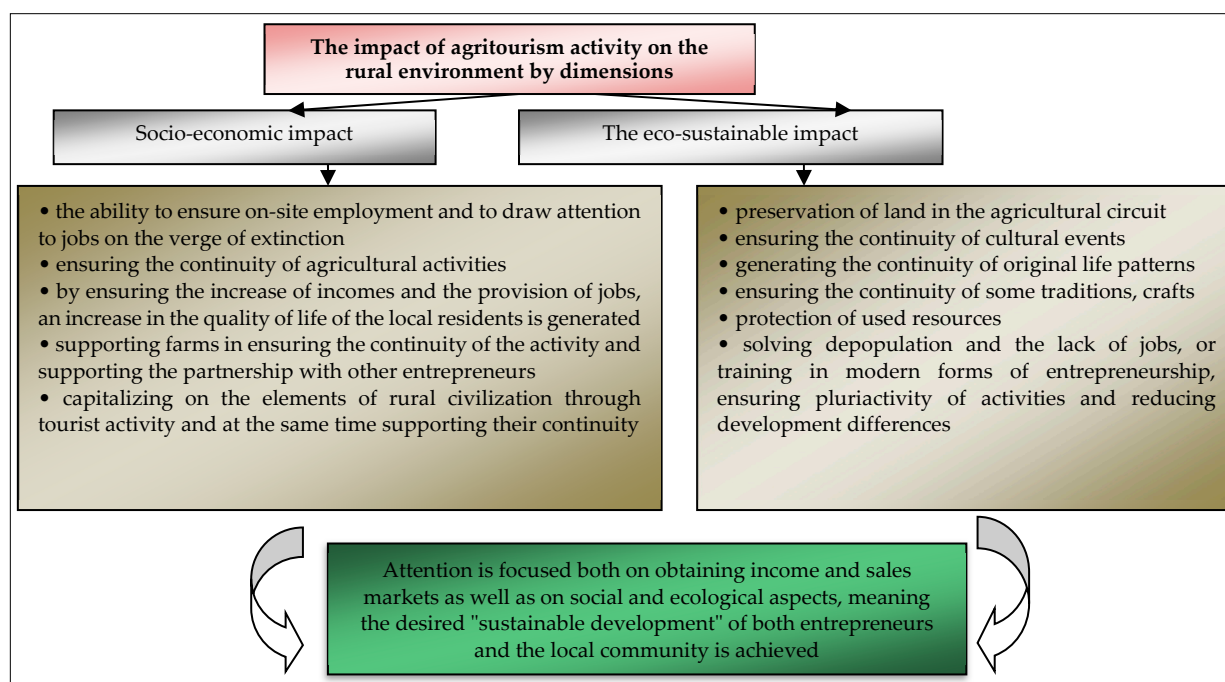
- at the level of individual households, agritourism products are made and managed by the entrepreneur/farmer, together with family members, including:
  - the offer of accommodation in the surplus spaces of households/farms, depending on requirements and possibilities, for determined periods of time;
  - the inclusion on the menu of gastronomic products obtained from the household/farm's own production, or the possibility of purchasing them freely;
  - the offer of opportunities to spend free time in the household or on the farm, through concrete activities: involvement in agricultural activities, learning crafts, recreational activities in the community or nature, etc.

At locality level, agritourism is complex, since its components are closely related to each other, in an interconditional relationship. If only simple accommodation is offered through tourist activities, in the surplus space of the household/farm, an unorganized form of agritourism activity can be said to take place, which does not require a prior strategy, but only the intention of the owner to obtain complementary financial resources in a short period of time. In situations in which, in addition to the "accommodation" component, the other two "food and leisure" elements appear, an organized form of agritourism activity can be said to occur [46].

Agritourism can be a way of supporting the rural economy, generating a series of positive effects [47,48]: the emergence of new capitalization possibilities for agricultural products; the reappearance of interest in the use of agricultural land and the reintroduction of some of this land into the productive circuit; ensuring employment opportunities through and in the family; increasing the sustainability of agricultural businesses in the long-term and regenerating interest in the rural environment, thus reducing the migratory exodus to urban environments, increasing the comfort level, etc. If we start from the reality that in many rural areas, there has been some decline in the industrial and agricultural sectors, then agritourism can be an innovative and diversified option, a modern business, ensuring the viability of local communities and rural environments [49].

The evolution of the agritourism field is influenced, in the long term, by the evolution of tourist demand, and by entrepreneurs' ability to create tourist product according to the tourists' wishes, or simply through their ability to create innovations in the mixture of the existing resources of the rural community in such a way as to achieve both profitability and sustainability [50,51]. Thus, agritourism activity is an innovative solution [52], starting from the involvement of the entire local community and many other entities [53,54], in the creation of tourism products, in other words, in obtaining added value for all those involved. Consequently, the following question arises: How can this field be a "smart" entrepreneurship model for small communities [55–57]? The answer lies in the socio-economic impact on the local community in several dimensions [58–60] (see Figure 2):

- the trend towards this field of activity was generated by the appearance of problems in the agricultural, rural field, the use of local resources and products that are able to generate, from an economic point of view, additional income for farmers/entrepreneurs and, at the same time, for rural areas to act as markets for own products/crafts;
- by training in this type of activity, the particularities derived from the specific rural way of life can be ensured at the same time the continuity of original patterns of life and the solution of some social problems related to depopulation and the lack of jobs, or the provision of training in modern forms of entrepreneurship, or even the possibility of ensuring pluriactivity;
- increased attention to ensuring the continuity of some traditions and crafts, as well as the protection of rural, natural, and human resources.



**Figure 2.** The impact of agritourism on the rural environment by dimension.

In conclusion, the reasons why agritourism can be a “smart” entrepreneurship model, and why its impact on the rural environment is positive [61], are related to the focus of attention both on obtaining income and sales markets and on social and ecological aspects, meaning that the desired “sustainable development” of both entrepreneurs and local community is achieved. At the same time, agritourism can be a valuable way of reinterpreting sustainability principles for the rural world [62,63].

### 3. Data and Methodology

The research undertaken started from the main hypothesis of identifying the development stage of agritourism activity in Bukovina area and the main elements that bring this area out of anonymity, as well as the evaluation of this field of activity so as to establish possible future directions to ensure rural sustainable development. Choice of Bukovina area was based on the fact that it is a representative ethnographic area at national level, with many well preserved resources accorded UNESCO patrimony and, at the same time, the fact that it is one of the major areas of agritourism in the country.

In support of the research, the quantitative case-study method was used [64–66], starting from the premise that it is suitable for the purpose proposed, to carry out exploratory and explanatory research, starting from the specific situation of life in the analyzed rural environment [67,68]. In this type of research, the focus is on the case study of an area, not necessarily on the methodology used [69]. In this regard, a questionnaire was used to fulfill the five objectives proposed. Its areas of focus were as follows (see Figure 3):

- the development degree of agritourism activity from Bukovina tracked through the existence of training in the field, the period of agritourism-activity development, and the extent to which the specific tourism product included local resources;
- the identification of the motivation of entrepreneurs in the field and proposals for this field to become “a possible tool to generate sustainability” for the local community;
- the analysis of the extent to which agritourism is a means of capitalizing on local land and resources in the case of analyzed area and consequences of agritourism activity over time;
- the analysis of benefits and future directions and their future impact on sustainable development.

The research carried out involved several stages (see Figure 3):

- qualitative research to establish the research directions, outline the particularities of the field, and finalize the theoretical information;
- a quantitative case study using the questionnaire applied directly to the agritourism units’ owners. The first step was the selection of localities, from the studied area, in a number that was representative existing agritourism units. Based on public data published by the National Institute of Statistics, 11 localities were selected (Cacica, Dorna Candrenilor, Dorna-Arini, Fundu Moldovei, Manastirea Humorului, Pojorata, Putna, Saru Dornei, Sucevita, Vama, and Vatra Moldovitei). The total number of agritourism units registered by the INS at the level of these 11 localities was 170, meaning 65.13% of the total existing units registered in researched area. The next stage of the study was the implementation of the questionnaires face-to-face at the units from those 11 localities. Only the valid questionnaires (meaning those with complete answers) were included in the study, 144, meaning 84.70% reported 170 structures from these 11 localities, or 55.17% of the total number of existing agritourism units at the county level. The questionnaires were applied in December–January 2022–2023, based on the existing time availability of those involved in the study.
- the processing of the results and the qualitative interpretation was the next step, which was taken using tables and graphs, and EXCELL as a method of presentation.
- The limitations of the study, or its possible critical points, were as follows:
- obtaining a significant number of completed questionnaires;
- large number of selected localities;

- the impossibility of surveying all owners of structures in the area. The limits were removed periodically during the implementation of the study.

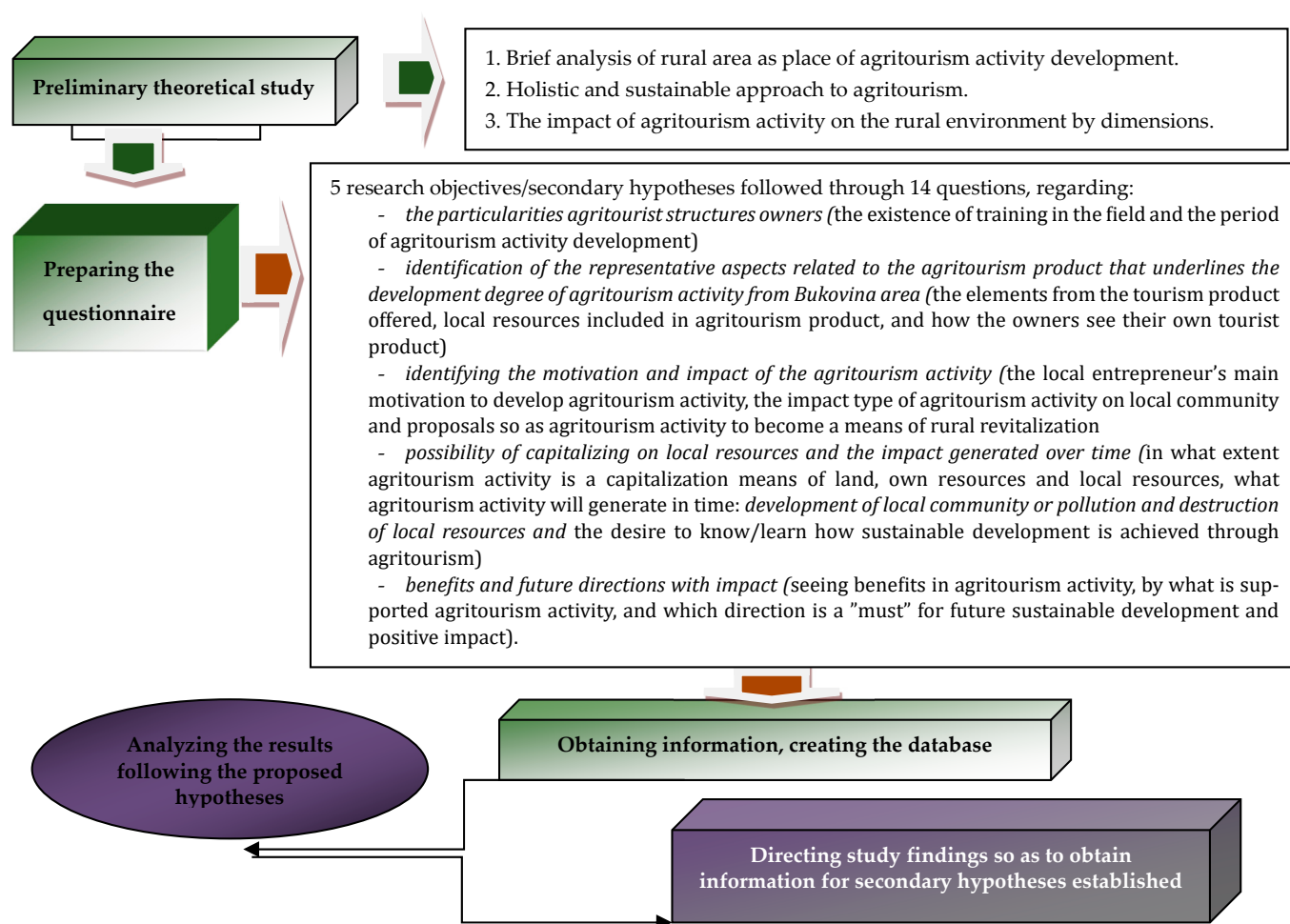


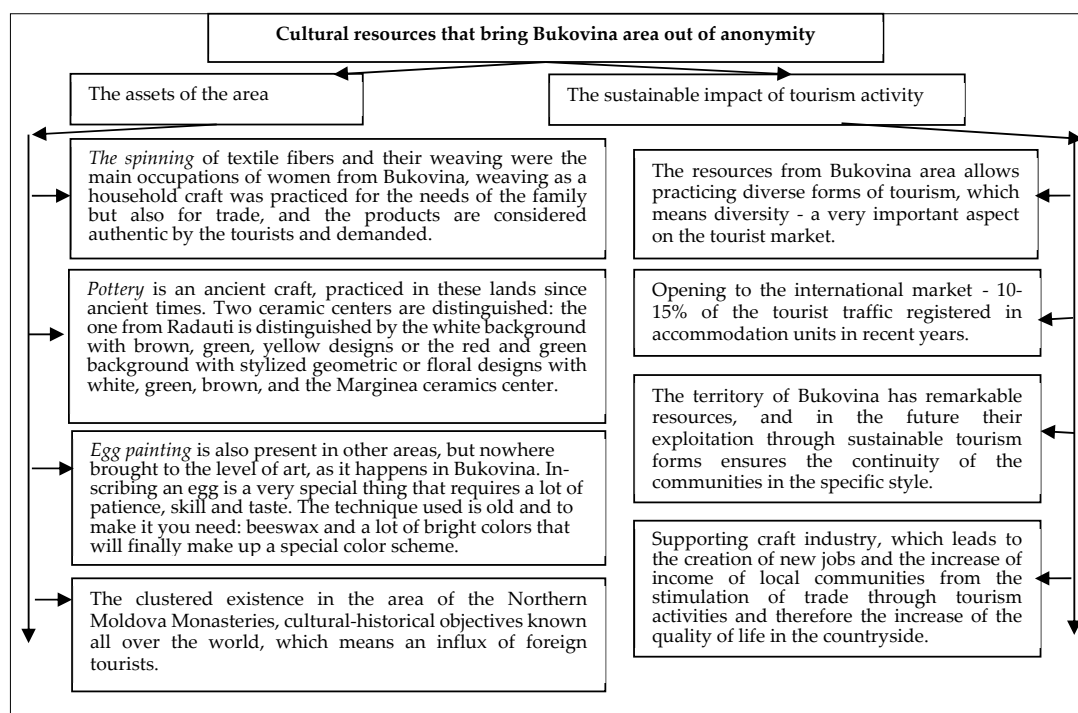
Figure 3. Research steps.

The contribution to scientific research in the future accomplished through this study is understanding of the real impact of agritourism on rural areas, through gathering of real data from the persons directly involved in carrying out these activities, so as to study, in the future, the extent to which this field can contribute to local development, or to design development plans/strategies.

#### 4. Results of the Research

##### 4.1. Brief Description of Bukovina Area in Terms of Tourism Potential

As with other areas with agritourism potential in Romania [70,71], Bukovina offers a synthesis of variety, harmony, and beauty. The unique resources in this area are related to its specific way of life; activities including the wearing, even for a day, of the traditional costume, the learning of glass painting, and the painting of eggs, have proven to be activities appreciated by tourists from the modern world; in other words, they are major sources of income for tour operators in this area (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The local resources that bring the Bukovina area out of anonymity and possible impact of using them.

When analyzing the area quantitatively, we found (see Table 3 and Figures 5 and 6) that the following:

- in terms of tourist-unit numbers, agritourism guesthouses predominate;
- in the 2015–2022 period, these numbers demonstrated constant and sustained growth;
- this ensured the possibility of activity development throughout the year, regardless of the period [72].

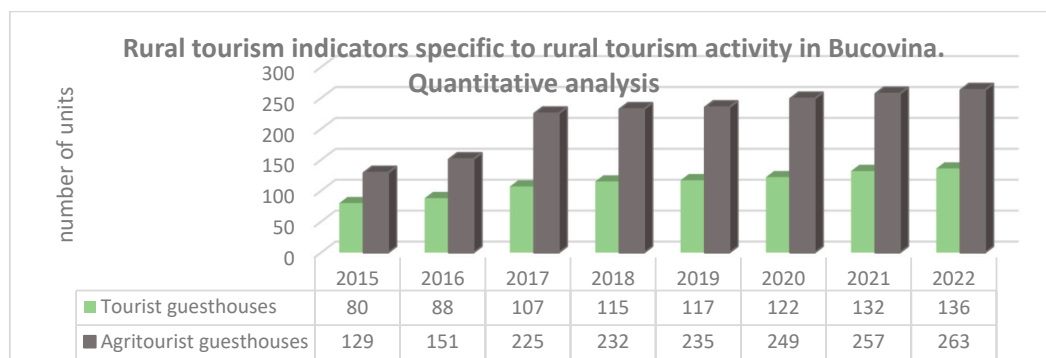
The same situation was recorded in the case of tourist guesthouses, although their number is lower. In the case of the net index of using the accommodation capacity, there was an increasing trend for both types of tourist accommodation unit evaluated, even during the pandemic restrictions.

**Table 3.** The analysis in terms of tourist indicators.

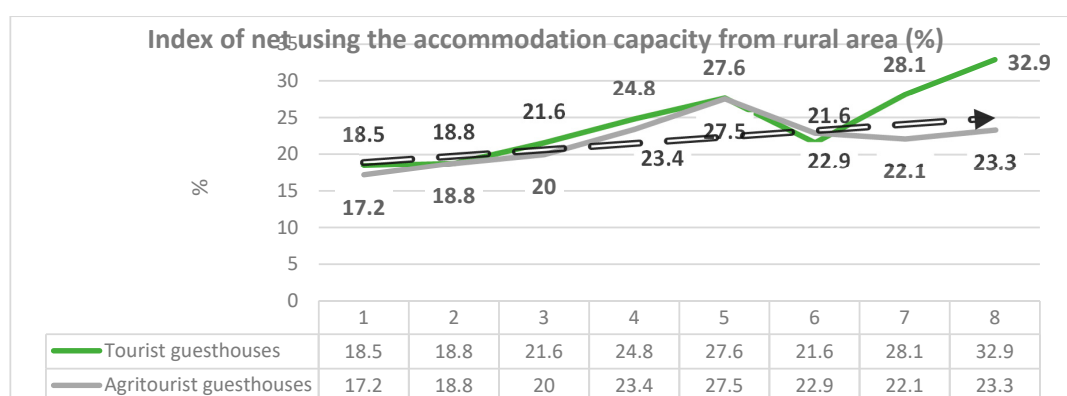
| Rural Tourism Indicators Specific to Rural Tourism Activity in Bukovina. Quantitative Analysis |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Specification                                                                                  | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Total no. of rural tourist units (number)                                                      | 209  | 239  | 332  | 347  | 352  | 371  | 389  | 399  |
| Tourist guesthouses                                                                            | 80   | 88   | 107  | 115  | 117  | 122  | 132  | 136  |
| Agritourist guesthouses                                                                        | 129  | 151  | 225  | 232  | 235  | 249  | 257  | 263  |
| Index of net use of the accommodation capacity in rural area (%)                               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Tourist guesthouses                                                                            | 18.5 | 18.8 | 21.6 | 24.8 | 27.6 | 21.6 | 28.1 | 32.9 |
| Agritourist guesthouses                                                                        | 17.2 | 18.8 | 20.0 | 23.4 | 27.5 | 22.9 | 22.1 | 23.3 |

Source: Processing data published by National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>, consulted in 20 January 2023 [73].

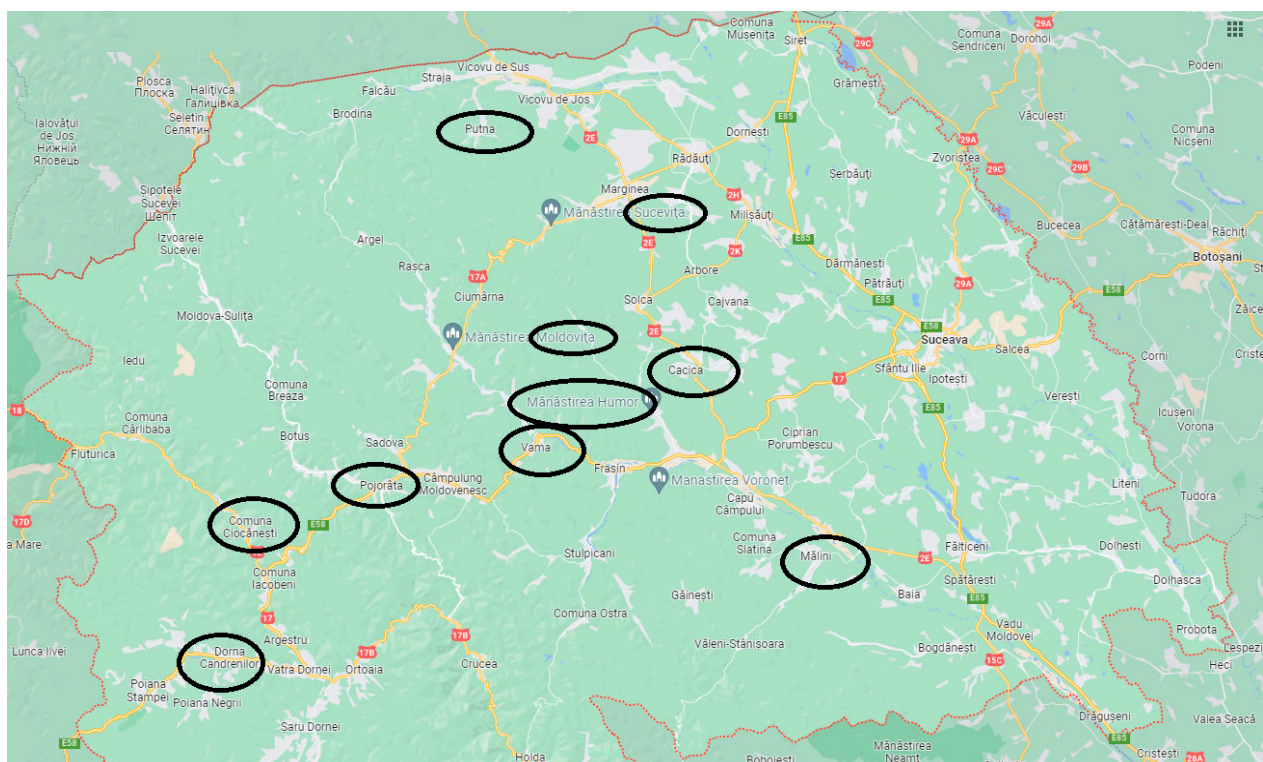
Following the distribution of agritourism units by component localities in the Bukovina area (see Table 4 and Figure 7), we can identify the areas with tourist representativeness, totaling 170 agritourism units from a total of 263 units.



**Figure 5.** Rural tourism indicators specific to rural tourism activity in Bukovina. Quantitative analysis.



**Figure 6.** Index of net use of the accommodation capacity in rural area (%).



**Figure 7.** Distribution of agritourism units by localities and representative centers. Source: Processing after <https://www.google.com/maps>, consulted in 14 December 2022 [74].

**Table 4.** Distribution of agritourism units by localities that are part of the Bukovina area.

| Agritourism Units/Localities | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ADANCATA                     | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    |
| BERCHISESTI                  | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| BOROAIA                      | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| BOSANCI                      | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| BREAZA                       | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| BRODINA                      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| CACICA                       | 2    | 6    | 8    | 7    | 7    | 6    | 9    | 10   |
| CARLIBABA                    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| CIOCANESTI                   | 3    | 4    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    |
| CORNU LUNCII                 | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| COSNA                        | 1    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| CRUCEA                       | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| DORNA CANDRENILOR            | 5    | 6    | 8    | 8    | 8    | 12   | 8    | 8    |
| DORNA-ARINI                  | 11   | 12   | 18   | 18   | 18   | 19   | 18   | 18   |
| DRAGUSENI                    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| DUMBRAVENI                   | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    |
| FANTANA MARE                 | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| FRATAUTII VECHI              | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| FRUMOSU                      | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    |
| FUNDU MOLDOVEI               | 6    | 6    | 10   | 11   | 12   | 10   | 10   | 10   |
| HARTOP                       | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| HORODNIC DE SUS              | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| HORODNICENI                  | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| IPOTESTI                     | -    | -    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 3    |
| MALINI                       | 1    | 1    | 3    | 5    | 5    | 6    | 6    | 7    |
| MANASTIREA HUMORULUI         | 13   | 17   | 20   | 19   | 19   | 20   | 20   | 21   |
| MARGINEA                     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    |
| MITOCU DRAGOMIRNEI           | 1    | 1    | 5    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| MOARA                        | 1    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 3    |
| MOLDOVA-SULITA               | -    | -    | 1    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| MOLDOVITA                    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 3    |
| OSTRA                        | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| PANACI                       | 2    | 2    | 4    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 7    | 6    |
| PARTESTII DE JOS             | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    |
| PATRAUTI                     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| POIANA STAMPEI               | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    |
| POIENI-SOLCA                 | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| POJORATA                     | 7    | 8    | 12   | 12   | 12   | 14   | 13   | 15   |
| PUTNA                        | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 9    | 11   | 12   | 13   |
| SADOVA                       | 6    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    |
| SARU DORNEI                  | 5    | 7    | 14   | 16   | 16   | 18   | 18   | 18   |
| SCHEIA                       | 4    | 4    | 7    | 6    | 6    | 6    | 6    | 6    |
| SLATINA                      | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | -    | -    | 1    |
| SUCEVITA                     | 17   | 20   | 24   | 24   | 23   | 23   | 25   | 23   |
| UDESTI                       | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| VADU MOLDOVEI                | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    |

Table 4. Cont.

| Agritourism Units/Localities | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| VAMA                         | 17   | 17   | 21   | 23   | 22   | 22   | 23   | 23   |
| VATRA MOLDOVITEI             | 3    | 3    | 10   | 10   | 11   | 12   | 11   | 11   |
| VICOVU DE JOS                | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| VOITINEL                     | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    |
| ZVORISTEA                    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |

Source: Processing data published by National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>, consulted in 20 January 2023 [73].

#### 4.2. Research Regarding the Impact of Agritourism Activities on the Rural Environment in Bukovina

The 11 localities selected for this study (see Figure 7) represent 65.13% of the total units in the researched area. Of the 263 agritourism units registered, 170 can be found in these 11 selected localities. In total, 144 of these, meaning 84.70%, were included in the final study (see Table 5—general statistical information (a)).

**Table 5.** Evaluation of agritourism-activity status starting from the particularities of the profiled structures' owners.

| Villages in Bukovina Area with Agritourism Potential Taken into Consideration in the Study | Measure Unit           | General Statistical Information (a) |                                                 | The Existence of Training in the Field (b) |                           | The Period of Agritourism-Activity Development (c) |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                        | No. of Agrit. Structures            | Valid Questionnaires Distributed Per Localities | Yes                                        | No                        | More than 5 Years                                  | More than 10 Years        |
| Cacica                                                                                     | No.<br>%               | 10                                  | 9<br>6.25                                       | 3<br>2.08                                  | 6<br>4.17                 | 7<br>4.86                                          | 2<br>1.39                 |
| Dorna Candrenilor                                                                          | No.<br>%               | 8                                   | 6<br>4.16                                       | 2<br>1.39                                  | 4<br>2.77                 | 2<br>1.39                                          | 4<br>2.77                 |
| Dorna-Arini                                                                                | No.<br>%               | 18                                  | 17<br>11.80                                     | 8<br>5.55                                  | 9<br>6.25                 | 8<br>5.55                                          | 9<br>6.25                 |
| Fundu Moldovei                                                                             | No.<br>%               | 10                                  | 7<br>4.86                                       | 2<br>1.39                                  | 5<br>3.47                 | 6<br>4.16                                          | 1<br>0.70                 |
| Manastirea Humorului                                                                       | No.<br>%               | 21                                  | 20<br>13.88                                     | 9<br>6.25                                  | 11<br>7.63                | 8<br>5.55                                          | 12<br>8.33                |
| Pojorata                                                                                   | No.<br>%               | 15                                  | 13<br>9.02                                      | 5<br>3.47                                  | 8<br>5.55                 | 4<br>2.77                                          | 9<br>6.25                 |
| Putna                                                                                      | No.<br>%               | 13                                  | 9<br>6.25                                       | 2<br>1.39                                  | 7<br>4.86                 | 2<br>1.39                                          | 7<br>4.86                 |
| Saru Dornei                                                                                | No.<br>%               | 18                                  | 14<br>9.72                                      | 5<br>3.47                                  | 9<br>6.25                 | 9<br>6.25                                          | 5<br>3.47                 |
| Sucevita                                                                                   | No.<br>%               | 23                                  | 20<br>13.88                                     | 9<br>6.25                                  | 11<br>7.63                | 4<br>2.77                                          | 16<br>11.11               |
| Vama                                                                                       | No.<br>%               | 23                                  | 19<br>13.19                                     | 7<br>4.86                                  | 12<br>8.33                | 2<br>1.39                                          | 17<br>11.80               |
| Vatra Moldovitei                                                                           | No.<br>%               | 11                                  | 10<br>6.94                                      | 2<br>1.39                                  | 8<br>5.55                 | 7<br>4.86                                          | 3<br>2.08                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                               | <b>No.</b><br><b>%</b> | <b>170</b>                          | <b>144</b><br><b>99.95</b>                      | <b>54</b><br><b>37.49</b>                  | <b>90</b><br><b>62.46</b> | <b>59</b><br><b>40.94</b>                          | <b>85</b><br><b>59.01</b> |

##### 4.2.1. Evaluation of Agritourism-Activity Status Starting from the Particularities of the Profiled Structures' Owners

Including the first part of the questionnaire, some questions of a generalized nature related to specialized training or to the period of agritourism-activity development (see Table 5) generated certain information, through which the development degree of the field was ascertained, while other information was obtained related to specific influencing factors, either positive or negative.

By including the question related to the existence of specialized training in the field (b), it was possible to identify (see Table 5) the status of the unit owners and to form correlations regarding the extent to which they can develop a plan for carrying out long-term activities. This particular aspect is important because it ensures profitability through the particular manner of creation of the agritourism product. From the data collected, the following observations were made:

- in total, 37.49% of the surveyed owners had specialized training in the field.
- a total of 62.46%, or more than half, did not have specialized training. Those in this second category relied on carrying out agritourism activities in a position of advantage. Although the share of those who did not have specialized training in this field was twice as high as those who had, due to financing from structural funds and other sources, the interest in this field increased, in addition to the number of those starting to engage in these activities and who were eager to acquire knowledge in the field.

Another way of tracking the development degree of the field, in the researched area, was through the period of agritourism-activity development (c). From this point of view, the ages of the agritourism structures were noteworthy (see Table 5), with 40.94% of the agritourism enterprises in this study older than five years and 59.01% more than 10 years old. It can be observed that in all the 11 analyzed areas, the evolution of agritourism structures increased, (see Table 3) which means that entrepreneurs identified the opportunities presented by the areas to which they belonged, the profitability of their activities, and the fact that their lack of specialized training was somewhat compensated by the accumulation of concrete experience through carrying out these activities over time.

#### 4.2.2. Analysis of the Development Degree of Agritourism Activities in Bukovina Area by Identifying the Representative Aspects Related to the Agritourism Product

Regarding the elements from the tourism product offered (a), it was identified that 40.95% of the surveyed structures in the selected area, offer only the first factor in the overall tourism product, namely accommodation, with 40.26% offering accommodation and food and only 18.74% offering all three elements of the tourist product. The information obtained, correlated with the age of the activity, underlines the reality: structures that have a representative age can offer more than accommodation only. The extent to which the tourist units were able to offer all the elements of the tourist product reflects their development degree:

- in total, 40.95% were young units; therefore, they offered only the accommodation element;
- only a quarter (18.74%) were developed tourist structures, meaning that they could offer all three elements of the tourist product (see Table 6).

The next aspect analyzed involved the local resources included in the agritourism product (b). For this indicator, a predetermined question was used, with three possible answers, of which only one could be chosen. From the 144 tourist structures analyzed, the following were observed:

- a total of 57.61% offered a product based on cultural resources from the area, which reflects the early stage of agritourism; the structures in this category offered only accommodation and capitalized on the advantages of their position.
- a total of 23.60% offered a product based on natural resources, local food, and local craft activities.
- a total of 18.74% included in their products the traditional resources of a local rural guesthouse, meaning the original agritourism product (see Table 6).

The third aspect included in this direction of the research referred to how the owners viewed their own tourist products (c):

- in total, 28.47% of those surveyed viewed their agritourism product “as being an innovative tourist product”;
- in total, 71.48% believed that “there is still room for improvement” (see Table 6). Indeed, the agritourism products offered by the owners of the rural tourist structures in the area could still undergo “additions,” especially regarding leisure part. However, the fact that the majority of the surveyed owners were aware of this aspect is gratifying, and it is probably due to the opinions expressed by tourists following their consumption of this product. Many of those surveyed stated that they would like to include their own food products/handicrafts in the tourism product offered, or to

work on leisure related to the rural world. Indeed, the Bukovina area has been noted for its secular, religious tourism, with many famous resources in this category; however, due to the rural specificity of its resources, and its great character and originality (from traditional dishes to rural architecture, or specific crafts, to its overall way of life) agritourism is a niche to be considered in all future development strategies [75,76].

**Table 6.** Analysis of the development degree of the agritourism activities in Bukovina area through identification of the representative aspects related to agritourism products.

| Villages in Bukovina Area with Agritourism Potential Taken into Consideration in the Study | Measurement Unit | The Elements of the Tourism Product Offered (a) |                         |               | Local Resources Included in Agritourism Product (b) |                                                     |                                                 | How Owners View Their Own Tourist Products (c) |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                  | Accommodation                                   | Accommodation and Lunch | All-Inclusive | Cultural Resources                                  | Natural Resources, Local Food, and Craft Activities | Traditional Resources of Local Rural Guesthouse | As an Innovative Product                       | There Is Still Room for Improvement |
| Cacica                                                                                     | No.              | 2                                               | 5                       | 2             | 5                                                   | 2                                                   | 2                                               | 2                                              | 7                                   |
|                                                                                            | %                | 1.39                                            | 3.47                    | 1.39          | 3.47                                                | 1.39                                                | 1.39                                            | 1.39                                           | 4.86                                |
| Dorna Candrenilor                                                                          | No.              | 3                                               | 3                       | -             | 4                                                   | 2                                                   | -                                               | 2                                              | 4                                   |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.08                                            | 2.08                    | -             | 2.77                                                | 1.39                                                | -                                               | 1.39                                           | 2.77                                |
| Dorna-Arini                                                                                | No.              | 8                                               | 7                       | 2             | 10                                                  | 5                                                   | 2                                               | 7                                              | 10                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 5.55                                            | 4.86                    | 1.39          | 6.94                                                | 3.47                                                | 1.39                                            | 4.86                                           | 6.94                                |
| Fundu Moldovei                                                                             | No.              | 3                                               | 3                       | 1             | 4                                                   | 2                                                   | 1                                               | 1                                              | 6                                   |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.08                                            | 2.08                    | 0.70          | 2.77                                                | 1.39                                                | 0.70                                            | 0.70                                           | 4.16                                |
| Manastirea Humorului                                                                       | No.              | 7                                               | 9                       | 4             | 13                                                  | 3                                                   | 4                                               | 5                                              | 15                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                            | 6.25                    | 2.77          | 9.03                                                | 2.08                                                | 2.77                                            | 3.47                                           | 10.41                               |
| Pojorata                                                                                   | No.              | 4                                               | 6                       | 3             | 7                                                   | 3                                                   | 3                                               | 3                                              | 10                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.77                                            | 4.17                    | 2.08          | 4.86                                                | 2.08                                                | 2.08                                            | 2.08                                           | 6.94                                |
| Putna                                                                                      | No.              | 6                                               | 3                       | -             | 7                                                   | 2                                                   | -                                               | 2                                              | 7                                   |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.17                                            | 2.08                    | -             | 4.86                                                | 1.39                                                | -                                               | 1.39                                           | 4.86                                |
| Saru Dornei                                                                                | No.              | 7                                               | 5                       | 2             | 9                                                   | 3                                                   | 2                                               | 2                                              | 12                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                            | 3.47                    | 1.39          | 6.25                                                | 2.08                                                | 1.39                                            | 1.39                                           | 8.33                                |
| Sucevita                                                                                   | No.              | 5                                               | 7                       | 8             | 10                                                  | 2                                                   | 8                                               | 5                                              | 15                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 3.47                                            | 4.86                    | 5.55          | 6.94                                                | 1.39                                                | 5.55                                            | 3.47                                           | 10.41                               |
| Vama                                                                                       | No.              | 9                                               | 6                       | 4             | 9                                                   | 6                                                   | 4                                               | 7                                              | 12                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 6.25                                            | 4.17                    | 2.77          | 6.25                                                | 4.17                                                | 2.77                                            | 4.86                                           | 8.33                                |
| Vatra Moldovitei                                                                           | No.              | 5                                               | 4                       | 1             | 5                                                   | 4                                                   | 1                                               | 5                                              | 5                                   |
|                                                                                            | %                | 3.47                                            | 2.77                    | 0.70          | 3.47                                                | 2.77                                                | 0.70                                            | 3.47                                           | 3.47                                |
| Total                                                                                      | No.              | 59                                              | 58                      | 27            | 83                                                  | 34                                                  | 27                                              | 41                                             | 103                                 |
|                                                                                            | %                | 40.95                                           | 40.26                   | 18.74         | 57.61                                               | 23.60                                               | 18.74                                           | 28.47                                          | 71.48                               |

#### 4.2.3. Research Related to the Identification of the Motivation behind and Impact of The Agritourism Activity

The first step was to identify the local entrepreneurs' main motivations for developing their agritourism activities (a), starting from three predefined potential motivations, with the possibility of choosing only one option. The findings revealed that the following:

- in total, 55.52% of the owners included in the study decided to carry out activities as a form of obtaining additional income.
- in total, 22.21% of the entrepreneurs had as their main purpose the capitalization on the products or crafts obtained/realized in their own household.
- in total, 22.22% of the local entrepreneurs decided to practice their activities to secure their own jobs (see Table 7).

Regarding the type of impact of agritourism activity on the local community (b), 77.04% believed that agritourism activities are long-term endeavors, involving several areas of favorability for the local community (see Table 7). Considering that 59.01% of the owners of agritourism structures had been operating for more than 10 years, the above percentage was supported, and the fact that these owners continued with their activities underlines the positive impact on both entrepreneurs and locals.

The third aspect pursued, proposals for agritourism to become a means of rural revitalization (c), involved the identification of future directions that could have a favorable and sustainable impact. The answers were free, the information obtained being of great importance. The responses with the highest frequency suggested are presented in Table 7:

- insertion into the tourist product of original elements from the rural world was the aspect mentioned by 23.61% of those surveyed;
- capitalization on agricultural production through agritourism was mentioned by 22.22% of the entrepreneurs in the field;
- attracting both tourists and inhabitants to become involved in the activities is a future necessity in the opinion of 19.44% of those surveyed;
- the stimulation of partnerships in all the categories was mentioned by 9.72%;
- consultancy, especially regarding the creation and promotion of tourism products, was mentioned by 6.94%.

**Table 7.** Identifying the motivation behind and impact generated by the agritourism activities.

| Villages in Bukovina Area with Agritourism Potential Taken into Consideration in the Study | Measurement Unit | The Local Entrepreneurs' Main Motivation for Developing Agritourism Activity (a) |                      |                                        | The Impact Type of Agritourism Activity on Local Community (b) |               |  | Proposals for Agritourism Activity to Become a Means of Rural Revitalization (c) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                  | For Additional Income                                                            | For Creating Own Job | For Capitalizing on Own Product/Crafts | In Long Term                                                   | In Short Term |  |                                                                                  |
| Cacica                                                                                     | No.              | 8                                                                                | -                    | 1                                      | 7                                                              | 2             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 5.55                                                                             | -                    | 0.70                                   | 4.86                                                           | 1.39          |  |                                                                                  |
| Dorna Candrenilor                                                                          | No.              | 3                                                                                | 3                    | -                                      | 6                                                              | -             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.08                                                                             | 2.08                 | -                                      | 4.16                                                           | -             |  |                                                                                  |
| Dorna-Arini                                                                                | No.              | 8                                                                                | 2                    | 7                                      | 15                                                             | 2             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 5.55                                                                             | 1.39                 | 4.86                                   | 10.41                                                          | 1.39          |  |                                                                                  |
| Fundu Moldovei                                                                             | No.              | 6                                                                                | 1                    | -                                      | 6                                                              | 1             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.16                                                                             | 0.70                 | -                                      | 4.16                                                           | 0.70          |  |                                                                                  |
| Manastirea Humorului                                                                       | No.              | 13                                                                               | 3                    | 4                                      | 17                                                             | 3             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 9.03                                                                             | 2.08                 | 2.77                                   | 11.80                                                          | 2.08          |  |                                                                                  |
| Pojorata                                                                                   | No.              | 4                                                                                | 3                    | 6                                      | 8                                                              | 5             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.77                                                                             | 2.08                 | 4.17                                   | 5.55                                                           | 3.47          |  |                                                                                  |
| Putna                                                                                      | No.              | 7                                                                                | 2                    | -                                      | 6                                                              | 3             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                                                             | 1.39                 | -                                      | 4.17                                                           | 2.08          |  |                                                                                  |
| Saru Dornei                                                                                | No.              | 7                                                                                | 5                    | 2                                      | 12                                                             | 2             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                                                             | 3.47                 | 1.39                                   | 8.33                                                           | 1.39          |  |                                                                                  |
| Sucevita                                                                                   | No.              | 8                                                                                | 7                    | 5                                      | 20                                                             | -             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 5.55                                                                             | 4.86                 | 3.47                                   | 13.88                                                          | -             |  |                                                                                  |
| Vama                                                                                       | No.              | 9                                                                                | 6                    | 4                                      | 12                                                             | 7             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 6.25                                                                             | 4.17                 | 2.77                                   | 8.33                                                           | 4.86          |  |                                                                                  |
| Vatra Moldovitei                                                                           | No.              | 7                                                                                | -                    | 3                                      | 2                                                              | 8             |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                                                             | -                    | 2.08                                   | 1.39                                                           | 5.55          |  |                                                                                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                               | <b>No.</b>       | <b>78</b>                                                                        | <b>32</b>            | <b>32</b>                              | <b>111</b>                                                     | <b>33</b>     |  |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                            | <b>%</b>         | <b>55.52</b>                                                                     | <b>22.22</b>         | <b>22.21</b>                           | <b>77.04</b>                                                   | <b>22.91</b>  |  |                                                                                  |

#### 4.2.4. Analysis of Agritourism Activity as an Opportunity to Capitalize on Local Resources and the Impact Generated over Time

The analysis of the extent to which agritourism can be means through which to capitalize on local land and resources, including cultural resources (a), revealed the inclination of the area towards secular tourism, with many of its cultural resources included in the UNESCO heritage. The following observations were made:

- the 43.74% of structures that identified the possibility to identifying/connect with these resources were the “smart” structures. Comparing the information obtained with that in Table 6, it is notable that 57.61% of the owners included offered cultural resources of the area in their tourism product.
- in total, 40.94% of the owners included in the study viewed agritourism activities as an opportunity to capitalize on their own agricultural/craft resources, so they understood the essence of this particular activity. Comparing the information obtained with that in Table 6, we found that 42.34% of the owners used natural resources, local food, and craft activities at rural guesthouses in the products offered.
- in total, 15.27% of those surveyed believed that through agritourism activities, territorial resources, meaning land, can be used in a beneficial way (see Table 8).

**Table 8.** Analysis of agritourism as an opportunity to capitalize on local resources and of the generated impact.

| Villages in Bukovina Area with Agritourism Potential Taken into Consideration in the Study | Measurement Unit | Agritourism Activity Is a Means of Capitalization on (a): |                                  |                          | Agritourism Activity Will Generate in Time (b): |                                              | The Desire to Know/Learn How Sustainable Development Is Achieved through Agritourism (c) |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
|                                                                                            |                  | Land                                                      | Own Agricultural/Craft Resources | Local Cultural Resources | Development of Local Community                  | Pollution and Destruction of Local Resources | Yes                                                                                      | No           |
| Cacica                                                                                     | No.              | 2                                                         | 2                                | 5                        | 9                                               | -                                            | 9                                                                                        | -            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 1.39                                                      | 1.39                             | 3.47                     | 6.25                                            | -                                            | 6.25                                                                                     | -            |
| Dorna Candrenilor                                                                          | No.              | 2                                                         | 4                                | -                        | 6                                               | -                                            | 4                                                                                        | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 1.39                                                      | 2.77                             | -                        | 4.16                                            | -                                            | 2.77                                                                                     | 1.39         |
| Dorna-Arini                                                                                | No.              | 2                                                         | 8                                | 7                        | 15                                              | 2                                            | 15                                                                                       | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 1.39                                                      | 5.55                             | 4.86                     | 10.41                                           | 1.39                                         | 10.41                                                                                    | 1.39         |
| Fundu Moldovei                                                                             | No.              | -                                                         | 6                                | 1                        | 6                                               | 1                                            | 7                                                                                        | -            |
|                                                                                            | %                | -                                                         | 4.16                             | 0.70                     | 4.16                                            | 0.70                                         | 4.86                                                                                     | -            |
| Manastirea                                                                                 | No.              | -                                                         | 15                               | 5                        | 17                                              | 3                                            | 15                                                                                       | 5            |
| Humorului                                                                                  | %                | -                                                         | 10.41                            | 3.47                     | 11.80                                           | 2.08                                         | 10.41                                                                                    | 3.47         |
| Pojorata                                                                                   | No.              | 5                                                         | 8                                | -                        | 11                                              | 2                                            | 11                                                                                       | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 3.47                                                      | 5.55                             | -                        | 7.63                                            | 1.39                                         | 7.63                                                                                     | 1.39         |
| Putna                                                                                      | No.              | -                                                         | 2                                | 7                        | 7                                               | 2                                            | 9                                                                                        | -            |
|                                                                                            | %                | -                                                         | 1.39                             | 4.86                     | 4.86                                            | 1.39                                         | 6.25                                                                                     | -            |
| Saru Dornei                                                                                | No.              | 4                                                         | 1                                | 9                        | 12                                              | 2                                            | 12                                                                                       | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.77                                                      | 0.70                             | 6.25                     | 8.33                                            | 1.39                                         | 8.33                                                                                     | 1.39         |
| Sucevita                                                                                   | No.              | 2                                                         | 3                                | 15                       | 15                                              | 5                                            | 20                                                                                       | -            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 1.39                                                      | 2.08                             | 10.41                    | 10.41                                           | 3.47                                         | 13.88                                                                                    | -            |
| Vama                                                                                       | No.              | 4                                                         | 6                                | 9                        | 17                                              | 2                                            | 17                                                                                       | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 2.77                                                      | 4.17                             | 6.25                     | 11.80                                           | 1.39                                         | 11.80                                                                                    | 1.39         |
| Vatra Moldovitei                                                                           | No.              | 1                                                         | 4                                | 5                        | 5                                               | 5                                            | 8                                                                                        | 2            |
|                                                                                            | %                | 0.70                                                      | 2.77                             | 3.47                     | 3.47                                            | 3.47                                         | 5.55                                                                                     | 1.39         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                               | <b>No.</b>       | <b>22</b>                                                 | <b>59</b>                        | <b>63</b>                | <b>120</b>                                      | <b>24</b>                                    | <b>127</b>                                                                               | <b>17</b>    |
|                                                                                            | <b>%</b>         | <b>15.27</b>                                              | <b>40.94</b>                     | <b>43.74</b>             | <b>83.28</b>                                    | <b>16.67</b>                                 | <b>88.14</b>                                                                             | <b>11.81</b> |

Regarding the impact generated by the agritourism activity over time (b), we found that the following:

- in total, 83.28% of the surveyed owners believed that this field will ensure the development of the local community. If we correlate this information with that in Table 7, then it can be seen that 77.04% believed that this impact will be felt in the long term.
- in addition, 16.67% of the owners believed that the development of agritourism activities or any type of tourist activity will generate pollution and the destruction of local resources.

Another positive finding was that 88.14% of the owners of the agritourism structures included in the study re willing to know/learn how sustainable development is achieved through agritourism (c), according to Table 8.

#### 4.2.5. Business Operation of Agritourism Activity: Benefits, Future Directions, and Impact

The first monitored aspect was the awareness of the importance of agritourism activities derived from the benefits of this activity (a). The results were as follows:

- in total, 90.92% of the owners believed that the development of the agritourism activity was beneficial for them, which was gratifying, since these owners will continue their activities with passion and dedication, with an awareness of their benefits; consequently, they will try to expand and bring their agritourism activities to a higher level of development and organization.
- a relatively small percentage, 9.03%, of the owners did not consider that agritourism was beneficial for them. A possible explanation for this is the reduced length of time over which they had carried out these activities and their lack of experience, which were correlated with low incomes and insignificant profitability (see Table 9).

**Table 9.** Business operations of agritourism activities—benefits, future directions, and impact.

| Villages in Bukovina Area with Agritourism Potential Taken into Consideration in the Study | Measurement Unit | Seeing Benefits in Agritourism Activity (a) |             | Agritourism Activity Is Supported by (b) |                    | Essential Direction for Future Sustainable Development and Positive Impact (c) |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                  | Yes                                         | No          | Own Resources and Management             | Local Partnerships | Improvement of Agritourism Product                                             | Turning to Agencies to Improve Sales | Creating Local Partnerships |
| Cacica                                                                                     | No.              | 7                                           | 2           | 9                                        | -                  | 5                                                                              | 2                                    | 2                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                        | 1.39        | 6.25                                     | -                  | 3.47                                                                           | 1.39                                 | 1.39                        |
| Dorna Candrenilor                                                                          | No.              | 6                                           | -           | 6                                        | -                  | 4                                                                              | -                                    | 2                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.16                                        | -           | 4.16                                     | -                  | 2.77                                                                           | -                                    | 1.39                        |
| Dorna-Arini                                                                                | No.              | 15                                          | 2           | 15                                       | 2                  | 11                                                                             | 5                                    | 1                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 10.41                                       | 1.39        | 10.41                                    | 1.39               | 7.63                                                                           | 3.47                                 | 0.70                        |
| Fundu Moldovei                                                                             | No.              | 7                                           | -           | 7                                        | -                  | 5                                                                              | -                                    | 2                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                        | -           | 4.86                                     | -                  | 3.47                                                                           | -                                    | 1.39                        |
| Manastirea Humorului                                                                       | No.              | 17                                          | 3           | 17                                       | 3                  | 9                                                                              | 4                                    | 7                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 11.80                                       | 2.08        | 11.80                                    | 2.08               | 6.25                                                                           | 2.77                                 | 4.86                        |
| Pojorata                                                                                   | No.              | 13                                          | -           | 11                                       | 2                  | 6                                                                              | 3                                    | 4                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 9.02                                        | -           | 7.63                                     | 1.39               | 4.17                                                                           | 2.08                                 | 2.77                        |
| Putna                                                                                      | No.              | 7                                           | 2           | 9                                        | -                  | 9                                                                              | -                                    | -                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 4.86                                        | 1.39        | 6.25                                     | -                  | 6.25                                                                           | -                                    | -                           |
| Saru Dornei                                                                                | No.              | 12                                          | 2           | 12                                       | 2                  | 9                                                                              | 1                                    | 4                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 8.33                                        | 1.39        | 8.33                                     | 1.39               | 6.25                                                                           | 0.70                                 | 2.77                        |
| Sucevita                                                                                   | No.              | 20                                          | -           | 15                                       | 5                  | 15                                                                             | 2                                    | 3                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 13.88                                       | -           | 10.41                                    | 3.47               | 10.41                                                                          | 1.39                                 | 2.08                        |
| Vama                                                                                       | No.              | 19                                          | -           | 17                                       | 2                  | 9                                                                              | 6                                    | 4                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 13.19                                       | -           | 11.80                                    | 1.39               | 6.25                                                                           | 4.17                                 | 2.77                        |
| Vatra Moldovitei                                                                           | No.              | 8                                           | 2           | 8                                        | 2                  | 5                                                                              | 4                                    | 1                           |
|                                                                                            | %                | 5.55                                        | 1.39        | 5.55                                     | 1.39               | 3.47                                                                           | 2.77                                 | 0.70                        |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                               | <b>No.</b>       | <b>131</b>                                  | <b>13</b>   | <b>126</b>                               | <b>18</b>          | <b>87</b>                                                                      | <b>27</b>                            | <b>30</b>                   |
|                                                                                            | <b>%</b>         | <b>90.92</b>                                | <b>9.03</b> | <b>87.45</b>                             | <b>12.50</b>       | <b>60.39</b>                                                                   | <b>18.74</b>                         | <b>20.82</b>                |

For the second aspect examined, the extent to which agritourism was sustained by the entrepreneurs' own resources and management or local partnerships (b), we aimed to identify the foundation of these activities, and the aspects of interest that we identified were as follows:

- in total, 87.45% of the owners used their own resources and management in conducting their agritourism activities.
- a total of 12.50% of the owners used local partnerships to ensure the necessary activities.

What do these findings mean? In the area studied, the owners managed to sustain their activities on their own, which means a solid foundation, but the evolution of this development will probably reduce over time. The openness to partnerships was reduced, perhaps due to a lack of knowledge; this aspect will slow the development of the field, at least until the reluctance to carry out activities in partnership is overcome (see Table 9). Correlating this aspect with the fact that only 18.74% (see Table 6) of the owners offered all three elements incorporated in the agritourism product (accommodation, food, and leisure), we claim that removing the reluctance to engage in partnerships is essential in order to increase the impact of the agritourism field on the local economy. Partnership would also help the owners of agritourism enterprises to market some of their products.

The third aspect examined was the identification of a single direction that is essential for future sustainable development and positive impact (c), out of the three predetermined factors: improvement of agritourism products, turning to agencies to improve sales, and the creation of local partnerships. The results revealed the following:

- in total, 60.39% of those included in the study believed that in order to ensure future development, the improvement of agritourism products is necessary, which reflects the anchoring in reality of the owners of agritourism structures, as well as the previous information from Table 6 (points a and b), which revealed the fact that owners are often unable to offer an agritourism product with all three components or a genuine agritourism product focused on household life.

- a total of 18.74% of the owners included in the study hoped to increase sales with the help of specialized agencies, which would be a more convenient option.
- a total of 20.82% believed that the creation of local partnerships is the element that will ensure sustained future development for them and their area (see Table 9).

## 5. Discussion and Proposals

Synthesizing the information obtained (see Table 10), the possibility of identifying positive and negative aspects emerges when we discuss the impact of agritourism on the area under analysis. The following *positive aspects* are worth mentioning:

- The prevalence of the agritourism enterprises that developed long-term (more than 10 years) activities, with these enterprises comprising 59.01% of the total analyzed, suggesting a fairly consolidated field;
- In total, 81.21% of the analyzed structures offered two elements of the tourist product, accommodation and food, with elements specific to the area, and 57.61% of the owners included in the study managed to include the cultural resources of the area in the agritourism product offered;
- The impact of agritourism activities on local communities was seen as a long-term effect by 77.04% of the owners, which means that they were aware of the importance of this field, probably due to the results obtained after developing the activity;
- a total of 45.83% of the owners of the agritourism enterprises included in the study proposed that, for agritourism activities to become a means of rural revitalization, the following would be necessary: a focus on the insertion of environmental resources, the cultural resources available in Bukovina, original elements from the rural world, capitalization on agricultural production through these activities, and the regeneration of interest in profitable agriculture. In this way, the impact on the community would be consistent, both in using existing resources and in ensuring the resilience of farmers' livelihoods;
- a total of 83.28% believed that agritourism activities will generate, in time, the development of the local community, which means trust in the activities carried out, acquired over time, meaning that the entrepreneurs managed to overcome the stage of mistrust at the beginning of the activity, derived from ignorance of the field;
- the desire to know/learn how sustainable development is achieved through agritourism was present among 88.14% of the entrepreneurs in the field, meaning the possibility of ensuring the sustainability of the field over time;
- in total, 90.92% of the local agritourism entrepreneurs saw the benefits in their activities, with 87.45% of them supporting their agritourism activities with their own resources and management and 60.39% of them considering these activities essential for future sustainable development and positive impact for the improvement of agritourism products.

Obviously, based the disadvantages found, in the future, proposals can be issued for agritourism to become a means of rural revitalization and have a positive and sustainable impact on the local community (see Table 11).

However, unfortunately, negative aspects were also identified:

- The lack of training in the field of 62.46% of the owners was one of the major negative features. It is true that this was compensated by the high level of experience in the field of 59.01% of the owners, but the provision of specialized training would strengthen and bring added value to the analyzed field;
- Only 18.74% of the owners offered an "all-inclusive" agritourism product, which denotes the early stage of the activity's development, due to both a lack of knowledge and a lack of financial resources;

- Most of the owners were refractory regarding consultancy, with only 6.94% believing that they needed consultancy, especially for the insertion of original elements into the tourist product and for promotion;
- The development of partnerships was found on a small scale, in only 12.50% from those surveyed. The same low levels were found in the desire to collaborate with agencies to improve sales.

**Table 10.** Agritourism activities' impact from Bukovina area—statistical overview.

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Evaluation of agritourism-activity status starting from the particularities of the owners of profiled structures</i>                                           | The availability of training in the field (b)                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                       | 37.49% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | No                                                                                                                                                                                        | 62.46% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | The period of agritourism activity development (c)                                        | More than 5 years                                                                                                                                                                         | 40.94% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | More than 10 years                                                                                                                                                                        | 59.01% |
| <i>Analysis of the development degree of agritourism activities in Bukovina area by identifying the representative aspects related to the agritourism product</i> | The elements of the tourism product offered (a)                                           | Accommodation                                                                                                                                                                             | 40.95% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Accommodation and lunch                                                                                                                                                                   | 40.26% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | All-inclusive                                                                                                                                                                             | 18.74% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Cultural resources                                                                                                                                                                        | 57.61% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Local resources included in agritourism product (b)                                       | Natural resources, local food, and craft activities                                                                                                                                       | 23.60% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Traditional resources of local rural guesthouse                                                                                                                                           | 18.74% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | How the owners view their own tourist product (c)                                         | as innovative tourist product                                                                                                                                                             | 28.47% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | There is still room for improvement                                                                                                                                                       | 71.48% |
| <i>Identifying the motivation behind and impact generated by agritourism activity</i>                                                                             | The local entrepreneurs' main motivation to develop agritourism activities (a)            | For additional income                                                                                                                                                                     | 54.14% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | For creating own job                                                                                                                                                                      | 22.22% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | For capitalizing on own product/crafts                                                                                                                                                    | 23.59% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | The type of impact of agritourism activities on local community (b)                       | Over long term                                                                                                                                                                            | 77.04% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Over short term                                                                                                                                                                           | 22.91% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | - focus on insertion into the tourism product of environmental resources, cultural resources in Bukovina, and of the original elements from the rural world                               | 23.61% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Proposals for agritourism to become a means of rural revitalization (c)                   | - Revaluing agricultural production through agritourism, regeneration of interest in profitable agriculture, and guarantee of farmers' livelihood                                         | 22.22% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | - Attracting both tourists and the rest of the inhabitants from rural world to take part in activities, generating the transmission of crafts and original elements to future generations | 19.44% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | - Consultancy, especially for the insertion of original elements into tourist product and their promotion                                                                                 | 6.94%  |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
| <i>Analysis of agritourism as an opportunity to capitalize on local resources and the generated impact</i>                                                        | Agritourism as means of capitalization: (a)                                               | Land                                                                                                                                                                                      | 15.27% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Own agricultural/craft resources                                                                                                                                                          | 40.94% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Local cultural resources                                                                                                                                                                  | 43.74% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Agritourism activities will generate in time (b)                                          | Development of local community                                                                                                                                                            | 83.28% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Pollution and destruction of local resources                                                                                                                                              | 16.67% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | The desire to know /learn how sustainable development is achieved through agritourism (c) | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                       | 88.14% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | No                                                                                                                                                                                        | 11.81% |
| <i>Business operations of agritourism—benefits, future directions, and impact</i>                                                                                 | Seeing benefits of agritourism (a)                                                        | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                       | 90.92% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | No                                                                                                                                                                                        | 9.03%  |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Agritourism is supported by (b)                                                           | Own resources and management                                                                                                                                                              | 87.45% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Local partnerships                                                                                                                                                                        | 12.50% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Which direction is essential for future sustainable development and positive impact (c)   | Improvement of agritourism product                                                                                                                                                        | 60.39% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Turning to agencies to improve sales                                                                                                                                                      | 18.74% |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Creating local partnerships                                                                                                                                                               | 20.82% |

**Table 11.** Proposals for agritourism to become a means of rural revitalization for rural communities in Bukovina.

| The Objective of the Study and the Area                                                                                     | Directions/Hypotheses Studied                                                                                                                            | Proposals for Agritourism to Become a Means of Rural Revitalization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The impact of agritourism on the rural environment. Proposals for the future development of the Bukovina rural area studied | Analysis of the development degree of agritourism activity in Bukovina area by identifying the representative aspects related to the agritourism product | Increasing the percentage of those who have training in the field, with an impact on increasing the quality of the products offered to tourists.<br>Stimulating and supporting the owners of agritourism enterprises through various measures, with the aim of supporting their activity for periods of longer than 10 years.<br>Increasing the number of agritourism entrepreneurs capable of offering “all-inclusive” agritourism products.<br>Centralization of resources with agritourism potential.<br>Increasing the visibility of agritourism products using the “Bukovina brand” through the following: |
|                                                                                                                             | Research related to the identification of the motivation behind and impact of agritourism activities                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the insertion into the tourism product of environmental resources, cultural resources in Bukovina, and original elements from the rural world;</li> <li>- an increase in the capitalization on agricultural production through agritourism, guaranteeing farmers’ livelihoods;</li> <li>- emphasis on the insertion of crafts and special, authentic elements into agritourism products, generating an increase in interest in this field at the local level.</li> </ul>                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                             | Analysis of agritourism as an opportunity to capitalize on local resources and the impact generated over time                                            | Assistance in the field through specialized consultancy in all stages of the activity.<br>The creation of an agritourism product that illustrates “the specific way of life of the local rural community” and is fully comprised of local resources.<br>Ensuring sustainable development by capitalizing on healthy food (from the entrepreneurs’ own production base, or from nature) directly through the agritourism product.<br>The consolidation of agritourism through partnerships between agritourism entrepreneurs and local administrative and economic entities.                                     |
|                                                                                                                             | Business operations of agritourism—benefits, future directions, AND impact                                                                               | Consultancy, strictly for tourism/agritourism initiatives.<br>Support for sales consolidation.<br>A local tourist center with the aim of managing the activity at the local level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Source: Own proposals taken in consideration the research.

## 6. Conclusions

The findings revealed that the period of agritourism activity development in the analyzed area for more than a half of analyzed enterprises was more than 10 years. In total, 87.45% sustained their agritourism activities through own resources, but only 18.74% could offer an “all-inclusive” agritourist product. In total, 57.61% relies on the cultural resources of the area, which they included in their agritourism products, and 71.48% of the owners believed they could improve their agritourism products. Furthermore, 77.04% of the owners believed that the effect of their activities on the local community was a long-term effect, with 84.68% seeing in this activity the possibility of capitalizing on their own agricultural/craft resources and local cultural resources. Additionally, 83.28% of the owners believed that agritourism activities will generate, in time, the development of the local community, and 88.14% expressed the desire to know/learn how sustainable development is achieved through these activities. In total, 90.92% considered agritourism activities beneficial, and 60.39% considered them essential for future sustainable development and positive impact.

A small percentage of the owners believed that the development of agritourism activities, or any type of tourist activity, would generate pollution and the destruction of local resources; however, a large percentage was willing to learn how sustainable development is achieved through these activities. In fact, a triad of actions are needed for these activities to become a means of ensuring the capitalization of local resources and, in time, sustainability:

- first, the agritourism product must be improved by adding all original/authentic elements, both those of entrepreneurs and those of the local community;
- next, local partnerships are the secret to ensuring success and the possibility of the profitable development of the activities;
- furthermore, the involvement of special tourist agencies is essential to remove the problem of sales and promotion.

Because the share of those who did not have specialized training in the field was twice as high as that of those who did, only a small percentage considered that, in the future, it will be necessary to attract tourists and the inhabitants of the rural world to carrying out

agritourism activities. However, only in this manner can increased attention be focused on the exploitation of resources. This will include the following:

- direct capitalization on healthy food (from entrepreneurs' own production bases, or from nature) through agritourism products;
- the transmission of crafts and special/unique elements to future generations.

All the elements that illustrate the specific way of life of the local rural community and are fully composed of local resources will be saved from depletion or degradation.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the impact of agritourism on rural communities in the Bukovina area is positive, with many opportunities to become a possible tool to sustain local rural entrepreneurship and local sustainability. However, this will be based on support, consultancy, partnerships, and the experiences of local owners of agritourist entities (see Table 11). Nevertheless, in the current conditions of the local rural economy, agritourism could be a way of ensuring the profitability of and reviving interest in some fields that are considered "old" by young people and not "fashionable," such as agriculture or old crafts (spinning, weaving, sewing, woodcarving, painting, etc.).

The contribution to scientific research accomplished through this study is the evaluation of an important area in agritourism development and, based on the information obtained, many development proposals can be issued. Some of the future development proposals are already presented in Table 11, based on current findings. Considering that the Bukovina area features multiple resources and tourist values, a possible future direction of study could include the centralization of resources with unique characters, taking into consideration cultural and gastronomic aspects. These methods might include the identification, design, and analysis of some methods with which to valorize these resources, either through the prism of gastronomy or through the prism of the creation of a traditional tourist village with strictly tourist values.

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