

# English in Rural Tourism

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**POLYTECHNIC OF ŠIBENIK**

**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT**

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**ENGLISH IN RURAL TOURISM**

**Final thesis**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

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**ENGLISH IN RURAL TOURISM**

**Final thesis**

**Course:** Business English 2

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## **ENGLSKI U RURALNOM TURIZMU**

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Sažetak rada:

Engleski jezik se proširio tijekom stoljeća kao jezik trgovine, i danas je vodeći strani jezik na globalnoj razini. Zadobio je status najrasprostranjenijeg svjetskog jezika u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća te se smatra da ga govori više od 1.5 milijarde govornika. Od značaja je za ugostiteljstvo, u svrhu marketinga, poslovnog dopisivanja i komunikacije. Ovaj rad razrađuje kako stvoriti dojmljivu sliku seoskog obiteljskog gospodarstva iz općeg mišljenja o ruralnoj zgradi, dobrog marketinškog pristupa i marketinga na engleskom jeziku. Opisat će se pretpostavke atraktivnog obiteljskog poljoprivrednog gospodarstva i način njegove promocije na primjeru agroturizma Kalpić, agroturizma Duvančić i Etnoland-a Dalmati u Šibensko-Kninskoj županiji. Cilj ovog rada je istražiti kako privući dodatnu potražnju za ruralnim turizmom i gdje treba provesti promjene. Kako bi se došlo do konkretnih zaključaka o interesu za ruralni turizam, provedena je anketa među studentima Veleučilišta u Šibeniku.

Ključne riječi: Ruralni turizam, Engleski za posebne namjene, Aktivni turizam, Tradicija, Okoliš

(42 stranice /5 slika /2 tablica /1 grafikon/1 diagram/27 literaturnih navoda /jezik izvornika: engleski)

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## **ENGLISH IN RURAL TOURISM**

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### Abstract:

English has spread over the centuries as the language of commerce, and today it is a leading foreign language globally. It was awarded the status of the world's most widely spoken language in the second half of the 20th century and is spoken by more than 1.5 billion speakers. It is important for the hospitality industry, for the purpose of marketing, business correspondence and communication. This paper elaborates on how to create an impressive image of a rural family farm from a general opinion about a rural building, a good marketing approach and marketing in English. In this regard, the assumptions of an attractive family farm and the way of its promotion will be described on the example of agrotourism Kalpić, agritourism Duvančić and Etnoland Dalmati in Šibenik-Knin County. The aim of this paper is to explore how to attract additional demand for rural tourism and where changes should be implemented. In order to come to concrete conclusions about the interest in rural tourism, a survey was conducted among students of the Polytechnic of Šibenik.

Keywords: Rural tourism, English for specific purposes, Active tourism, Tradition, Environment

(42 pages/5 figures/2 tables/1 chart/1 diagram/27 references/ original in English language)

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Modern trends in global tourism such as more frequent short holiday breaks through the year for the purpose of exploring culture, sporting and cultural events as well as new target groups who seek for healthier and more active holiday, e.g.: individualists who want to see as much of a certain country as possible in a limited time or elderly people who have some spare money and time for travelling, have changed tourism movement patterns. By the term “active holiday” they wish for different opportunities to explore, learn and actively participate in the tourist product through events, sports and recreation, gastronomy and nature. Recently, in the world, including Croatia, there has been a significant increase both on the supply and demand side of the rural tourism. The data from the Association of Rural Tourism of Croatia mentions about 1000 tourist family farms in 2019. With quantitative changes also occur qualitative: enrichment of offer with numerous new services and activities, as well as 100% local products. This is mostly supported by the development of agritourism (tourist family farms as the most common form of rural tourism), which is recognized in Istria, the surroundings of Dubrovnik and partly in the Dalmatian Hinterland, Baranja. Along the main rural tourism area – Istria, Šibenik-Knin county will be pointed out with the emphasis on their promotion and in general importance of the English language, which enables functioning of the supply-demand relations in tourism.

## **1.1. Main topic and key objective of the studies**

The main topic is to present rural tourism as a new trend of tourist demand and on the example of selected destinations of Šibenik-Knin County, and to explore the effectiveness of their marketing in English and on that basis propose opportunities for improvement. The key objective is to prove that the English language can be a very powerful tool in creating the overall impression of the rural area, because it conveys welcome, local story, lifestyle of the population, i.e., it is the optimal solution for the largest number of guests of different demographic and geographical characteristics.

## **1.2. Structure of the study**

The paper is divided into seven chapters. After the introductory definition of the topic and objectives of the work, the second chapter presents the concept, features and assumptions of rural tourism. The third part presents an analysis of the state of rural tourism in Croatia, marketing of major rural destinations and an assessment of tourist traffic. The following is a description of the offer of three family farms of Šibenik-Knin County. In the fifth part, the importance of English language for the marketing in rural tourism is elaborated. The following is an overview of the results of a survey conducted among students of the Polytechnic of Šibenik about their pre-and-post impression when visiting one of the family farms. Finally, there is a review of the entire work with the most important conclusions and suggestions.

## **1.3. Data sources and methodology**

The writing methods used in this paper are:

- 1) The inductive method was aimed at collecting as much information as possible. Data from different years were analysed and explained in the appropriate order with important conclusions.
- 2) The deductive method was used as a way of elaborating general opinions, for example, the method was used to introduce into individual topics based on commonly known facts.

The statistical and the sample method were used to analyse the characteristics of a certain number of elements of the group.

- 3) The statistical method obtained a conclusion about the average value. In this paper, the statistical method is used in the survey of students to numerically present interest in rural tourism.
- 4) The sample method is used when one wants to obtain data from only a fraction of the units of a statistical set. The sample method obtained data during the analysis of entrepreneurial projects in the Šibenik-Knin County.

## **2. THE TERM OF *RURAL TOURISM***

*Rural tourism* is a term for a type of tourism which consists of various factors of rest and services provided in rural area based on touristic valorisation of nature, cultural heritage and tradition at the same time having in mind their preservation. In general, additional services it includes are outdoor activities (sport for the purpose of experiencing new adventures and improving health): horseback riding, hunting, fishing, education, etc.

Definitions of rural tourism are numerous depending on different meaning of rural area in a specific country and the diversity of activities in rural area (which can be industry, business zone for different purposes – constructions supervision in traffic). According to Kantar (2019) the Council of Europe defines that “rural tourism is tourism in a rural area with all the activities carried out in that place, and the most important features are a peaceful environment, the absence of noise, preserved environment, communication with hosts, local food and getting acquainted with peasant affairs.

According to Kantar (2019) the main criterion when systematizing rural areas in the European Union is the population density of the area (e.g., villages, settlements, hamlets and their surroundings), which must be up to 150 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Essentially, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2004) defines four key elements of rural tourism. These are: natural rural resources (rivers, lakes, mountains, forests, etc.), rural lifestyle (crafts, local events, gastronomy, traditional music, etc.), rural heritage (traditional architecture, history, castles, churches, villages, etc.) and rural activities (horseback riding, hunting, fishing, hiking, cycling, water sports and a whole range of outdoor activities).

Geić (2011) concludes that rural tourism is not the same as agritourism which is narrower form. Rural tourism is characterized by different types of tourist activities which take place in rural area and therefore depending on main purpose of tourist visits it is divided into different subtypes (sports, eno-gastro, health, eco rural tourism etc.).

Bartoluci et al. (2015) point out that the basis of tourist offer can be: wine shops or tasting rooms (wine cellars, tasting rooms, wine roads); excursion sites or restaurants (traditional crafts,

workshops, souvenir shops, traditional food preparation facilities); accommodation in rural areas (traditional and other rural holiday homes, apartments, camps, small family rural hotels); eco-ethno villages and farms with ethno-collections or museums; eco farms and eco-production or thematic roads and paths. This means that whenever tourist visits rural area to get involved in activities connected to previously mentioned factors, it is considered rural tourism.

*Table 1: The difference between urban/resort and rural tourism*

URBAN/RESORT TOURISM	RURAL TOURISM
Little open space	Much open space
Densely populated	Sparsely populated
Built environment	Natural environment
Many indoor activities	Many outdoor activities
Infrastructure-intensive	Infrastructure-weak
Nationally/internationally owned firms	Locally owned firms
Many guests	Few guests
Cosmopolitan in atmosphere	Local in atmosphere
Many modern buildings	Many older buildings
Broad marketing span	Niche marketing

Source: Adapted from (Tourism strategies and rural development, 1994) Taken from <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/2755218.pdf> , 10. 02. 2023

The table contains a list of distinctive features of urban/resort tourism and rural tourism

## **2.1. Assumptions of rural tourism**

Bartoluci et al. (2015) state that the development of a rural destination must be based on sustainability, quality scenery, crafts, food, drink, hospitality, tradition, traditional skills and local story.

Of particular importance is the first mentioned factor *sustainable development*, which according to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) is based on minimal negative impact on nature and the environment to preserve them for the purpose of economic activities and living conditions in the future. As stated by Bartoluci et al. (2015) unlike

industry, mining, deforestation, intensive farming, etc. rural tourism is a pure economic activity that does not deplete natural resources. Its main resources are nature and tradition combined in different unique and personalized experiences connected to the lifestyle of the geographical area.

According to Tubić (2019) key factors/assumptions for the development of rural tourism are: the attractiveness of the location, the arrangement of the rural family farm, the attractiveness of the offer, organizational, normative, property-legal, spatial assumptions, infrastructural and developmental, educational, and promotional and environmental protection measures.

- Arrangement of a typical rural family farm

For the household to be visually attractive, functional, and accepted on the market, along with the subsequent unavoidable promotion, the way it is arranged is also important. The arrangement of the rural family farm refers to: exterior decoration, interior design of the facility and landscaping.

For a family farm, it is characteristic that caterers arrange their catering spaces as well as households with a rustic and antique interior to bring the guest closer to the rural experience. The bathroom, toilet, sports facilities should be modern and clean and not necessarily rustic. It is important that guests do not doubt in the cleanliness of the restroom. Baćac (2011) states that for the exterior decoration, it is necessary to take care that the building exudes the "spirit of antiquity" and tradition. Some of his suggestions are: to equip the object with antique authentic furniture (bread oven; indigenous flowers in the accommodation area); to decorate the premises with objects of manual labour; provide space and even at the expense of a lack of rooms. If traditional and modern features are combined in the design of the household, it should not lose the ambience of space, etc. According to him the environment should be arranged in such a way that old varieties of fruits, vegetables, flowers, ornamental, spicy and medicinal plants dominate; preferably, it should contain a specially designed rest area where it is possible to stay in the summer days and which is overshadowed by an old -fashioned "pergola" for the decoration of old grape variety, climbing rose, vine; well; children's playground, etc.

- Attractiveness of rural tourism offer

According to Tubić (2019) rural tourists expect and seek a number of services, the most common of which are:

- sleeping
- food and drinks (primarily indigenous agricultural products, i.e., traditional specialties)
- purchase of agricultural products and products and souvenirs
- other sports and entertainment offer (grape harvest, work in the field).

•Attractiveness of the location

According to Ružić (2005) the attractiveness of the location of a particular rural economy is a prerequisite for obtaining the status of a tourist household. For tourists to be interested in visiting this household, it is especially important that it is in a tourist-interesting and picturesque area, i.e. that it meets their tourist needs and requirements, which are:

- clean air, clean water, healthy climate, preserved environment (natural and cultural heritage)
- recreation opportunities; if the environment is characterized by interesting natural relief (rivers, lakes, mountains) various activities are possible: walking, hiking, swimming, rowing, fishing, skiing, hunting, rock climbing, horseback riding, cycling, etc.
- sights: castles, churches, museums, galleries located near the peasant farm
- various social events, old crafts and homemade: pottery, leather making, basketball, making folk costumes, weaving, knitting, embroidery, painting, etc. skills
- paved access to the peasant farm, water supply, electricity, telephone, proximity to the inn, shops, post office, bank, doctors, car workshops, etc.

• Organizational assumptions

The organizational structure of tourism in Croatia is divided into three levels - state, county and local level. The creators of tourism policy are the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia and related ministries and the Croatian National Tourist Board, which represent the state level.

Tubić (2019) considers that this is a good way of organizing and that all creators and co-creators need to define for their own level concrete goals of tourism development and growth, ways of

achieving them and to consistently achieve results. These can be: development of a separate strategy for the development of rural tourism, establishment of appropriate institutional marketing and interest association, development measures and support, criteria of categorization and certification, formal and non-formal education to raise the quality of the workforce, etc.

- Environmental measures

It implies measures: reducing the pressure on nature through the sustainable use of natural resources and organic farming without the use of pesticides; raising the level of knowledge, understanding and support of the public for nature conservation, etc.

- Property-legal and infrastructural assumptions

Tubić (2019) states that development of rural tourism in Croatia is in danger of further fragmentation of family farms, as well as devastation of the beauty and comfort of space by building hydroelectric power plants, highway routes and similar structures. Municipal and social infrastructure is allowed, such as: telephone, water supply, waste disposal, post office, school, museums, ambulances, etc.

- Developmental assumptions

Tubić (2019) refers to the development of documentation basis, in the form of concepts, strategies, programs at the local, regional and national level with proposals of incentive measures (organic production, production of indigenous products, environmental protection, etc.). The Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030. is the current basic strategic document.

- Educational assumptions

Tubić (2019) refers to formal and non-formal education, pointing out that the formal education leads to mismatch on the labor market. The main issue is how to improve efficiency of education system that usually doesn't provide necessary skills and appropriate employees for tourism employers. In the development of non-formal education so far (through various seminars, round tables, lifelong programs), the leading role with appropriate results is played by the professional association Members Club "Selo". The following are education programs intended for tourist farms and other entrepreneurs in rural tourism, regularly held since 2006. Such education should

be based on: marketing, financing of EU development projects, interest association, incentive measures, etc.

- Promotional assumptions

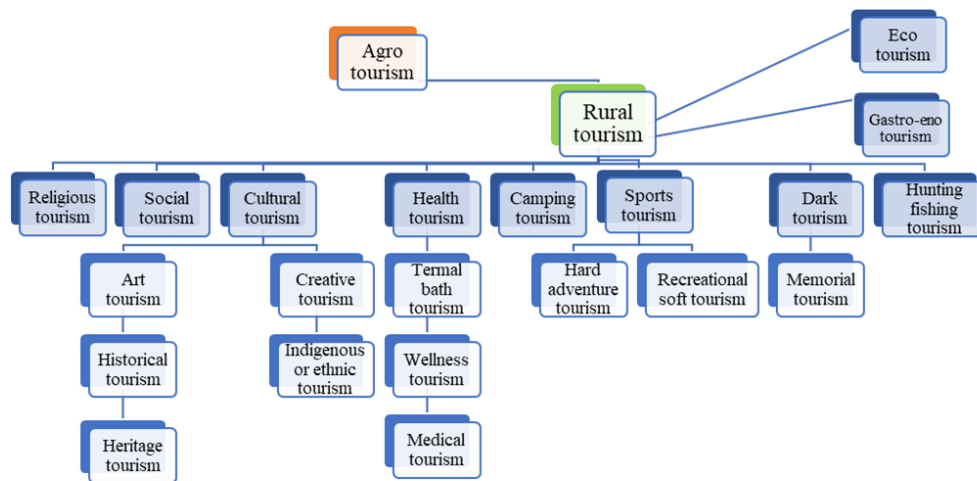
According to Tubić (2019) rural tourism should be more systematically promoted. The general conclusions of previous rural tourism congresses in Croatia contribute to this. Current specific objectives for improving promotional activities are:

- ensure equal promotion of rural tourism at the national level of the Croatian National Tourist Board and the Croatian Chamber of Economy – Sector for Tourism
- design a marketing program of rural tourism
- intensify the promotion of the entire rural tourism as a special type of tourism and developed specific forms of rural tourism.



## 2.2. Subtypes of rural tourism

Picture 1: Diagram showing the subtypes of rural tourism



Source: Adapted from Tubić, D. (2019). *Ruralni turizam: Od teorije do empirije*. Virovitica: Visoka škola za menadžment u turizmu i informatici u Virovitici., p.159

The main goal of farms is to provide guests with overnight stay services (in family hotels and holiday homes in the countryside), food (e.g., as part of ethno villages and tasting rooms) and other active holiday services such as agricultural works, cycling tours, experience of tradition, etc. With the process of socio-demographic and economic activation of rural areas in Croatia, but also with more families who are willing to move from big, crowded cities to peaceful and quiet environment to start something on their own, rural offer is continuously increasing. Given the multiplicity of activities which are the basis of tourist interest, there are different subtypes of rural tourism, as shown in the picture 1 (agrotourism, soft tourism, nature tourism, alternative tourism, green tourism, ecotourism, etc.). Today, among all mentioned subtypes, tourists of all over the world are mostly interested in following health tourism (termal bath, wellness, medical), dark tourism (visiting places and sites associated with some of history's most tragic events), gastro-eno tourism,

sports tourism, religious tourism, adventure tourism and ecotourism. All of them can be topic of individual surveys and statistics.

### 2.2.1. Definitions of types of rural tourism

Among the most common definitions are the following:

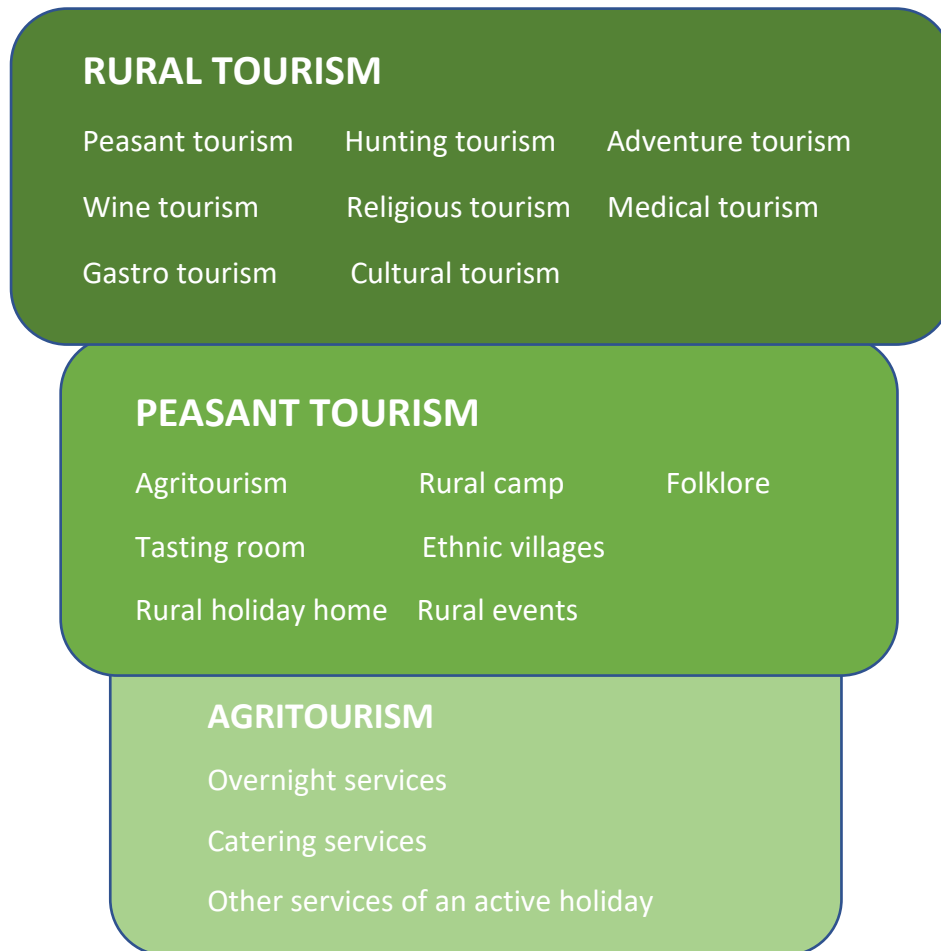
According to Ekioglası.ba (2020) the difference between rural and peasant tourism is that rural tourism is the broadest term and encompasses all activities in the rural area. Accordingly, rural tourism includes rural, cultural, ecotourism, adventure, health, gastronomic, etc.

Furthermore, it is mentioned that peasant tourism is a narrower term, unlike rural tourism, and includes all forms of tourist offer, that combine agriculture and tourism, and are related to the village. Peasant tourism includes: agritourism, tasting rooms, excursion sites, ethno villages, rural events, etc. Peasant tourism is the main source of household income.

The same source mentions that agritourism is the narrowest term and represents a form of tourism that is an additional source of income for agricultural households. Its purpose is to market its products through the tourist offer.

Dobrota defines that (2018) the main purpose of agritourism is agricultural production, while catering service is an addition to the offer. Agritourism offers accommodation, food services (from the farmer's own production) and various services such as participation in agricultural works, hunting, horseback riding, excursions, workshops, etc.

Diagram 1: The diagram shows the schematic difference between *rural*, *peasant* and *agritourism*



*Source: Shortend diagram by the author from the main source: Baćac R., Priručnik za bavljenje seoskim turizmom, Ministarstvo turizma Republike Hrvatske, (2011), Hrvatska.*

The diagram presents the relationship between rural, peasant and agritourism and their main types.

### 3. THE STATE OF RURAL TOURISM IN CROATIA

Most of the information about rural tourism is in the national catalogue which offers extensive information on the rural tourism offer of each tourist region with a focus on the main attractions of destinations, rural areas and local cultural identity. The basic idea of the catalogue was to create a strong image of rural tourism based on a diverse concept related to the most famous characteristics of rural areas and villages such as natural heritage, preserved nature, tradition, and activities related to tradition in rural areas.

Picture 2: The figure shows the division of the Republic of Croatia into 10 tourist regions according to the publication of the Croatian Chamber of Economy



Source: (The Croatian Chamber of Economy, 2015) Adapted from Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia, Nacionalni katalog Ruralni turizam Hrvatske, Zagreb, p. 39. Retrieved from <https://www.hgk.hr/documents/hgkatalogruralniturizamhrvatskeweb57728ea64487b.pdf>, 6.12.2022

According to the latest data from 2007. there was about 352 (Ćurić, 2010) tourist family farms, 477 (Dobrota, 2015) in 2014 and in 2015 there was 688, while the Association of Rural Tourism of Croatia mentions 1000 of them in 2019.

Bartoluci et al. (2015) emphasize that coastal and continental Croatia differ significantly with regard to the realized tourist traffic. In the continental part of Croatia, only about 2% of total tourist traffic is generated (while the rest refers to coastal parts of the country), which indicates that rural potential of Croatia (92% of its territory that abounds in agricultural tourism) is not enough tourist recognized and it is still quite unexplored.

According to Bartoluci et al. (2015) rural destinations in Croatia share the following characteristics: numerous small municipalities that should cooperate with each other in creating an integrated tourist offer, lack of identity of most rural tourist destinations, although there are some positive trends in the rural farms offer: 100 % production of local indigenous products (to which more and more tourists are particularly sensitive), awareness to applicate environmental protection measures, as well as more and more rural farms etc. Unlike Austria, Hungary and Slovenia, where rural tourism has an important economic role, it is however beginning to be more recognized in Croatia.

The reason why it was in stagnation for a long time is that the rural area has been facing two related processes for decades: deagrarianization (the process of abandoning agriculture as an activity and source of income) and depopulation (the process of reducing the number of inhabitants of a region or country due to emigration and a small increase in the number of births), which particularly affect the emigration of young, working-active population.

According to Bartoluci et al. (2015) the most developed form of rural tourism in Croatia is Country tourism, which provides guests with a short stay in the countryside and opportunities for active holidays, works on farms and participation in various cultural events. Furthermore, he states Istrian, Osijek-Baranja and Dubrovnik-Neretva Counties as the most developed rural tourism counties.

In addition to rural tourism, guests are also interested in:

-ecotourism (especially within surrounding of protected parts of nature such as national parks and nature parks) and

-cultural tourism (visits to peasant households to sightsee of cultural goods – castles, monasteries, sacral heritage, museums and various thematic collections, historical, archaeological, and memorial sites; to visit cultural events and festivals throughout the year).

### **3.1. Development of rural tourism in Croatia**

Livajić (2007) explains that rural tourism in Croatia began to develop in the early nineties, and at the initiative of the Croatian Peasants' Union, the Institute for Tourism and the company “Hrvatski farmer”, legislation was set that determine the dealing with rural tourism. The first Dalmatian ethno-eco village which is open to this day, was founded in 1987. by family Škopljanac from Radošić near Split as a pioneer of rural and ethno tourism in the Dalmatian hinterland. Nowadays, even though 92 % of The Territory of Croatia is rural area, the share of rural tourism in the total tourism of Croatia is only 2%. The annual growth of rural tourism on a global scale is 11%. According to the Croatian Chamber of Economy, in 2005 there were 309 tourist peasant farms registered in Croatia, of which 210 or 68% offer food services, and 167 have wine and brandy tasting rooms. Tourism on peasant farms in Croatia is the most developed in Istria County where 80 peasant farms are registered or 26%.

According to Demonja (2014) the systematic development of rural tourism in the Republic of Croatia can be divided into two time periods. The first period began in 1995 and lasted until the end of 1999 when the national programme "Development of small and medium-sized enterprises in tourism with an emphasis on sustainable development in rural areas" was accepted. The second period begins at the end of 2003, when the Republic of Croatia begins to take care of rural areas and rural economy (through its ministries of tourism and agriculture).

### 3.2. A comparison between rural tourism of Croatia and globally

#### Similarities

According to Futuremarketinsights.com (2023),

1. More farms are emerging in areas that record a population decline with an emphasis on agrotourism.
2. A more pronounced trend of demand for rural tourism as a source of peace, quiet and natural sustainability.
3. In Croatia, as well as in the world, the older population is most interested in rural tourism because of the interest in discovering different cultures and the need for a break from an accelerated lifestyle.

#### Differences

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2020),

1. In general, a stronger tourism value chain<sup>1</sup> is represented in the world (e.g., better availability of information, the possibility of organizing excursions, events, conferences, transport, as well as the offer of tourist packages).
2. Public investment spending in rural tourism is higher than in the private sector.
3. There is a greater emphasis on the education as well as on investing in technology (wireless internet, card payments and various other technological solutions).

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<sup>1</sup> For tourists, the value chain represents a set of all the information, activities, goods, services and experiences that tourists consume from preparing for travel, traveling and reminding them of travel upon returning home. A great advantage will be achieved by providers that are connected in value chains in tourism that create a greater perception of value for tourists, such as complex tourism products (packages, excursions, events, conferences). They generate more added value through the inclusion of more content. Source: Trezner, Ž. (2015). Value chains in tourism. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from Croatian Chamber of Economy: <https://hgk.hr/documents/dmk-startuphub-prezentacija-2616295e7ec13aad.pdf>.

### 3.3. A comparison of rural tourism in the counties Šibenik-Knin and Istria

As effective marketing is one of the key prerequisites for the development of a tourist destination, this paper offers the analysis of two main rural tourism counties from this aspect:

#### •Istria County

According to Mirošević (2014) tourism in Istria develops through the so-called "umbrella branding" - the promotion of the Istrian region as a whole. The reason for this is that tourists of Istria are highly interested to explore as much of the whole region. Therefore, it is much more effective to find common characteristics of individual local offers (in this case 7 clusters: Umag-Novigrad, Poreč, Vrsar-Funtana, Rovinj, Labin-Rabac, inland Istria, Pula-Medulin). Istria represents a combination of rich tradition and tourism, which is manifested in winemaking, olive growing, agritourism, events, sports and recreational facilities, etc. The competitive advantages of such a tourism framework are authenticity, cooperation, differentiation<sup>2</sup> and innovation.

#### •Šibenik-Knin County

As mentioned in the Master plan of the Šibenik-Knin County (2017), in recent years, initiatives have been launched in the interior of the county to complete the tourist offer, given that there are still untapped tourist resources. The wealth of natural and cultural tourism resources began to be directed towards the development of rural tourism subtypes like: cultural, eno gastronomic, adventure and other. This is also an important prerequisite for the extension of the tourist season. Concrete progress has been made through:

- greater valorisation of the Knin fortress and local gastronomic offer and through projects of arranging hiking and cycling trails along the river Krka, under the auspices of the Knin Tourist Board.

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<sup>2</sup> In general, emergence, making differences, differences; separation, separation due to the resulting differences; divergence in opinions. Source: Differentiation. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from Croatian Encyclopedia: <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?ID=15031>



- Etnoland Dalmati in Pakovo Selo has been recognized as a site of quality promotion of cultural heritage and local gastronomy, which in 2012 received the award for the best tourist offer of continental Croatia
- Skradin Tourist Board promotes traditional products and cultural heritage through gastronomic events
- The Tourist Board of Vodice encourages the promotion of various cultural and entertainment events,
- Tourist Board of Pirovac and Tourist Board of Tisno also have a wide and rich offer of events that promote local specialties,
- Zlarin Tourist Board creates a unique tourist product related to coral farming,
- the island of Krapanj has the potential to brand sponge harvesting as a brand of intangible county's heritage,
- The Jezera Tourist Board and the Betina Tourist Board promote maritime tradition and heritage, as well as tangible and intangible cultural goods such as dance, singing and jewellery, etc.

According to the above, recognition and valorisation of individual tourist products of Šibenik-Knin County is indisputable. Additionally, even more important are revitalization of the fortresses: St. John, St. Michael and Barone, arrangement of numerous promenades – St. Ante's Channel, from Vodice to Tribunj and many others on the islands, educational centres – Eco Campus "Krka", ecological workshops for children within the Fortress of Culture Šibenik and other Šibenik-Knin County. This city also meets all the prerequisites for better development of ecotourism, nautical and cycle tourism: typical Dalmatian villages, untouched nature, islands and their tradition, as well as the possibility of building additional cycling routes and trails in the Dalmatian hinterland. On the other hand, it remains to improve the image of a unique tourist product that it offers through the strengthening of the brand of destination Šibenik-Dalmatia, preferably in a way that marketing is focused on the selected target segment. For example, through one of following segments that are most represented in Šibenik-Knin County: young people, tourists of higher / lower purchasing power or those who take care of their health. The recognizability of the slogan and visual identity are also important measures in repositioning it on the international tourism market, as well as promoting the tourist offer out of season.

## **4. EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS OF RURAL TOURISM ON THE TERRITORY OF ŠIBENIK-KNIN COUNTY**

### **4.1. Agritourism Kalpić**

Agritourism Kalpić is located in the village of Radonić and is an ideal place for all those who want to enjoy untouched nature, a quiet or active holiday and get to know the tradition of the region. This farm unites six picturesque stone houses, built in Dalmatian, traditional style, part of which is decorated to accommodate guests, and part of which has been converted into a tavern offering Dalmatian dishes, wine and brandy. In addition, guests are offered the opportunity to harvest medicinal herbs, grapes and seasonal fruits and vegetables (e.g., figs, almonds, walnuts, cherries) from organic farming. Guests are also offered the possibility of cooking one of the traditional Dalmatian dishes and tasting local specialties like prosciutto.

Additional facilities of the farm are: outdoor pool, hydromassage pool, sauna, children's playground, bicycles for adults and children, the possibility of excursions with a picnic basket full of local products. Guests can enjoy homemade food, fresh fruits and vegetables, homemade cakes, olive oil, wine and liqueurs.

### **4.2. Agritourism Duvančić**

The Duvančić family's farm is at the foot of Promina Mountain, 12 km from Krka National Park.

Guests can find out about the production of wine, which has been going on for 140 years, and whose current owner was declared the best young winemaker and winegrower in Croatia in 2007. The farm includes vineyards on an area of 12.5 ha, a winery that produces 7 types of wine, 60 sheep and goats, one donkey, a restaurant Pilipovi dvori offering local food, a children's playground, a tennis court, a bowling alley, unique rooms in wooden barrels and a swimming pool.

The catering offer is based on local specialties and the traditional way of preparing dishes such as lamb under the bell or jars, and you can taste top quality wines and natural liqueurs. Guests are offered a variety of activities: petanque, promenade, badminton, socializing with domestic animals, children's playground and the like. The surrounding area is a paradise for hiking and cycling. Within 15 km you can visit the birth house and mausoleum of sculptor Ivan Meštrović, the Drniš City Museum, sacral buildings and the beauty of the Krka River Canyon and the archaeological site Burnum, The Nečven Tower, Bogočin-grad.

#### **4.3. Theme Park “ETNOLAND Dalmati”**

ETNOLAND Dalmati is a cultural and historical theme park founded in 2007, located in Pakovo selo near Krka National Park and Šibenik city and is a monument of cultural heritage of the Dalmatian hinterland. It provides his guest unforgettable experience of history, culture and tradition of Dalmatian Zagora. The original idea of the foundation was to show a faithful reconstruction of the historical look of the Dalmatian village, which the guests recognized and they nowadays come from all parts of Croatia and the world. The tourist offer includes activities for relaxation and getting acquainted with old crafts and customs. Etnoland tends to show its visitors through education and local story in an interesting way how people lived, what was eaten, and how people celebrated in the wider area of Dalmatia.

The very term "etnoland" denotes preserved traditional objects that have been refined and completed with ethno elements for the purpose of tourist attraction. Gradually, for the purpose of preserving tradition and valorising the tourist destination on the farm, numerous authentic objects have been upgraded: the museum “Didova kuća” [Grandpa’s house], the summer restaurant, the house with workshops (where blacksmiths, woodworkers, stonemasons introduce visitors to the production of various objects of the region), the tavern and the theatre (capacity: 400 spectators, serves to perform folklore program).

Picture 3: Tourist offer of Etnoland Dalmati



Source: Adapted from Turistička zajednica Šibensko Kninske županije, Etnoland. Taken from <https://www.dalmatiasibenik.hr/hr/istrazi/atracije/etnoland/> 14.03.2023

My Luxoria, A journey to the heart of Dalmatian culture: Etnoland Dalmati Croatia, Gastronomy travel. Taken from <https://www.myluxoria.com/hr/journal/journey-heart-dalmatian-culture-etnoland-dalmati-croatia> 14.03.2023

## 5. IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MARKETING OF RURAL TOURISM

According to Ružić (2005), the term tourism marketing implies a systematic and coordinated adjustment of the policy of tourism companies and the tourism policy of a particular tourist destination (e.g., rural destinations), in order to achieve optimal satisfaction of the needs of certain groups of consumers and thus create profit. The carriers of marketing in tourism are all entities involved in the tourist offer and it is everyone's responsibility to provide the visitors of their region with the most carefree holiday, whether it is communication in English, the quality of tourist services or the availability of hosts and other service providers for various information.

Ružić (2005) explains that in this way, it is also achieved to build the perception of the rural economy, not only as another entrepreneurial venture, but as a place that delighted them and that they would gladly recommend to close people and friends. In general, all employees, but also residents of a particular place of the host country, are equally responsible for creating an image of that country and its culture.

Picture 4: The presence of the English language on the welcoming sign



Source: Bigsee, Theme Park Etnoland Dalmati in Pakovo selo. Taken from <https://bigsee.eu/theme-park-etnoland-dalmati/> 15.03.2023

English language should be present from the moment of arrival at the property and the entire duration of stay. The guests have to feel welcomed. The tourist feels welcomed and accepted when they are greeted in their own language.

## 5.1. The importance of English in rural tourism

The use of English in rural tourism is necessary, the most important is because of verbal communication<sup>3</sup>, i.e., it is important to understand what the foreign guest is telling us, as well as confidently and clearly convey one's own idea/attitude. The most common situations in which knowledge of English are required are when: hosting, giving various instructions (about the facility, locations of cultural and historical sites, direction of movement, etc.), when shopping in shops and souvenir shops. The demand for rural tourism is mostly foreign, so it is important that bilingual road signs are installed in rural areas, that it is easy to reach tourist leaflets in English and that tourist and hospitality workers make excellent use of it. It is extremely important in marketing, especially in interaction with potential guests, through market research and promotion. In the next part of the paper the importance of the English language will be described in the context of the rural economy.

## 5.2. Market research in rural tourism

Marketing research determines the whole life cycle of a product or a service. There is no better way of getting to know what consumers, both potential and loyal ones, wish for and what new trends among them are. Therefore, it can give us directions what to launch on the market and what changes are necessary. Following the interviews with stakeholders working in the field of *rural tourism* in Šibenik-Knin County, it is evident that market research is an important contributor to the qualitative improvement of *rural tourism*.

Rocco (2000) states that marketing research is the systematic collection, registration and analysis of information on specific issues relating to the marketing of goods, services, organizations, people, places and ideas. The scientific process itself is based on the continuous monitoring of all phases and stages through which it passes. The entire research can be divided into three stages:

a) Preparation – bringing up the problem

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<sup>3</sup> Communication can be verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication means that we exchange messages with words, and includes speaking and listening. Most communication, more than 70%, takes place nonverbally. Source: Radić, A., Sabljčić, L. i Šalamon, S. (2020.) Verbal and nonverbal communication. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from Teaching Institute of Public Health dr. Andrija Štampar: <https://stampar.hr/hr/novosti/verbalna-i-neverbalna-komunikacija>.

b) Research:

- situation analysis (collecting information's from discussions with the business manager, internal business records and professional publications aiming to spot the company's business problems),
- informal research (through informal conversations with consumers, stores or responsible persons in the company, the researcher gains a direct insight into the problem itself),
- research plan (determining the tasks, sources of data, organization, terms and costs of the research),
- collecting and registering data (researcher seeks to establish facts by examining or observing),
- processing and analysis (table results are processed in statistical reviews),
- interpretation (based on the results of the statistical analysis, it is sought to conclude whether the business policy is justified and whether it should be amended, recommendations are offered),
- preparation of reports (complete, short and clear document of the entire process).

c) Application – changes are introduced and monitored in accordance with the results of the research.

According to Language-house.hr (2017), the prevalence of the English language has been emphasized since the Internet enabled cultural globalization, which has arguably become the greatest language tool ever. Cultural globalization today means the spread of new cultural habits, customs, values, but above all the use of the English language. All this was preceded by economic globalization, which influenced the international flow of people, knowledge, ideas and capital, so the English language is today an indispensable medium of communication in any business sphere. In a marketing survey that is intended to reveal the attitudes of respondents of different countries of origin, English stands out as the most appropriate, given that almost everyone knows at least its basics. This is particularly useful in: tourism, the business of multinational corporations or expansion into new markets. It is worth pointing out that it is also very efficient in accessing potentially huge world markets, as well as the fact that its return on investment is much higher than when it comes to research in the native or languages of a few other target markets, and the data obtained in this way are much more realistic. In addition to all this, it does not hurt to research in the language of consumers of the target group, but only when it comes to a smaller number of selected groups.

For Brajdić (2002), monitoring and creating a tourist product, conducting surveys is of particular importance. Surveying is the most common, and sometimes the only instrument of research, both

for scientific and professional analyses of tourism activities. Surveys are conducted by various institutes, institutions, faculties, and even tourist service providers themselves.

Chart 1: An example of a survey that examines the satisfaction of guests of a rural farm for the purpose of introducing new services and products or improving existing ones

Primary index	Secondary index
A. Functional value satisfaction	A1. External traffic in the homestay
	A2. The homestay is close to the scenic spot
	A3. The homestay room is large
	A4. Room decoration style
	A5. The sanitary condition of the bed and breakfast room is good
	A6. The bed is comfortable
	A7. The bathroom is clean and tidy
	A8. The homestay hot water supply stable
	A9. The room air-conditioning is in normal use and no noise
	A10. The Wi-Fi in the room is fast
	A11. The room has a balcony
	A12. The room is well-insulated
	A13. Courtyard environment
	A14. Overall residential decoration style
B. Satisfaction with the value of bed and breakfast service	B1. Normal charges for bed and breakfast service
	B2. The service attitude of the accommodation staff (warm, considerate, and patient)
	B3. Room service for bed and breakfast (thoughtful, fast)
C. Emotional value satisfaction	C1. Homestay hosts provide guided tour services (professional, detailed, efficient, and considerate)
	C2. The homestay offers local food
	C3. Homestay provides shuttle service, pick up, and drop off station
D. Price perception, value satisfaction	D1. Homestay is cost effective

Source: Zhou et al., (2022, August 11). Survey on the tourist satisfaction of rural homestay based on the theory of importance–performance analysis. *Frontiersin*. Taken from <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.940345/full> 18.05.2023

It is especially important that market surveys in tourism are comprehensive (e.g., containing all the necessary topics and aspects of a pleasant and impressive stay on a rural family farm) and aimed to discover overall perception of a larger group of guests. Once the survey is conducted regularly it can be objective tool for decision making in order to keep an attractive offer.



### 5.3. Promotion in rural tourism

Promotion is the sum of various activities through which a company strives to make its products and services known to consumers and uses communication media, as well as personal and non-personal persuasion, with the aim of ensuring the demand that the company can meet.

According to Rocco F. (2000), promotional activities aimed at introducing potential consumers to products and creating demand are:

1. economic propaganda or advertising (motivates sales, i.e., through mass media in order to change the attitudes or ways of consumer behaviour towards a product or service in a direction that is in favour of the propagator; it is aimed at constantly informing consumers about the existence of products that can meet their needs; includes: magazines, radio and television, mail, catalogues, etc.),
2. sales promotion (includes incentives for purchase – discounts and vouchers on the amount or amount of traffic; incentives for purchase at a given time – free samples, reduced prices, demonstrations and tastings of products, tenders and other activities for the purpose of its highlighting – way of display, price labelling, special shelves, inscriptions),
3. publicity (includes non-personal stimulation of demand for a product or service by launching commercially important information about it in a publishing medium – print, radio or television, without being paid by the advertiser),
4. personal sales (presentation in conversation with one or more potential customers),
5. public relations (planned and supported effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the company and its environment - the public, consisting of employees, investors, consumers, suppliers, financial institutions and government bodies; is aimed at creating image of the company and its products; public relations are created through television, radio, printing, exhibitions, fairs; sales exhibitions, public conferences, symposia, opening ceremonies with invitations to influential persons).

### 5.3.1. Promotion of Kalpić Agritourism

Agritourism Kalpić recognized the importance of promoting traditional content, while preserving original products and creating new ones and using English as a necessary means of communication. All this has affected the ever-improving results in the tourism market. Today they are promoted through various media such as the official website in English, social media- Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, through brochures and leaflets and word of mouth. The website is beautifully designed with all the necessary information about the offer, and there you can quickly notice the catchy slogan "Becoming one with nature". According to the website of a Radio channel Drniš (2022), their work has been recognized by numerous organizations and they have been awarded several times, and some of the awards are the "Bronze Charter" of the Sunflower of Rural Tourism award of Croatia in the category of Tourist Peasant Family Farms. Based on guest reviews, it won the "Traveler's choice" award and was among the top 25 Bed & Breakfast properties in Croatia on TripAdvisor's list.

### 5.3.2. Promotion of Agritourism Duvančić

The promotion of agritourism Duvančić is based on word of mouth, website and social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The Facebook page contains posts about guest impressions and new information that is continuously updated. The Instagram page also gives various content and posts about events on the property. According to the data obtained from the survey, agritourism advertising uses more advertising on social networks (share of 90 %) than PR articles on the Internet and magazines (public relations with share of 10%). The official website is in Croatian with translation spelling in English, French and German. Agritourism Duvančić was awarded in 2021 a certificate with the quality label "Rural experience" Dalmatia Šibenik Quality in the category of agritourism. In addition, guest reviews have provided him with valuable recognition and pages Booking.com 2023.

### 5.3.3. Promotion of the Theme Park "Etnoland Dalmati"

The Theme Park “Etnoland Dalmati” is also known as the most awarded tourist and cultural attraction, namely from its foundation in 2007 until 2023 it has won as many as 15 awards, both international and domestic. For example, it has been awarded three times as the best tourist attraction of the county, and during the pandemic in 2020 it was awarded for the best interpretation of cultural and historical heritage in the competition of 26 countries, as well as the Golden Sunflower Award [Suncokret ruralnog turizma Hrvatske] for the best interpretation of heritage in Croatia, while the owner of the estate in 2016 was named the best animator in tourism. Such recognitions have greatly facilitated the promotion of Etnoland itself, and today it is carried out through the website and social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube). The website is entirely in English, and there, along with all the details about the experiences and products offered on the farm, there is an interesting slogan: “*We have a story to tell! Let's create long-lasting and fun-filled memories together*”. Accordingly, on the page there is a link to Instagram, which is complemented by pictures of satisfied guests, mostly groups of guests, who are the main visitors.

Picture 5: Slogans attracting tourists to the Theme Park “Etnoland Dalmati”



Source: Etnoland, Taken from <https://www.etnoland.com/index.php/conferences-and-events> 15.03.2023

Slogans are necessary for addressing guests, for example such as in the visual identity of “Etnoland Dalmati”. Etnoland uses picture of boiling pot on a fire place to describe what can be experienced in their Theme Park. English words

## 5.4. SWOT analysis of rural tourism of Šibenik-Knin County

Table 2. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Preserved environment, landscape and biodiversity</li> <li>– Wealth cultural and natural heritage throughout the county (230 cultural monuments, 2 UNESCO world heritage sites, 11 medieval fortresses, 2 national parks)</li> <li>– The vicinity of Krka National Park and numerous local and traditional specialties,</li> <li>– Great offer of activities: recreation (walking, cycling, paragliding, canoeing, horseback riding), eco-tourism, speleology.</li> <li>– Good transport connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Basing most of the offer on coastal tourism (mainly promoted destinations by the sea)</li> <li>– Emigration of the population (derealisation and deagrarization)</li> <li>– Concentration of events in the summer months and seasonality</li> <li>– Insufficient number of accommodation capacities</li> <li>– Insufficient promotion and branding of certain parts of the county</li> <li>– Short duration of stay in bypass regions</li> <li>– Insufficient information about promotional materials on tourist opportunities and activities in the Šibenik hinterland.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The possibility of tourist valorisation of agrarian landscapes, due to the increasing interest for healthy, organic food, as well as because of the interest in a smaller accommodation in objects which fit into the environment;</li> <li>– Development of selective forms of tourism</li> <li>– The potential of the hinterland for the extension of the tourist season (organization of cultural events)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of a clear vision and branding plan</li> <li>– Further development of seasonality (increased visits in the summer period)</li> <li>– Climate change (droughts, rising air temperatures, fires)</li> <li>– Negative rates of natural population change and ageing</li> <li>– Emigration of educated working-age population</li> <li>– Security threats (wars, epidemics, terrorism)</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Master plan turizma Šibensko Kninske županije, Konzorcij Urbanex, Šibenik (2017), p.70-77.

Taken from: <https://www.rra-sibenik.hr/upload/stranice/2015/12/2015-12-21/57/masterplanturizmaibenskogninskeupanije.pdf> 21.02.2023

Jovanić writes that the SWOT analysis (2022) is the most important strategic planning tool. In addition to drafting the strategy, it is also used for the preparation of investment studies, applying for a new loan, EU funds, etc.

According to Božac (2008) the aim of its implementation is to analyse the internal environment, i.e., the strengths and weaknesses of the company, which can ultimately enable the identification of opportunities that cannot currently be exploited due to the lack of necessary resources and unique competence, as well as the threats that exist in the market.

In accordance with its previous determination, table 2 presents the strategic advantages and disadvantages of Šibenik-Knin County as a destination of rural tourism. As its greatest strengths the following elements stand out: preserved environment, distinct landscape, biological and geodiversity; good transport connections (close to two airports); a considerable number of attractive protected areas (two national parks, and two UNESCO monuments). The weaknesses of the county relate in general to the state of the economy and tourism of the Dalmatian hinterland, namely: insufficient coverage of the hinterland by the tourist offer and excursions, seasonality and dominance of coastal tourism, as well as emigration of the population (aging population, concentration of local population in urban areas) and insufficient number of accommodation capacities.

For Šibenik-Knin County, the opportunities are as follows: selective forms of tourism, potential hinterland for the extension of the tourist season and development of active tourism through tourist valorisation of agrarian landscapes. On the other hand, there are certain threats that can slow down the growth and development of the economy: the existence of a clear vision and a branding plan, the development of seasonality (growth of visits in the summer period), and climate change (droughts, fires).

## **6. SURVEY**

A properly structured survey, as the most common research technique in the field of tourism, can give credible data on the attitudes of a particular sample of respondents related to the selected topic. Its important determinants are: clear and unambiguous questions (focused on only one narrower area of research), non-suggestive questions, satisfactory and precise range of answers (answers must not be related), avoid too general questions, i.e., describe specific situations related to the field of research.

### **6.1. Research on interest in rural tourism**

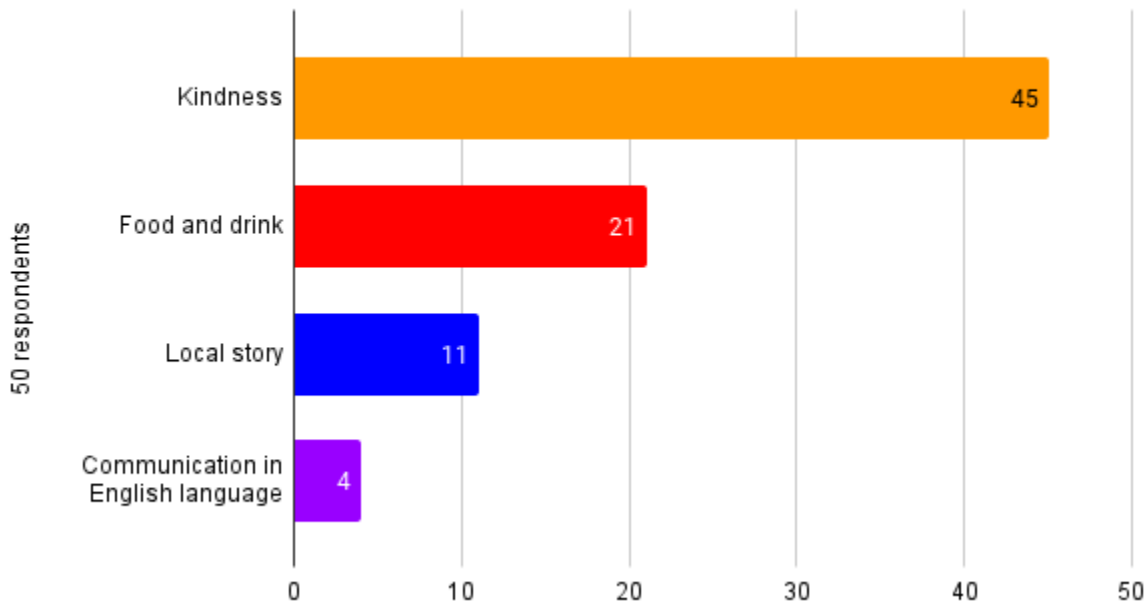
The purpose of the research was to show the current state of awareness, interest (frequency of visits) and satisfaction with visits to rural farms among students of Tourism Management and the first year of Administrative studies of the Polytechnic of Šibenik. The results of the research are presented in the form of a multiple statistical graphs. Based on the provided statistical data, appropriate conclusions were made.

The research was conducted on a sample of 50 students, most of whom are from the area of Šibenik-Knin County, while a smaller part comes from other counties of the Republic of Croatia. Respondents are members of the age group from 18 to 30 years and mostly have experience working in tourism or are users of tourist services.

The survey consists of seven questions to which short and precise answers are offered with the aim of gaining knowledge about the attitudes of respondents.

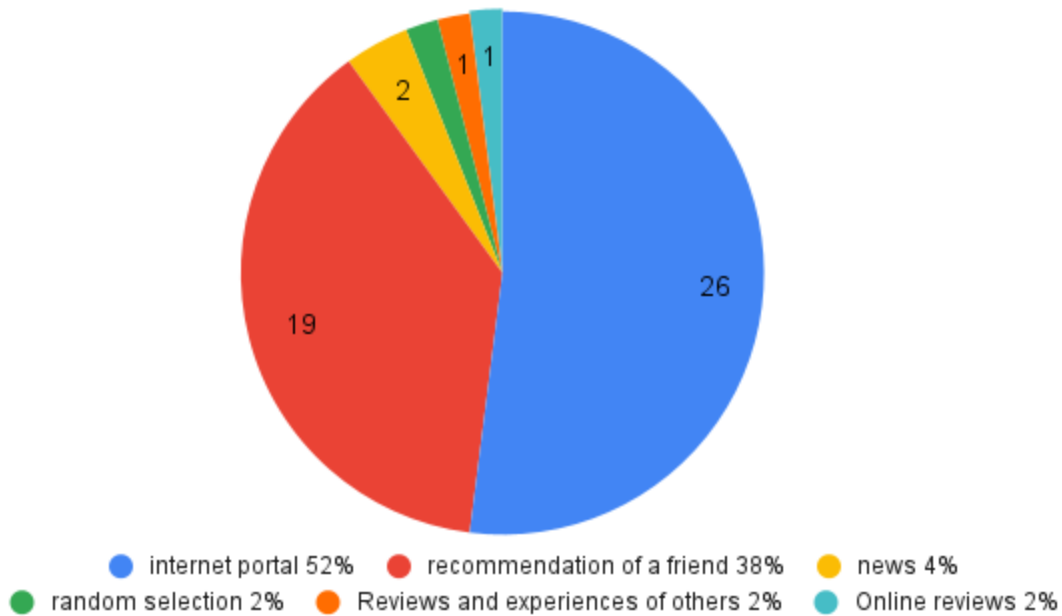
## RESULTS

### 1. What do you think is the main factor of a pleasant welcome?



A pleasant welcome is what every guest wishes for and the basis on which he builds his first impression of the household. This question sought to find out which factor contributes the most to it. 90% of respondents consider kindness to be the factor that contributes most to a pleasant welcome. This is understandable, given that the host is a person from whom guests can get the most important information about the cultural and natural attractions in the area. The host's kindness is a prerequisite for trust and all other positive experiences. Although English is not a priority, a professional knowledge of business English in the field of Management of Tourism is still a prerequisite for hiring catering staff.

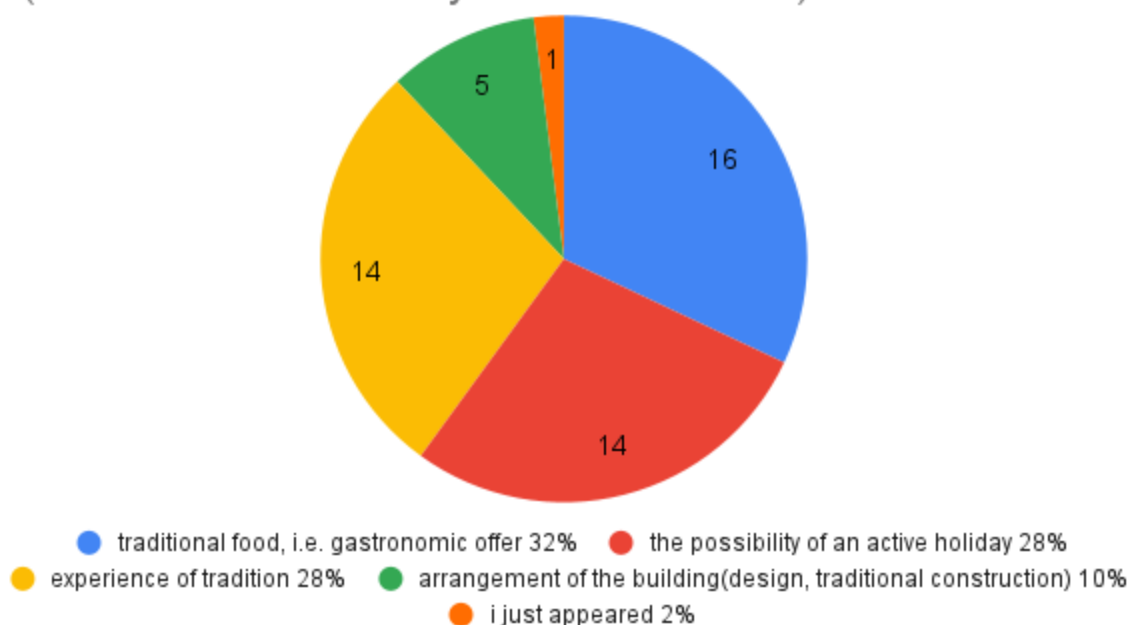
## 2. What information do you use when choosing a visit to a rural destination?



The purpose of this question was to find out what respondents rely on most frequently to obtain the necessary information about a particular family farm. 52% of respondents rely on internet portals as a source of information. The reason may be that they contain numerous links to tourist news (projects, events, innovations in the offer). Their effectiveness is based on the ability to search for details of a particular family farm, facility, region or any other tourist attraction by typing keywords in the search engine. After internet portals, the majority of respondents use the recommendation of friends, which is decided by as many as 38% of respondents, given that they are motivated to make a decision on a tourist visit by the detailed and reliable information they receive in this way.

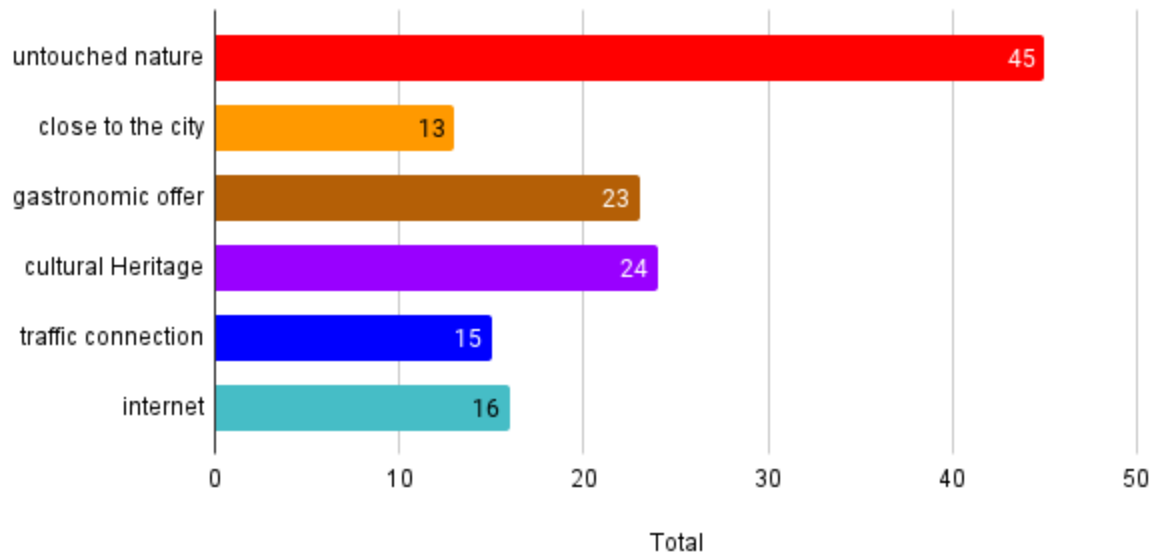


### 3. What are the main reasons for your visit to a rural destination (which tourist services are you most interested in)?



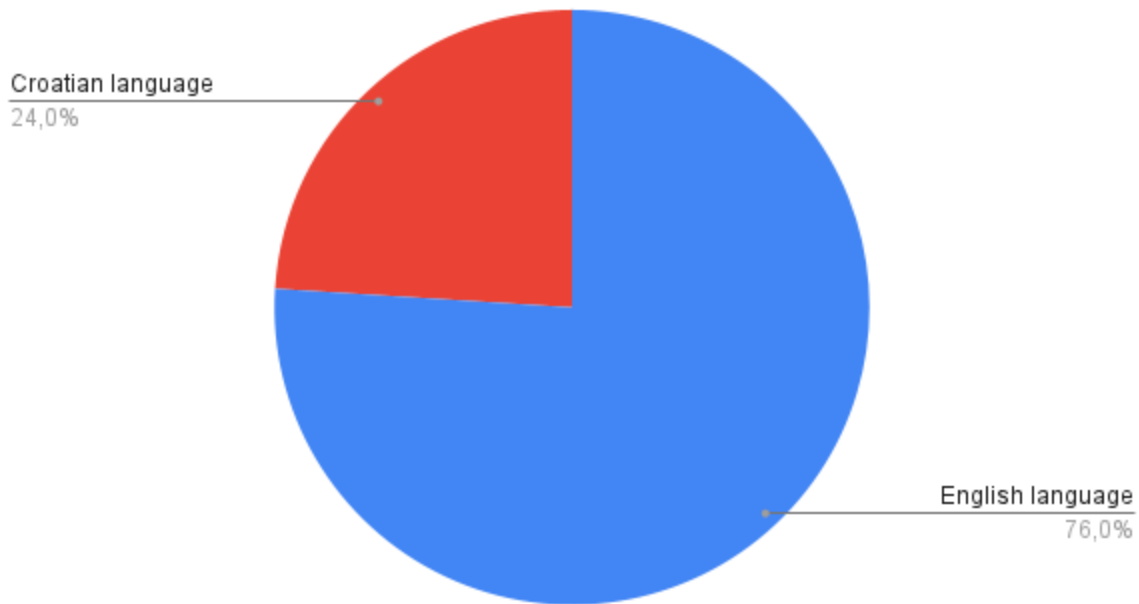
Traditional food is for 32% of respondents the most important reason for visiting rural destinations. The causal - consequential relationship of such an appearance is in a new lifestyle, namely the need for new and unknown experiences additionally motivated by the increased number of television shows about culinary trips and reviews of catering establishments on websites. In this way, additional demand for gastronomic tourism is created. In recent years, Croatian tourism strategists have increasingly realized that quality tourist promotion cannot be based only on the sun and the sea, and therefore tourist promotion is increasingly turning to the gastronomic offer, which indicates the quality of the tourist offer. An equal number of respondents (28%) are interested in active holidays and getting to know tradition. Active tourism or active holidays were created in response to the monotony of the rhythm of everyday life. Active tourism includes cycle tourism, sports and recreational tourism, adrenaline or adventure tourism and nautical tourism. The reason for the great interest in the last two motives of the visit can also be that both relate to the acquisition of new and unique experiences, which tourists carry with them as memories of the nature of the rural destination they visited.

#### 4. What characteristics are most important to you when choosing a rural destination?



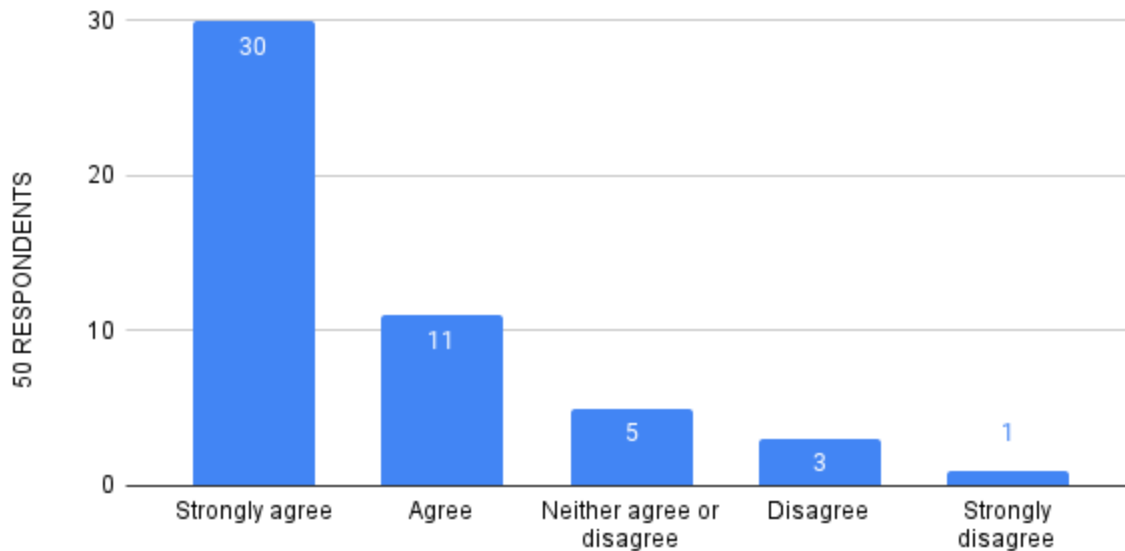
This question is a certain continuation of the previous question, so its explanation is found in the main motives of the visit to the family farm. Three dominant characteristics crucial for choosing such a destination: untouched nature (45), cultural heritage (24) and gastronomic offer (23) are the answer to the motives of visits: active tourism, getting to know tradition and traditional food. Such a result further emphasizes modern trends in tourist demand.

## 5. Which language do you think is the most useful in storytelling?



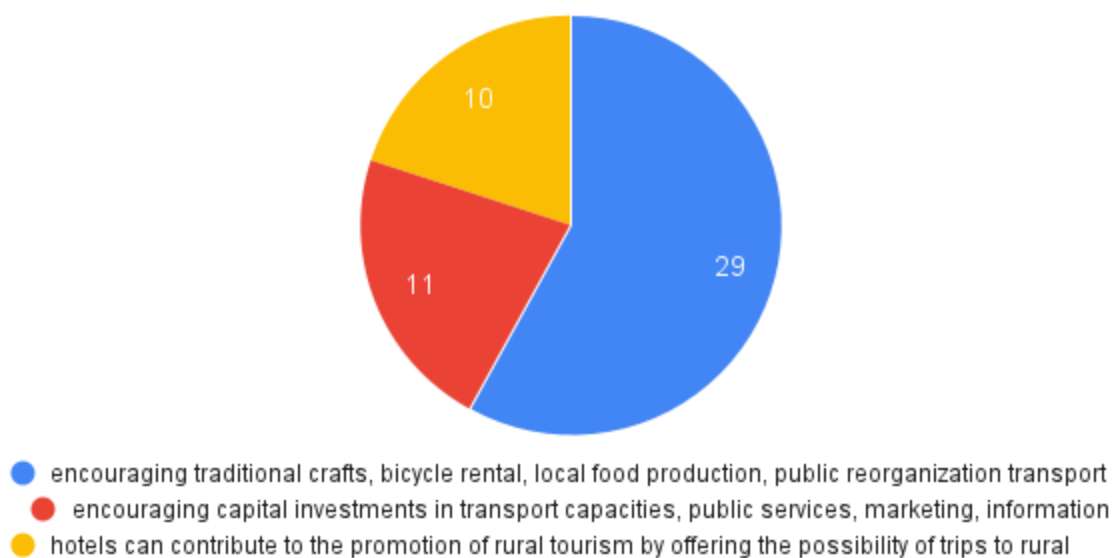
This question indicates that most of the tourist demand visiting a rural destination is foreign and therefore English as the main foreign language is also the main means of communication. Croatian, on the other hand, represents a native language that is somewhat understood by a relatively large number of visitors to Central European countries, for example: Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, and therefore can be impressive when telling stories.

## 6. Do you think that the Republic of Croatia has unused potential for the development of rural tourism?



The majority of the students are in agreement with the fact that there is untapped potential for the development of rural tourism in Croatia (for 30 students this is completely true, and for 11 it is correct). That rural tourism is only slowly progressing on an annual basis while the development flourishes worldwide. So, called *sun and sea tourism* is a current topic of numerous tourism reports in Croatia. It is believed that the share of tourists visiting Croatian rural areas is 2%, and that it generates only 1% of tourist revenues, although 92% of the area of Croatia is a rural area. Due to its natural and cultural attractions and active holiday opportunities, Croatia has the potential to attract numerous visitors even in the off-season, thus enabling year-round tourism. The key incentives in starting rural tourism should be: reducing levies on agricultural production, better cooperation among institutions for the development of rural tourism, regulations for starting rural tourism activities, better marketing activity, etc. Rural tourism often requires large financial resources, which many of the investors do not possess, so additional integration of Support from EU funds and banks is needed.

## 7. What would you recommend for the development of rural tourism in Croatia?



Given that the main motives for visiting rural farms are: active tourism, getting to know tradition and traditional food, it is understandable that among 29 out of 50 respondents the attitude prevails that traditional crafts, bicycle rental, local food production and public reorganization of transport should be further improved (for the purpose of a better connection with the centre of the county – e.g., the city of Šibenik). Economies that possess as many traditional crafts and local food production as possible are the creators of a more complete experience, i.e., have a greater guarantee of guest satisfaction, positive reviews and recommendations. According to 11 respondents, encouraging capital investments in transport capacities, public services, marketing and information are also important, but according to the share in the overall results, these contributors are not crucial. These factors are not that crucial because they are managed in certain regions or because it is considered that there are certain optimal options (e.g., transport by car, recommendations from friends in the role of marketing, information from the Internet or from the host). The reason why hotels are not adequate promoters of rural economies may be, that they represent competition for them and because they often themselves contain a diverse and rich offer.

## **6.2. Conclusions of the survey and solutions**

From the conducted survey, it can be concluded that excellent knowledge of English is no longer considered a competitive advantage, but is a key factor when hiring. Nowadays, more and more job interviews in tourism also contain a verification of expression in English. The host of the rural economy as its main promoter, the creator of a pleasant welcome and the factor of an interesting story must especially take care of the continuous improvement of his language skills. Internet portals as the main source of information on rural economies should contain a concise overview of how economies address potential foreign guests, either through visual identities or slogans in English.

As stated by numerous authors, rural tourism in Croatia has a relatively low potential utilization, which most respondents agree with. They propose the introduction of additional opportunities for active tourism. Guests are happy to repeat their visit if they are provided with some additional activity or convenience, but also because of the kindness of the host and other employees. Such general conclusions do not indicate that there are no certain breakthroughs and that they cannot be expected. Specifically, with a more systematic marketing support and rural tourism strategy, the desired transformation to developed rural tourism can be achieved.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Rural tourism in Šibenik County is part of Dalmatian history and traditional lifestyle, and is developing more intensively through an increasingly systematic approach to this form of selective tourism. In Dalmatia, rural tourism has been represented since 1987 with the establishment of ethno-eko village Škopljanci from Radošić near Split, and in Šibenik-Knin County according to three surveyed households since 2007. According to the results of the survey, young people are familiar with the offer of rural tourism and have a clear perception of its current state and opportunities for development. Most of the students agree that the new imperative of rural tourism is to adapt to the newer trends of active holidays, e.g.: opportunities to participate in traditional skills, better opportunities for sports and various other innovations. However, given the personal contact with the hosts Agrotourism Kalpić, Agrotourism Duvančić and Etnoland Dalmati, a positive direction has been recognized in this regard. The main disadvantage of the development of Croatian rural tourism is the slow increase in the number of rural households. The example of three rural households, their distinctive and diverse offer increasingly seems to be a kind of time machine into the past. Namely, rural tourism can survive if more attention is paid to the values and quality of life nurtured by our ancestors, because there is much to learn from their coexistence with nature and tradition.

English is largely understood as part of a pleasant and kind welcome, telling traditional stories and as the main means of promotion and attraction of potential guests. Its level must correspond to the modern trend of lifelong professional development, because it is considered part of the global culture and is an indispensable element when hiring in tourism.

Rural tourism must not remain neglected, it should be recognized as the basis of every national economy and ultimately a better and more promising future.

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## **APPENDIX**

1. What do you think is the main factor of a pleasant welcome?

- a) Kindness
- b) Local story
- c) Food and drink
- d) Communication in English language

2. What information do you use when choosing a visit to a rural destination?

- a) Internet portal
- b) News
- c) Recommendation of a friend
- d) Random selection

3. What are the main reasons for your visit to a rural destination? (Which tourist services are you most interested in)?

- a) Traditional food, i.e., gastronomic offer
- b) The possibility of an active holiday (participation in agricultural work, cycling tours)
- c) Arrangement of the building (design, traditional construction)
- d) Experience of a tradition

4. What characteristics are most important to you when choosing a rural destination?

- a) Close to the city
- b) Untouched nature
- c) Gastronomic offer
- d) Cultural heritage

- e) Traffic connection
- f) Internet

5. Which language do you think is the most useful in storytelling?

- a) English language
- b) Croatian language
- c) German language
- d) Italian language

6. Do you think that Republic of Croatia has unused potential for the development of rural tourism?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree or disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

7. What would you recommend for the development of rural tourism in Croatia?

- a) Encouraging capital investments in transport capacities, public services, marketing, information
- b) Encouraging traditional crafts, bicycle rental, local food production, public reorganization transport for the purpose of tourism, new forms of catering, etc.
- c) Hotels can contribute to the promotion of rural tourism by offering the possibility of trips to rural areas