



Strategies for motivating the human resource in rural tourism

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<p>The universe of rural tourism has been one of the major research topics for the academic environment for more than two decades. The actuality of this work is based on the fact that employees are the main resources of rural tourism and the provision of appropriate motivation strategies is the decisive factor in terms of their performance. The usefulness of this topic is on the one hand the improvement of the strategies that are the basis of employee motivation, as well as finding new strategies that can motivate employees. In tourism, the motivation of human resources as a subject is very broad and has many definitions from different contexts, but it is almost non-existent approaching this theme in the context of rural tourism.</p> <p>In the theoretical framework, key concepts, selected theories and background information for the study of employee motivation strategies in rural tourism were addressed. First, defining what rural tourism really means. Human resources motivation as a topic is very broad and has many definitions from different contexts. This research has a deeper perspective into an employee's motivational theories and how managers can maximize motivation strategies for both employee and employer benefit. Summarizing the different definitions of rural tourism presented in chapter 2, we can say that rural tourism is a form of tourism that includes units that use only rural tourist guesthouses and agro-tourism guesthouses for accommodation and meals, benefiting from an unpolluted and picturesque environment, tourist attractions natural and cultural-historical values, traditions and customs present in the rural environment.</p> <p>To carry out the research, the quantitative method was chosen as a research method, and as techniques of research, the application of questionnaires to both employees and employers in rural pensions in Romania was used. The realization of the questionnaires was based on the three theories of motivation, respectively that of Abraham Maslow - The theory of the hierarchy of needs, of David McClelland - The theory of motivation, of Friedrich Herzberg - The theory of the bifactor. The research was carried out on a group of 58 employees and 14 employers, aged between 18-60 years, the group being heterogeneous from the perspective of other criteria, such as the social environment and the economic level of the family they come from, the education level etc. The selection was made by simple random sampling, thus resulting in a heterogeneous group, which reveals qualitative differences at the level of motivation strategies. The subjects were selected from 14 rural guesthouses in Romania, located in various geographical areas, the environment of origin being the rural one for the whole lot.</p> <p>The results of the applied questionnaires revealed that indeed the creating a quality interpersonal relationship between the employer and the employee increases the motivation in the work of the employees, but also on the benefits of the employer. Based on Maslow, Herzberg and McClelland theories, the data analysis reveals that main motivation strategy is a good interpersonal relationship employers-employees which will bring a good contractual relationship with both sides benefits and, on the other hand, another good motivation strategy is related to job promotion. Five motivational tools and mechanisms linked to the motivational theories studied in this report, which can lead to an increase in the work satisfaction of the organization's employees and the added value for it, are bonuses for employees, favorable environment framework, professional training, job promotion, quality interpersonal relationship.</p>
Key words Tourism, human resource, rural tourism, motivational strategies,

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Objective and purpose of the research	2
1.2	Overview of the topic.....	3
1.3	Delimitations and Definitions	4
1.4	Justification for the study	8
2	Theoretical premises of rural tourism investigation and human resource motivation strategies ..	9
2.1	The structure and characteristics of rural tourism	9
2.2	The diversity of rural tourism in Europe	17
2.3	Human resource and its motivating strategies	20
2.4	The objectives, goals and actions of the strategy for motivating the human resource in tourism. 28	
3	Research methods and methodology	34
3.1	Research Method.....	34
3.2	Research process	36
	3.2.1 Questionnaire	40
	3.2.2 Data acquisition methods.....	44
3.3	Data analysis.....	45
3.4	Ethics in research.....	46
3.5	Research results	46
4	Discussion.....	54
4.1	Consideration of results.....	54
4.2	Further research.....	55
4.3	Evaluation and self-assessment.....	58
5	Sources	59
	Appendix 1 - Employees survey statistics	1
	Appendix 2 – Owners survey statistics	4
	Appendix 3 – Employees Survey	7
	Appendix 4 – Owners Survey.....	10
	Appendix 5. U Mann Whitney test.....	14
	Appendix 6. Database employers and employees combined statistics.....	16

1 Introduction

Rural tourism is a specific form of tourism, in which the reception units are located in the countryside, which offer opportunities for relaxation as well as education and exploration, closeness to the natural environment and the creation of much more personalized interpersonal relationships than in tourism classical. Rural tourism exists and is developing in European countries, offering good, quality customer services.

The development of human resources is the main key to success in implementing the concept of rural tourism. Human resource has an important role in determining the sustainability, effectiveness, and competitiveness of a business (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, 2006). Human resource management requires an understanding of system boundaries in terms of the internal and external environment. Strategies for motivating human resources in rural tourism will provide a clear picture of human resources to know their respective roles and duties, so that policies in the realization of a tourist village can be implemented and minimize the obstacles that appear along the way.

(Yuviani, Tiurida, Maidar, 2021)

The rural areas on our continent have been inhabited by people for long periods of history, they are very rich in vestiges of old settlements, monuments, but also in natural landscapes of particular beauty, which offer the visitor special emotions, and this constitutes the competitive advantage of this type of tourism. Thus, ancient traditions, agriculture and the agricultural calendar, craft production and folklore, are part of the culture of the European people and originate in rural areas, representing the result of the filtering over the centuries of the experiences and experiences of the inhabitants.

In this research, we will look deeper into an employee's motivational factors, what influences these factors, and how we can maximize one's motivation for both the employee's and the employer's benefit. In order to find the information needed for the research, we will document ourselves by analyzing existing theories, studying and also reflecting on the studies done in order to create a motivational model.

All these elements have awakened our interest in this subject, respectively for the research of the specific aspects of rural tourism and for the definition of strategies for motivating the human resource working in this field, to ensure the preservation and efficiency of this resource, so important for the success of the activity tourist guesthouses.

The preservation of a rural world, with everything that is significant from an economic, social, cultural aspect, requires the initiation and development of this form of tourism. Tourism can also participate in conservation the viability and stability of rural localities, in the conditions where the phenomenon of depopulation manifests itself obviously by the departure of young people to urban

areas and by the abandonment of old households and lands. The encounter between the rural environment, a particularly fragile environment, and the dynamism imposed by the tourism phenomenon poses the problem of the appearance of risks generated by restructuring. The development of rural tourism will act as an integrating force, able to train the development of other sectors, thus improving the standard of living. The development of tourism will mean encouraging the development of other dimensions. Using tourism as a resource for local economic development means also investing in infrastructure or education, because the development of tourism will generate that synergistic effect, having an important role in increasing employment and is also a support for the development of the business and services sector. Rural tourism can also represent an occupational sector, creating jobs for locals.

1.1 Objective and purpose of the research

The relationship between rural tourism and employees is a complex one of mutual conditioning, both elements equally assuming the roles of cause and effect. As a result, the successful management of this resource ensures the success of the business and its development potential.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative questions	Theoretical framework (chapter)	Results (chapter)	Questionnaire questions
How can the human resource in rural tourism be motivated so that tourism becomes sustainable?	2.3	4.1	OQ 7-11
What could be the ways in which a boarding house owner can motivate his employees so that they show loyalty and make efforts to make the business work?	2.3	3.3.2	EQ 6-10
What does a strategy for motivating rural	2.4	4.1	EQ 6-11

tourism employees mean?			
What is rural tourism?	2.1	4.2	OQ 1-3

The purpose of this research is:

To present definitions, key concepts and theories about rural tourism and human resources from rural tourism.

To present the strategies for motivating the human resource in rural tourism.

To present information on how the need for human resources in rural tourism can be covered, as well as what could be the ways in which a guest house owner can motivate his employees so that they show loyalty and work hard to make the business work.

1.2 Overview of the topic

Tourist experiences are very different, depending on the skills of the guesthouse or household owner and the potential of the area, from hiking, to interacting with domestic animals, initiation into local crafts (weaving, hand sewing, pottery, blacksmithing, woodworking), cooking and tasting specific food products, tasting drinks prepared in the rural household, specific activities for children (sledding, making archaic toys, etc.). When it comes to agro-tourism, the main activity of the agricultural household is agriculture, although agro-tourism is treated as a secondary activity, capitalizing on the surpluses obtained from the main activities. Also, it is a very good opportunity to capitalize on the touristic, cultural, social, human and sustainable development potential of rural localities while keeping traditions and rural trades that are cultivated, which can now generate added value. The ecological balance is protected through the sustainable exploitation of resources. Cultural, natural, ethnographic and social diversities are valued and promoted while contributing to the development of local infrastructures (transportation, telecommunications, etc.). Promotes the tourist's proximity to nature and other existing values, intentionally and privately, through the lack of standardization, proximity and experimentation. (Davidescu, Strat, Grosu, Zgură, Anagnoste, 2018). Also contributes to good environmental education. The tourist offer is personalized, the tourist being treated as a close guest and not as an anonymous one, most of the time tourists returning and creating lasting relationships of closeness with the hosts, of friendship even.

The tourist product is characterized by a high variability, which takes into account a wide range of elements, from the characteristics of the client and the needs that are manifested at his level, to the capabilities and tools that the operator uses to cover them. (Bratescu, Dima, 2002)

Tourist experiences are very different, depending on the skills of the guesthouse or household owner and the potential of the area, from hiking, to interacting with domestic animals, initiation into local crafts (weaving, hand sewing, pottery, blacksmithing, woodworking), cooking and tasting

specific food products, tasting drinks prepared in the rural household, specific activities for children (sledding, making archaic toys, etc.). When it comes to rural tourism, the main activity of the agricultural household is agriculture, although agro-tourism is treated as a secondary activity, capitalizing on the surpluses obtained from the main activities. Also it is a very good opportunity to capitalize on the touristic, cultural, social, human and sustainable development potential of rural localities while keeping traditions and rural trades that are cultivated, which can now generate added value. The scientific novelty and originality of the thesis is in correlation with its purpose and objectives and resides in the scientific substantiation of the theoretical-conceptual framework of the motivation of employees in rural tourism; highlighting and arguing the managerial implications on staff motivation at different levels of management; evaluation of the main indicators regarding the use of working time and salary with direct implications on staff motivation; qualitative evaluation of the elements of the motivation system of rural tourism staff; elaboration of the general picture of the performance-motivation-satisfaction correlative areas at the organizational level.

Approaching a research topic, aimed at studying the correlation between human resources motivation practices used in rural tourism and employee work productivity, is an important and current topic. This paper aims to analyse the influence exerted by the motivation of human resources in rural tourism and to identify those categories of human resource motivation practices that offer the possibility of developing rural tourism.

1.3 Delimitations and Definitions

In the specialized literature, the importance of the field of human resources in the tourism activity is revealed. Motivating human resources involves a specific approach, aimed at ensuring and maintaining a qualified and engaged staff, using a range of specific practices. The motivation of human resources practiced in rural tourism influences its performance and its ability to maintain and develop in the market it operates on. The modern (strategic) approach in the field of human resources, increasingly present in rural tourism, considers the human resources of an organization a strategic resource for it, having a decisive role in the implementation of the motivation strategy. (Yuviani, Tiurida, Maidar, 2021)

In order to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the research has been carried out from the perspective of the motivation of human resources by studying aspects from several European countries, with a closer attention to rural guesthouses in Romania.

Definitions of rural tourism through the prism of specialized literature:

According to Eurostat (Parlamentul European, 2023), the concept of "tourism" refers to activities carried out by visitors who travel to a destination outside their usual residence for a shorter period of time for a year. The wording describes the complexity of this activity, which can be carried out for both leisure and business purposes, given that the distance from the usual home implies the

need to use alternative facilities for accommodation, meals, carrying out the business activities planned to take place, relaxation, spending free time in an active and pleasant way, etc. This also represents an opportunity to initiate and carry out a wide range of economic activities that provide the goods and services requested by visitors, in order to support tourist activities, such as: advisory services and reservation of tourist stays, transport services, services accommodation, restaurant and catering, cultural, sports and recreational services, access to locally specific goods and services. The European area is the most visited area worldwide, statistics show that in 2019, 539 million tourists from all over the world visited Europe, respectively 37% of the total number of tourists that were registered globally, with a level of income achieved of this occupation of 383 billion euros (28.9% of the revenues recorded at the global level from tourism) (European Court of Auditors, 2021).

Although on the surface the definition of rural tourism might seem easy - that form of tourism practiced in rural areas - it must be taken into account in this endeavor, a series of factors that can complicate this endeavor. (Ayazlar, 2017) Firstly the impossibility of clearly demarcating urban from rural areas, there are many situations when they overlap. Also, rural spaces as such are quite difficult to define, the criteria used in different countries being extremely varied. Secondly, the degree of rurality is both a technical and an emotional issue: not every touristic activity carried out in a rural area is rural tourism, because some activities can be urban in form and rural only in location (for example, holiday villages located in rural areas, where organized tourism is practiced).

There are several types or varieties of rural tourism, being an activity with several aspects, different regions of the world developing in particular certain components of the rural tourism product. The rural regions know in the current era a process of change, under the impact of the development of global markets, communications, as well as the flows of inhabitants.

In Romania, a rural community is described rather vaguely, in Law no. 351/2001 (Parliament R. , 2001) regarding the approval of the National Territorial Development Plan, section IV, as being characterized by the fields in which the majority of the workforce is employed (agriculture, forestry, fishing) and by the fact that this profile will be preserved even after the application of the modernization policies, or if the facilities are insufficient to be declared a city. No reference is made to the number of inhabitants, to the density, to the specifics of the homes, nor is there any description of the facilities that the community should benefit from in order to be declared urban. (Romanian Chamber of Parliament, 2001)

Taking into account the previously stated, we can define rural tourism as the form of tourism that takes place in the rural environment, with the exploitation of local tourist resources (natural, economic, cultural and human), as well as with tourist facilities and equipment, including guesthouses and farms agro-tourism, using various accommodation spaces (inns, rural hotels, shelters, holiday villages) and which are offered in various forms of stay, with a wide spectrum of motivations (transit

or itinerant, with cultural, cognitive, even affective valences) , as an alternative to classic tourism, with standardized offers and in which the tourist is just a statistical, anonymous unit. (Stejărel, Ungureanu, Mihalache, Airinei, Paveliuc, 2013)

Rural tourism is today the focus of several tourism researchers: J.V. Kloeze, Glăvan V., Gherman Matei, P. Nistureanu, etc.

Author	Definition
Glăvan V. (Glăvan, 2003)	“Rural tourism includes a wide range of accommodation, activities, events, festivities, sports and entertainment, all taking place in a typical rural environment.”
Kloeze. J.V. (Kloeze, 1994)	Rural tourism is a concept that includes all tourist activities that take place in the countryside.
Gherman, M (Gherman, Gherman, 2011)	Rural tourism includes a series of activities, services, facilities offered by farmers, peasants and rural residents to attract tourists to their area, which generates additional income for their businesses.
Nistureanu. P (Nistureanu, 2012)	Rural tourism is a concept that includes the tourist activity organized and led by the local population and which is based on a close connection with the natural and human environment.

Table no.2 Defining the concept of human resources in tourism

The most important features of rural tourism are being a high level of complexity, in addition to the structures specially designed for receiving tourists; it capitalizes on the surplus of existing accommodation spaces in the rural household, touristic services, namely accommodation, meals, entertainment.

Most researchers define the concept of human resources in tourism as follows:

Author	Definition
(Chhabra, 2005)	“From the national point of view, human resources may be defined as the knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes obtained in the population; whereas from

	the viewpoint of individual enterprise, they represent the total of the inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills as exemplified in the talents and aptitudes of its employees”
(Wright, McMahan, McWilliams, 2020)	Human resources constitute an essential strategic component of an organization aspiring to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.
(Hermawati, Nurwati, 2020)	Human resources, as an intangible asset, can provide a contribution to the gaining of an organizationally competitive advantage. Skills and experts from human resources can be unique and difficult to imitate for competitors.
(Prasad, 2005)	Sumantra Ghoshal, who is considered a founder of management, used the term "human capital" to represent human resources and classified it into three categories as intellectual capital, social capital and emotional capital Thus, human resources represent all people from managers to workers employed by the organization.

Table no.3 Human resource concept theories

Key defining concepts for our research:

Rural tourism is considered an alternative to sustainable tourism because this type of tourism emphasizes the active involvement of local communities and their control over tourism development in their area (Marinovski, 2019). The transformation of the village as a tourist destination will increase the need for facilities and infrastructure, as well as the management of natural resources and human resources. Rural tourism is related to areas that have local wisdom (customs, culture and potential) that are managed as tourist attractions according to their capacities, which are presented for the social and economic interests of the community (Hermawan, Santosa, Wijayanti, Novia, Dwi, Jonet, 2022).

Human resource – the most important resource of the company, which sums up and capitalizes on the totality of an individual's professional skills and abilities, formed and developed on the basis of a specialized training and a relevant experience, but also accumulating character traits that support motivation and attitude towards work, together with attachment and loyalty to the employer, as well as the desire for professional and personal development. The particularity of the human potential is reflected by the human quality, in the sense that the specific skills and qualities of the human resource determine and limit the choice of the motivation strategy and its successful implementation. A large part of human potential development and management programs, such as education

and constant development, motivation and reward are interdependent with the successful implementation of the applied motivation strategy. (Čerović, 2012)

Motivation strategies – complex of methods and tools used by employers, which accumulate financial and non-financial elements, in different combinations, depending on group psychology and the specifics of human resources, to determine and maintain long-term motivation for work, loyalty the employee and the desire to actively participate in the development of the company. (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 2008)

Rural tourism is a widespread form of tourism in Europe, with great importance in terms of employment and turnover, with small-scale economic agents that capitalize on local heritage, providing on average between 10% and 20% of jobs and income from this environment. (Ciornei, Mrica, Nedelcu, Grigore, Despa, Plugaru, Nechita, Nicola, 2016)

For these reasons, it is rather difficult to accurately define the concept of rural tourism so that the formulation is internationally valid.

1.4 Justification for the study

The scientific novelty and originality of the thesis is in correlation with its purpose and objectives and resides in the scientific substantiation of the theoretical-conceptual framework of the motivation of employees in rural tourism; highlighting and arguing the managerial implications on staff motivation at different levels of management; evaluation of the main indicators regarding the use of working time and salary with direct implications on staff motivation; qualitative evaluation of the elements of the motivation system of rural tourism staff; elaboration of the general picture of the performance-motivation-satisfaction correlative areas at the organizational level.

The present research aimed to study the reality of rural tourism with the main aim of the empirical approach, data collection and directly observable phenomena regarding human resource motivation strategies, focusing on practical importance and empirical testing with the help of the most used tool, the questionnaire.

The report deals with the theoretical aspects and the defining characteristics of staff motivation, the structural components of motivation, the main roles of motivation, the forms of motivation of employees in rural tourism are analyzed. There is an increasing interest in this subject, respectively for the research of the specific aspects of rural tourism and for the definition of strategies to motivate the human resources working in this field, in order to ensure the retention and efficiency of this resource, so important for the success of the activity of the tourist guesthouse.

2 Theoretical premises of rural tourism investigation and human resource motivation strategies

The second chapter of his thesis will focus more on the different theories relevant to this phenomenon, thus gaining a better understanding of the problems encountered in the interaction between the employee of a guesthouse and the employer and further in planning the description document and solving them. A review of the tourism sides of different countries to widen the range of problems and solutions found, being able, at the same time, to identify the most common ones.

2.1 The structure and characteristics of rural tourism

Human evolution is intrinsically linked to travel, from mass movements between closer or more distant areas, to journeys made to identify resources, trade, to conquer new territories, for healing waters or simply to satisfy his curiosity; the man was not sedentary but was always eager to reach other parts of the world. In the context where urbanization affects the landscape more and more, rural tourism is a solution for preserving the specificity of rural areas and for their sustainable development. (Ion, 2017)

Rural tourism is a widespread form of tourism in Europe, with great importance in terms of employment and turnover, with small-scale economic agents that capitalize on local heritage, providing on average between 10% and 20% of jobs and income from this environment (Parliament E. , s.a.). Considering that geographically close countries also present a series of cultural similarities that bring them closer together, the European Council has defined a series of four macro-regions, so that a series of common strategies for sustainable regional development can be developed: Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR); Danube Region (EUSDR); Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR); The Alps mountain region (EUSALP). (Europe, Council of, 2020)



Fig.1. The logos of the four European macro-regions (Commission European, s.a.)

Rural tourism is about the areas, communities and experiences that can be had in the countryside. Thus, in countries that have important mountain areas, rural tourism aims to spend free time through mountain hiking, ascents, exploring the mountain landscape, specific gastronomic experiences. In countries that have maritime areas, rural tourism includes activities related to the specifics of the place, such as excursions with different types of boats, contemplating the seascape (sunrise or sunset), observing marine animals in their natural habitat, gastronomic experiences based on fish dishes and seafood, visiting areas with unique ecosystems. It can thus be stated that rural

tourism is a way and a strategy that successfully uses three large categories of resources, products, spaces and people, in different formulas that offer a synergy that these components, considered individually, would not have.

This also represents an opportunity to initiate and carry out a wide range of economic activities that provide the goods and services requested by visitors, in order to support tourist activities, such as: advisory services and reservation of tourist stays, transport services, services accommodation, restaurant and catering, cultural, sports and recreational services, access to locally specific goods and services. The European area is the most visited area worldwide, statistics show that in 2019, 539 million tourists from all over the world visited Europe, respectively 37% of the total number of tourists that were registered globally, with a level of income achieved of this occupation of 383 billion euro (28.9% of the revenues recorded globally from tourism). (Antonescu, Antonescu, 2015)

The space is the geographical area, the territory that holds objectives of rural tourist interest, associated with favorable conditions for spending free time. These tourist attractions can be natural monuments (age-old trees, about which oral tradition or written sources preserve information, waterfalls and lakes, special landscape elements such as volcanic areas, extinct or still active, age-old forests, geological phenomena), monuments cultural (memorial houses, funerary monuments or even cemeteries, very old rural houses, which respect traditional constructive elements), intangible elements of culture (local customs, traditions, elements specific to folk costumes, elements of religious origin), but also other elements that confer geographical space respectively uniqueness. The inhabitants of the rural area are both entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of this type of tourism, because it is agreed that the private initiative must be part of a collective development plan, and everyone's contribution must be part of the structure of the tourist products, offering the consumer satisfaction quality accommodation, a restaurant suitable for the area, with the prospect of discovering new people and places. (Tourism Development, 2015)

We can therefore affirm that rural tourism develops by capitalizing on the favorable characteristics of the three main elements previously referred to: firstly, the rural space, also called the hearth of the village, as a support for the process of survival and carrying out specific human activities, an area of personal recovery and reconnection to the perennial values that guided living in the respective areas (Constantin, 2010). Here the tourist lives in a personal and profoundly quiet way, with the lack of agitation and urban agglomerations, the clean air, the possibility of intimate contact with nature and with traditional elements that have not survived in the urban environment; secondly the rural population, represented by people who keep intangible cultural treasures, such as forgotten crafts, oral elements, components of regional traditions, etc. Lastly the natural local products, which fall within the current trends, of returning to a diet that goes through as few processing stages as possible, without additions and substances that are not part of the composition of the raw materials used, under sustainable conditions of obtaining.

Rural tourism fulfills several specific functions that further differentiate it from other forms of tourism.

In close connection with agriculture as a basic branch, the rural economy is also based on other occupations such as forestry, traditional crafts, maintaining the predominance of agriculture, the main contributor to the economic level in urban areas, without forgetting that the diversification of occupations brings a greater attractiveness, along with favorable social implications.

People, as a resource remarkable for its characteristics, respectively creativity and capacity to initiate and shape the tourist product, are the ones who design and develop the tourist offer, by selecting the strategies and tools to ensure a perfect correlation of the component elements, such as accommodation spaces with special environmental elements, food resources selected from the specifics of the area, leisure and relaxation solutions, so that the tourist develops an affinity and an attachment that ensures the availability of the purchase of tourist packages in the future as well.

The product (or the products offered) may refer to the entire tourist package or to a special offer within the package, respectively certain possibilities for relaxation and leisure that cannot be practiced in other areas, food products that can be consumed at the time of their production or can be purchased for later consumption, non-food products that cannot be purchased from other areas, such as hand-made, traditionally decorated clothing items from fabrics obtained in the rural household, clay vessels, wood or other materials, toys from natural materials (wood, clay), tools. (EGTC, 2020) Depending on the practical way of combining different types of services (transport, accommodation, leisure, food), which form the tourism product, there are different criteria for classifying forms of tourism.

Depending on the tourist's area of origin and the region where he is traveling for tourist purposes, we can note both internal tourism, practiced by the whole population of a country, inside its national borders and international tourism, which results in movement of the people outside of the national borders. In this case, depending on the country of reference, we can differentiate between the outgoing tourism, in which people from one country leave the country's national space and the incoming tourism, in which one country is receiving different nationalities visitors.

Although rural tourism has a modest weight in the total volume of tourist activities carried out at the international and world level, its promotion has a number of positive implications, which we will address in the following lines.

The higher utilization of the labor force and the balancing of the rural population, an extremely valuable thing in the perspective of the development of these areas and the higher utilization of the natural, cultural and social potential possessed, as a necessary intervention tool to mitigate the phenomenon of depopulation and to provide the means of necessary livelihoods, without the need to transfer the individual to the urban environment and without intensifying the migration phenomenon. Tourism benefits significantly improve financial inputs in families and in the community, by

supplementing the income of small producers in agriculture, forestry and fish farming, offering a higher degree of employment, because in these cases, the whole family is involved. We cannot also omit the non-financial satisfactions that rural tourism offers to small entrepreneurs, through wider openness to local cultures, a higher level of socialization and a significant improvement in relations with the local community and business. (Gheorghe, 2020)

Diversification of income-generating activities provides alternatives to situations where agricultural activities do not yield, either by renting surplus spaces and providing catering services, or by related services (guide, animator, leisure service provider, horse riding instructor, etc.). Pluriactivity offers the opportunity to obtain additional income, in the context of the constraints exerted by the seasonality of agricultural activities, this being also beneficial to the community through the receipts that local administrations have following the legal fees that apply. Last but not least, increased income in farming families produces beneficial chain reactions, as these families will afford a better standard of living, have access to higher education and bring tangible added value to the community.

The diversification of the use of human resources is another development factor in the rural community, because employment in a single field of activity has disadvantages, including the fact that a part of the available and unoccupied workforce does not have skills or training in the agricultural field, leading to lower per capita income and personal dissatisfaction. Diversification of the fields in which the workforce can find its usefulness is an important advantage for the rural environment and for its sustainable development.

One of the scientific articles dealing with aspects related to rural tourism and the human resource in tourism can also be found in the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* - which is an academic magazine. Lars Aronsson approaches the concept of a meeting place, it is used to link demand and supply within the tourism system, but he studies with great care ecological tourism and sustainable development, which are normative concepts with multiple dimensions. (Aronsson, 1994).

The promotion and development of services is favored by the opening of the rural horizon for tourism. It is known that many rural areas in Europe present a deficit of infrastructure, but also of demand for other services and products that the community can offer. The increase in the number of tourists in the rural community is reflected in the increase in demand for goods and services, thus allowing the assumption and support of workers to improve the living conditions of the community, such as the modernization of access roads, electricity and sewage networks, communication services, of public transport, which leads to the accessibility of the area and the development of the rural community on multiple levels. In this way, the quality of the tourist services offered also improves, leading to a greater motivation for customers to visit or return to visit. (European court of auditors, 2021)

The economic support of farmers is an important objective for the economic and political environment of any country. In addition to other forms of support offered to farmers, promoting visits to agricultural farms, hosting, offering opportunities to experience new elements for the tourist, such as picking, preparing specific products, tastings, selling products from one's own household, horse-back riding, interacting with domesticated and sometimes even wild animals can provide a financial surplus to residents engaged in agriculture, which provides important individual and collective economic advantages. Contact with tourists also offers informational benefits, reducing the gap between urban and rural environments, reducing loneliness, bringing technological, economic, social and cultural innovations closer.

The promotion and support of folk art and local crafts, which occupy a particularly important place in the local, national and international cultural heritage, is an important asset of rural tourism, both for the identification of specific elements and for their promotion and valorization. The preservation of the local cultural heritage and its distinctive elements can be done by promoting them and by stimulating tourist interest, so that society preserves these values in the collective memory and passes them on to the next generations.

The rehabilitation of the real estate heritage refers to two major objectives for the development of rural tourism, namely, the preservation and/or restoration of historical, cultural, ethnological interest objectives, as well as ensuring a sufficiently high-performance accommodation potential, through the restoration and introduction into the tourist circuit of old, abandoned buildings, as a result of the Attracting new depopulation phenomena, increasing the level of comfort, building guesthouses or tourist villas, but also a recreation infrastructure to cover the existing and potential demand.

(Romania, 2019) These desired can be achieved through investments at the community level, through access fees to the objectives of interest, as well as through private investments, so that a significant tourist flow can be obtained, which ensures the increase in the income of small entrepreneurs and local administrations. Investments are necessary in the current context, due to the emphasis placed on the tertiary sector, services, but also on the sustainability of all human activities. The development of rural tourism, as a sub-branch of tourism, must take place under the conditions of the new economic and legislative perspectives, including taking into account climate change, the need to ensure energy needs from renewable sources, the level of competition on the profile market, given that the support offered by some European states to this type of tourism is not always sufficient to ensure economic efficiency. In this sense, the attraction of new investments to develop the reception infrastructure and improve the conditions for performing the services included in the tourist packages constitutes a new direction of evolution.

Today, rural tourism can be found in two clearly identifiable forms:

Agro-tourism, which is a fairly new concept, it includes those forms of tourism directly related to agricultural activities, or with activities directly related to agriculture. Accommodation is provided in

the peasant household, and meal and leisure services are provided by mobilizing resources from the household, by using the surpluses obtained from agricultural activities (plant culture and animal husbandry, mainly). (Turism, 2023)

Ecotourism, also called green tourism, appeared as a manifestation of the need to protect the environment and natural diversity, to preserve the health of the environment and natural balances. This form of tourism takes into account the materialization of the principles agreed by the national ecotourism associations, which are based on models promoted by the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program, implemented by the Australian profile association and Nature's Best, the accreditation system promoted by the Ecotourism Association of Sweden, (Turism, 2023) principles applied both by the entrepreneurs who develop tourism products and by the authorities who draw up and apply development plans based on ecotourism. Ecotourism is centered on the direct and personal experience of the tourist in nature, which leads to the essentiality of considering natural areas as a central element in the development of the tourist product.

In European countries, rural tourism has been practiced for a long time, under the influence of two distinct reasons:

Identifying the still unused potential existing in rural areas, in the perspective of relaunching sustainable development and exploitation.

The existence of characteristics that differentiate rural tourism from classic tourism, characteristics that make it attractive for customers.

Rural tourism fulfills a number of specific functions that further differentiate it from other forms of tourism (Lo, Chin, Law, 2019).

The economic function is the primary function, which is particularly based on agricultural activities and manifests itself in the direction of certain commitments and actions that fall to each country, in order to guarantee an agricultural production system that allows ensuring a sufficient level of income for employed people in agriculture and for the members of their families, a level similar to that of non-agricultural professions that have a similar degree of responsibility, in terms of ensuring the protection of the environment, through the regeneration of resources such as soil and water from the water table, in the spirit of sustainable development.

In relation to agriculture, as a basic branch, the rural economy is also based on other occupations such as forestry, traditional crafts, maintaining the predominance of agriculture, as being the main contributor to the economic level in urban areas, without forgetting that the diversification of occupations brings a greater attractiveness, with favorable social implications.

The ecological function reflects the fact that at the basis of human evolution, the territorial space with its resources was the main factor of influence and development. The symbiotic relationship established between the human being and the land, on which he lived, with its resources, providing

raw materials, water, shelter, raised to the level of virtue the concerns for preserving the health of this relationship, for ensuring their availability for future generations, as a condition primary human survival.

The socio-cultural function is reflected in the nature of human activities in rural areas, relationships within communities, inter-community relationships, traditions and crafts, as an element of interest for urban residents. The personal and social life of rural residents is intrinsically linked to spiritual life, culture, ancestral customs that transcend time; they still function today as regulatory and cohesive elements for rural communities and connecting to the land and ancestors. Rural culture and customs constitute a substrate and resource for the creativity of the current inhabitants, for the communication and expression of feelings and aspirations, for strengthening the ties in the community, for generating the joy of living and sharing with others.

Of course, like any human activity, rural tourism also presents a series of challenges that manifest themselves from different directions. These challenges come to increase the already existing pressure in a sensitive environment, which implies a certain level of risk, which can acquire a disruptive character.

Many studies highlight a shift of tourist travel demands towards more mindful and meaningful tourist activities after the pandemic (Seraphin, Dosquet, 2020); (Zhu H., Deng F., 2020). Rural tourism brings a vast opportunity to satisfy the demand of the post-pandemic tourists who seek stress-relief and rejuvenation within a nature-based environment or engagement with physical and psychological wellbeing activities (Vaishar, Milada, 2020); The most frequently encountered difficulties that can affect the evolution of rural tourism can be:

The pressure exerted on the environment, given that this form of tourism often targets natural environments with sensitive balances, their attractiveness often consisting of this very fact. Human interference in natural environments occurs most of the time with the disruption of fragile balances, exerting a certain level of stress on ecosystems. For these reasons, there is a need for a competent and careful management of the spaces where the tourist phenomenon takes place, with the implementation of some preventive measures, in order not to exceed the capacity of restoration and regeneration of the affected ecosystems. (Kent, 2018)

Socio-cultural pressure is given by the capacity of tourists to destabilize the balances and socio-cultural relationships structured over time in rural communities. Changes in economic balances, changes in status, can bring, together with the previously listed advantages, some damages. It should also not be forgotten that the influx of tourists brings with it cultural and technological influences that can negatively influence the stability and quality of elements of rural, archaic culture and civilization. Moreover, the rural area is also faced today with the phenomenon of buildings or houses being purchased by urban residents, which reduces the potential for providing touristic accommodation services and harms the affected communities. New owners usually purchase these

properties with the aim of turning them into temporary or permanent residences, removing them from the tourist circuit, thus also causing changes in rates, community tensions and urban sprawl. (Zhu, Deng, 2020)

Limited availability of accommodation, it is observed especially in areas that have objectives of great tourist interest, given that these rural communities do not have a sufficient surplus of accommodation spaces. Overcoming this impediment, we must state that we take into account the fact that the development of the rural tourism phenomenon cannot be done under any conditions and indefinitely, especially since it is necessary, as we stated previously, to preserve natural, social and community balances and relationships.

Passivity towards the initiatives of entrepreneurs from outside the community, either when taking over some already existing spaces and facilities that local farmers easily give up, or when establishing new ones. The transfer of tourist facilities and activities to people from outside the rural community, even if this fact brings a contribution of capital and maybe also competence, can generate problems due to the lack of knowledge of the local specifics, the misunderstanding of traditions or certain economic practices specific to the area, but especially through recourse to external sources of supply and support for trade and services, the benefits obtained being directed in turn, outside the community where they were acquired. Farmers' reluctance towards the tourist phenomenon is observable in rural residents, who are relatively conservative and do not look kindly on the influx of foreigners into the community, an influx that can bring new positive or negative cultural elements.

The territorial differentiation of the tourist potential of rural areas leads to different results when applying similar entrepreneurial solutions. The differences can manifest both from the perspective of elements of natural, cultural or historical attractiveness, as well as from the perspective of the accessibility offered by the infrastructure elements, their modernization and the existence of recreational facilities. The development plans of these communities must consider the profile of the attractiveness elements, to stimulate both the reception of tourists for shorter periods (weekend or short stays) and for longer periods when it comes to some resources such as mineral springs, forests or climate factors that can also function as health care potential.

The insufficient complementarity of enterprises and the absence of cooperation structures, a fact identified in several countries, especially in those where the phenomenon of rural tourism was more difficult to accept or that implemented capitalism later (former socialist countries, some of which are today part of European community block). Previous experiences in these countries have led to a certain rigidity towards certain forms of association and cooperation, which could come to the rescue and ensure certain types of services (promotion, cooperation with administrations, defense of certain rights, financial services, etc.), which would relieve the farmer and allow him to exercise his basic skills, those of production in the agricultural field. (Vaishar, Milada, 2020)

Starting from the key concepts regarding rural tourism, here is a brief foray into the history of European rural tourism.

2.2 The diversity of rural tourism in Europe

Rural tourism is, by comparison, widespread in Europe, being a considerably larger activity in terms of turnover and employment and is made up of a very large number of micro-enterprises. In this context, we will make a short foray into rural tourism in Europe. We cannot say that rural tourism is a new phenomenon in the countries of the European Union. Accommodation of tourists in villages has been practiced for a very long time, more or less organized. The novelty comes from the extent that the tourist phenomenon has taken in the rural area. Numerous tourism organizations, from various European countries, are concerned with the organization and institutionalization of tourism in rural areas, thus creating the need to create or recreate the rustic-rural environment, in multiple forms: holiday villages, farm holidays, club villages, youth villages, rural holiday resorts, as well as the tourist village. Rural tourism evolved differently in each country. Most of the differences refer to the endowments and services chapter, each country having its own potential and strengths.

In Romania, rural tourism is directly linked to both the variety of the landscape and the traditions that accompany certain periods of the year. Religious holidays have a significant impact in rural communities and are accompanied by various customs, such as social interactions (ploughing, caroling), connection with the land and the church, consumption of specific food preparations. Various crafts are still practiced in the rural communities, which can in turn constitute points of attraction for tourists. We can also add trips with less common means of transport (sleigh or wagon rides, hikes to various natural attractions such as mud volcanoes, visits to monasteries in the area, etc.). The areas where rural tourism is highly developed are Transylvania, Maramureş and northern Moldova, including the Carpathian Mountains. (Antonescu, Antonescu, 2015)

Specific to Romania is the difference in economic development between urban and rural environments, which increased after 1989, as well as the impoverishment of rural communities and emigration, as a national phenomenon significant in size. The changes were dramatic in all economic branches, many production or service facilities were closed, and unemployment recorded values of over 10%. One of these solutions identified during the search for new income-generating resources, was the return to the rural environment, which apparently could provide goods in an emergency regime: vegetables and fruits by cultivating the lands with which the parents or other relatives were appropriated, by taking in the use of houses inherited or still lived in by parents/relatives and the search for ways of accommodation to the transformations that were taking place in the economy and in society. (Antonescu, Antonescu, 2015)

France is considered one of the most important tourist destinations, at European and world level, with a flow of 90 million tourists in 2019, registering over 440 million nights of accommodation, 180 billion euro spent by tourists, investments of over 16 billion Euros and over 2 million jobs.

(Dashper, 2014) Also in France, rural tourism is developed in the areas of Haute-Savoie, Herault, Saône and Loire, Cotes-d'Armor, Bas-Rhin, Bourgogne, Bretagne and Alsace and is primarily based on holiday homes, called "les Gîtes de France", meaning the rural shelters of agricultural producers or craftsmen, but also communal shelters, arranged in the form of bungalows, containing apartments of 1-5 rooms. Accommodation services must comply with specific provisions, according to the criteria of a quality book and classified according to the degree of comfort. There are associations that bring together small entrepreneurs in this field, which deal with the promotion of rural tourism, offer consultancy and other services to tourists, provide assistance for the profitability of tourism processes and equipment. (France, 2021)

In Austria, rural tourism has developed significantly over the approximately 150 years since it has existed, contributing to the development of rural settlements. The reception units have evolved, from peasant homes and inns, to what is now called a tourist recreation village or rest resort. The Tirol region is the best known and most visited, with the tourist phenomenon also reaching isolated farms, as the state forbids the construction of secondary residences in this area. This led to the approval of 25 tourist communes, where 50% of the families have reception facilities for approximately 6 people each. In the entire region, one third of the rural households have accommodation spaces available for rent, and the specific tourism is related to the contemplation of mountain landscapes, the practice of winter sports, mountaineering. Specific to Austria was the development plan initiated and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, the so-called "Green Plan" (Commission European, s.a.), which supported farmers with low-interest, long-term (15 years) loans. This plan had positive consequences in the development of rural tourism, in the current period Austria has in operation approximately 20,000 farms with a tourist function (Eurostat, 2023).

Italy is another European country with a developed rural tourism, which totals revenues of over 300 million euro, coming from over 5.5 million tourists. The rural tourism phenomenon is based on around 7,000 farms and over 15,000 inns and restaurants with local specifics (Eurostat, 2023). In Italy, the concentration of farms and inns that represent the basic infrastructure in rural tourism is observed in areas where there are various tourist attractions, the elements of the historical heritage being highly sought after. In addition to history, Italy also has special scenic attractions (the Amalfi Coast, for example), as well as gastronomic attractions, especially wines. The specificity of reception units in Italian rural tourism refers to the fact that, in general, they are located at altitudes of 300-600 meters above sea level, they can receive 8-10 people, they have quite generous dining rooms, for about 30 people, sometimes even more (a proportion of about 10% can organize events

with up to 100 people), own between 20 ha and 50 ha of cultivated land, offer for sale agro-food products or other services (horse riding) and are family businesses. (Agriculture Gazette, 1984)

Germany began to take measures to develop rural tourism from the '80s, through the large-scale project "From the North Sea to the Alps", which specifically targeted the Schwarzwald and Messen areas. In addition to the fact that the project supported and encouraged small entrepreneurs, it also aimed at changing the role and position of women in society, from the one called "Kinder, Küche und Kirche", meaning "children, kitchen and church", to harnessing her capabilities and promoting her, which led to appropriate results. Rural tourism has developed in the entire rural area, from North Rhine, Westphalia, Hessen, Baden Wurtemberg or Bavaria (Maria, 2018). The specifics are on the national drink, beer, on the landscapes offered by the course of the Danube, but also of the Rhine, with important wine-growing areas. An attractive area is that of the Rhine valley with its castles, with the story of the Loreley rock. Autumn is the season of grape picking and the villages on the Rhine attract tourists who come to taste specific varieties of wine, along with visiting the country fairs that are organized.

The same can be said about the development of rural tourism in Hungary, Poland or Bulgaria, former communist countries, which are trying to make their economies more efficient, especially through the tertiary sector, services, and tourism is an economic branch that is becoming more and more the most important. Along with this, it is important to underline the fact that the urban citizen experiences a tendency to return to his roots, whether he still has relatives or friends in the countryside or not. Also, the need for connection to nature and natural processes is felt not only for adults, but also for children in the urban environment, who often did not have the opportunity to interact closely with nature, with domestic animals, to have the opportunity to pick some fruit directly from the tree, etc. All these elements are important premises that ensure a serious development potential for rural tourism.

Finland - the country "made" as if entirely of water, air and trees. More than 188,000 lakes and more than 65% of the area covered with areas covered with forests is the paradise of nature lovers and pure, fresh but cooler air. Land of fjords and Santa Claus at the same time, Finland possess a calm, modest, pacifist and much disciplined people. To all that has been presented so far, we must add the long white nights of the arctic summers, the sauna, the fish boat and the wooden equipment. Tourist equipment seems to come from the world of stories, these small wooden cabins or "castles" are mostly found in the area of lakes, fjords and in the southern half of Finland. More than 50,000 settlements with more than 10,000 beds are approved. Tourists can live alone in farms or peasant households. Also, on their vacations they can participate in the life of rural settlements, work in households or practice sports - most often horse riding or skiing (Ionescu, Pascariu, 2007). Thus, the geographic variables, tourist attractions, economic level, human resources differ from area to area, quantitatively and qualitatively, giving specificity and sometimes uniqueness to some

tourist packages. Considering the development that rural tourism will have in the future, its alignment with the requirements of the European Union, the number of operators will increase and the market of rural tourism will become a promising one. This leads us to consider that this form of tourism is first of all an art and only secondarily a profitable economic activity.

Starting from these premises, some considerations and proposals regarding the importance of human resources in rural tourism and methods of motivating them will be presented.

2.3 Human resource and its motivating strategies

Motivation represents the sum of internal and external forces, energies that initiate and direct human behavior towards a certain goal, which once achieved will determine the concern for satisfying another need (Rotaru, Prodan, 2005).

The motivation for work represents the influence that certain factors exert on employees and that determine them to positive or negative actions for the fulfillment of work tasks. Unlike the material and financial means necessary for productive activity, people represent more than a source of costs or consumption. Their system of needs, values, degree of motivation and satisfaction will determine individual and organizational performance.

The concept of motivation it is defined by all the actions carried out over time to stimulate the participation of people interested in the fate of the institution or company, to contribute directly or indirectly, consciously or not, to the achievement of the organization's performance based on the correlation of common interests and aspirations (Rotaru, 2005).

The most important motivational theories are: Maslow's hierarchy of needs or needs pyramid, ERG theory, Herzberg's bifactor theory, McClelland's needs satisfaction theory and McGregor's approach (Eccles, Wigfield, 2002).

In specialized literature, motivation is given various definitions: "the process of triggering, directing and maintaining human, physical and mental activities" (Ivancevich, Donnelly, Gibson, 1989); "the change in the body's equilibrium state, which determines it on man to act until the reduction of this change" (Michel, 1991); "the correlation of his (the staff) satisfactions, resulting from participation in the work process, with the achievement of the objectives of the unit and the subsystems"; "the process of selection, orientation and maintenance of human behavior" (McClelland, Boyatzis, 1982).

The result is that, in their concern to study the behavior of people in organizations and outside them, various authors have arrived at the conclusion that at its base there are certain elements, more or less explicit and as a result the definitions given to motivation take into account both the physical and the psychological aspect of human action. Human resource management in rural tourism is of particular importance for a long-term development of an enterprise, because seasonality of demand and staff turnover are problems that occur constantly, and management must ensure that they can control them. In this sense, the retention of employees can only be done by

motivating them. The sustainable development of rural localities requires the use of the labour force from the community, its engagement and the capitalization of its specific qualities, and the use of personnel who are not part of the community does not lead to the fulfilment of sustainability indicators.

From this perspective, the rural community has some specific features, which can be strong points or weak points, depending on the management approach: a reduced level of anonymity, because in general the inhabitants of a rural locality know each other, they know their ancestors and descendants to a greater or lesser extent, information circulates quickly within the community, and the spirit of solidarity manifests itself more visibly than in urban communities; the education level of the unemployed rural workforce is generally lower, often without having a specific qualification, and the employment process can be more difficult and for shorter periods of time; the use of labour from the rural community implies advantages such as the lack of accommodation costs, easy access from home to workplace, common community culture, possible common objectives; knowledge of the local specifics and possession of information about the area's attractions, different stories, traditions, crafts, knowledge that can be exploited within the tourist offer; knowledge of the natural environment, access routes to tourist attractions, so that tourists can be guided to them; knowledge of crafts that are no longer practiced on a large scale, which can become part of the tourist offer. Most of these specific characteristics are also arguments that must be taken into account by the manager of the tourism company, because they can be capitalized and transformed into strong points of the tourist offer. In general, rural tourism service providers are small, family businesses, established with the aim of supplementing the main income that generally comes from agricultural occupations. Summarizing, we can say that between motivation and satisfaction there can be three statements as specified by the specialist in organizational psychology Zlate:

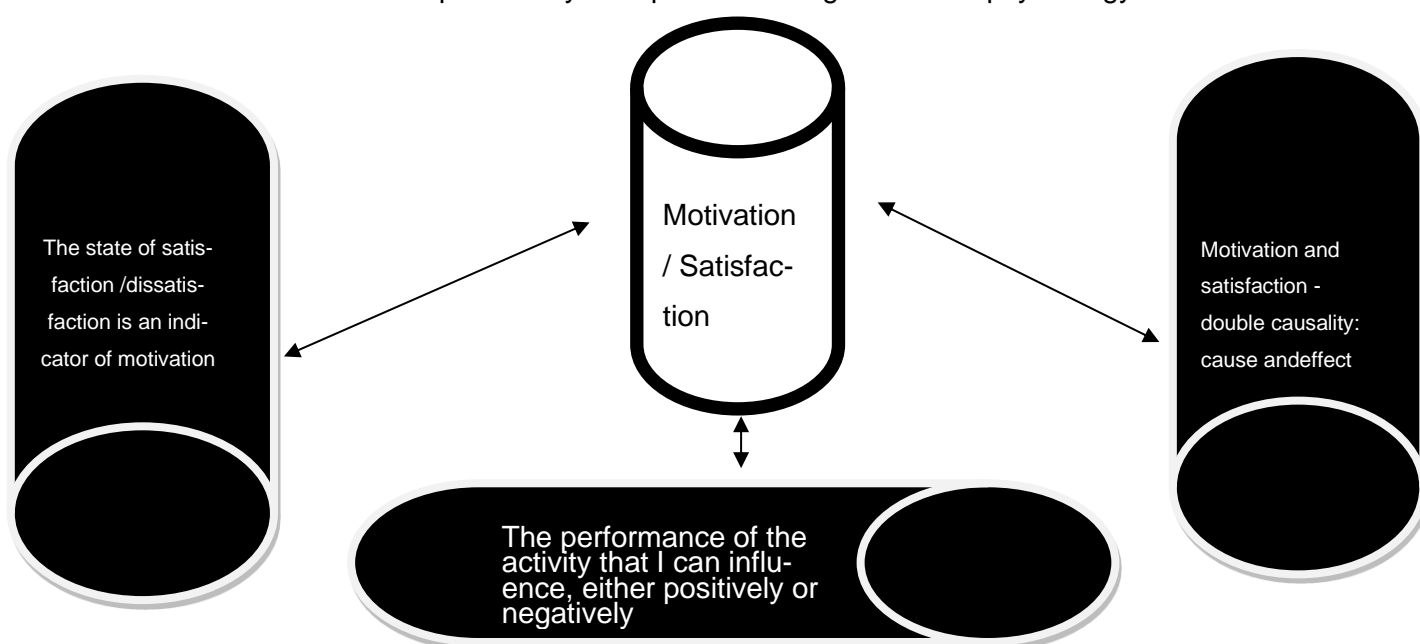


Figure 2. The relationship between motivation and satisfaction (Zlate, 2007)

In this context, we must emphasize the fact that the human resource employed in rural tourism units has several characteristics:

He is part of the rural community, he often knows the employer personally, knows the traditions, customs, demands, but also the taboos of the community, it is very possible that they have no training, experience or have an irrelevant experience in the field and also many times, the human resource is part of the limited or extended family of the employer.

Most of the time, it is not a simple employee, given that there can be a high degree of solidarity, collaboration and support between employer and employee. The existence of difficulties in managing conflict situations (indiscipline, insubordination, etc.), due to the nature of the relationship between employer and employee.

Thus, the managers of these firms may not have the necessary expertise to apply appropriate management methods and tools, as is the case in large firms. On the other hand, getting to know employees more closely, who can often come from close or extended family, friends or acquaintances, can be a strong point in human resource management. The manager of the tourism company knows well or very well the specific needs of each employee and, thanks to the small number of employees, can apply individually adapted motivational solutions with maximum efficiency (Minciu, Rodica, 2001).

In theory, several types of motivation used by managers are defined, which can have several forms, correlated with the generating element:

By the feelings (Brief, 2002) and experiences felt by the employee, we can tell: *positive motivation*, when the employer grants benefits such as salary increases, bonuses, profit sharing, praise, thanks or promotions; *negative motivation*, through coercive mechanisms such as salary reductions, demotions, warnings, reprimands.

According to the psychological area in which satisfaction is manifested, there are: *cognitive motivation*, aimed at the intellectual dimension of the employee, using tools aimed at qualitative and quantitative information, to which the employee has access, offering various tools to know the environment of the activity and to operate in full knowledge of the case; *affective motivation*, by creating a climate of comfort, appreciation, good quality relationships, which allows openness and personal development (Williams, Guerin, Fortier, 2014).

According to the place (internal or external), of the motivation: *intrinsic motivation* is the type of effective long-term motivation, energetically supported by internal psychological mechanisms, under the conditions of experiencing professional satisfactions that agree with the individual's personality and aspirations; *extrinsic motivation* is effective in the short term and consists in the use of financial and non-financial instruments to reward the effort and involvement of the employee, so as to

cause him to have the same attitude in the future. The downside of this type of motivation is that when the reward disappears, so does the motivation (Ryan, Deci, 2000).

All these types of motivation produce effects, but they must be combined according to the real possibilities that the employer possesses and in direct correlation with the personality, aspirations and desires of the employee.

Based on these types of motivation, a series of motivational techniques have been developed that are accessible to the employer and that can also be successfully applied in the management of human resources in rural tourism. The technique of listening and responding, by Jahromi is a simple, easy-to-apply technique that involves active listening and immediate, clear and precise feedback, with ownership on both sides of the content, so that the employer creates and develops relationships based on transparency, mutual respect, subordinated to the established tasks and foreseen objectives. This technique yields results under conditions of mutual trust and the existence of common development goals (Jahromi, Tabatabaee, Abdar, Rajabi, 2016).

Verbal motivational feedback or the merit recognition technique, involves the explicit reaction of the manager, through positive or negative assessments towards an employee, after he has completed a task or a period of activity (month, year). Feedback must be designed to produce constructive effects, both in the case of positive and negative feedback. This technique must be used with discernment and attention, with a certain frequency and in situations where the employee is open and understands the objective of the approach.

Extending or enlarging the job, by JR Hackman, GR Oldham is a technique by which the diversity of tasks assigned to a job can be increased, by combining tasks related to similar or complementary work processes, of close difficulty, in the same field. Job enlargement is horizontal development and takes into account key tasks of executive positions at the same hierarchical level. The employee can be motivated by the trust granted by the employer and by the reward for the work done (Oldham, Greg, Richard, Jone, s.a.).

Job enrichment is a technique aimed at increasing the role and autonomy of a job, by assigning new tasks and responsibilities, including coordination, based on the competencies previously demonstrated by the employee, by vertically integrating tasks and responsibilities of managerial nature with execution tasks and responsibilities. There are employees who work very well and responsibly when they have a higher degree of autonomy and control, so it is necessary for such employees to enrich their job, to be efficient and for them to feel the satisfaction of work and the appreciation of the employer.

Management by objectives allows employees to actively participate in setting objectives and evaluating performance, so that they become involved in the process of growth and development, assuming individual roles and responsibility for how to fulfil them. This technique stimulates the

feeling of belonging to the group and awareness of the personal role in the fulfilment of common goals, so that no one experiences the feeling of uselessness and abandonment (Mora, Radu, 2000).

The flexible work schedule is a technique that offers an alternative to the standard work schedule, especially given that the nature of work in rural tourism is more difficult to fit into this schedule. Thus, the flexible working week can be a motivational technique by assuming responsibility, developing a sense of responsibility, autonomy and professionalism.

Stimulating the employee to participate in professional and personal development programs is a way that rewards the efforts of both parties involved in the work processes, the employer providing support, including financial, by improving the skills and abilities of the employee, who will provide quality work, and the employee who will benefit from improving his work skills through the exchange of experience, superior knowledge in the field and various opportunities to do an activity that he likes and brings him financial and non-financial satisfaction (Camerale de Comerț și Industrie Gorj, Harghita și Mureș, 2022).

The reward system is an effective technique if it is designed to be adapted to the type of employees and is applied systematically. Of course, the salary is the remuneration for which the labour force of the employee is given to the employer, during the working hours, but the reward system must be more than that. The rewards are intended to be granted according to the merit and performance of each employee, or of the work group, and the systematic application, according to a plan established and known by the employees (employee of the month or year, Christmas or Easter holiday, celebration birthday or the birth of a child, support for the death of a member of the restricted family) can increase the level of motivation and the desire to perform of employees.

Of course, financial instruments have and will continue to play the most important motivating role. Whether we are talking about the involvement of the staff by giving a part of the profit, insurance instruments (medical or life insurance, education), instruments aimed at employee's family members or the granting of financial benefits in the form of prizes on various occasions, money can cause the employee to work harder to provide the best performance of which he is capable, in the prospect that he will have access to these resources again. Even if there are a number of non-financial motivation tools, financial tools will always have a high impact (Maria, 2010).

In rural tourism, the recruitment and selection of human resources is often carried out randomly, without requiring the submission of a CV, an interview, or a work trial. As previously stated, providing tourism services can be a family business and utilizing the surplus labour of the family as well as other close people. These potential employees, most of the time, do not have previous experience in the field, they do not have qualification courses in this regard, but the employer has full confidence in the already existing relationships and in the common goals, aimed at the well-being of the whole family. This fact is not a weakness, except in the situation where the employee shows

bad will and behaves contrary to the interests and objectives of the employer, which should also be his own. However, we must emphasize the fact that in recent years, given the acute need for the development of rural communities and the need to put on the labour market qualified personnel in this sense, many education providers, such as universities, high schools or companies that have this object of activity, have diversified their educational offer, accrediting secondary and higher education specializations in the field of rural tourism. In this sense, even if the employee does not have a qualification in the tourism or gastronomic field, he has the chance to obtain one, this fact contributing significantly to the quality level of the service package offered, to improving the image of the company and to customer loyalty (Stan, 2012).

A first strategy to retain and motivate the human resource can therefore be to offer the possibility of obtaining an appropriate qualification, with the support of the employer, under conditions clearly established and agreed by both parties (employer and employee), so that the employee can contribute to the development of the company. The qualification courses can be, depending on the needs that arise, of short duration (6 months, up to a year), or even longer duration (post-high school or university courses), which can cover the need for human resources on medium and long term, given that rural tourism is also constantly evolving, customers will be more and more selective regarding the quality of the tourist product, starting with the careful evaluation of accommodation services, continuing with meal and recreation services and relaxation.

In line with the concept of long-life-learning, the employer's attitude will bring long-term benefits to both parties, as it will have a motivated and skilled workforce, and the employee will understand that the qualification certificate obtained will bring them long-term benefits, given that it will ensure a higher income and more diverse future employment possibilities.

It should not be forgotten that the package of financial benefits is the most important element of the employment contract. Thus, each individual feels the need for access to a lifestyle that allows him to provide the means to cover physiological, security and belonging needs, but very important is the need for esteem, the need to be known in the community (MASLOW, 2013), thus this cannot be done if the individual does not have a decent level of income. The needs in Maslow's hierarchy include physiological needs (food and clothing), safety needs (job security), social needs (friendship), self-esteem, and self-actualization. This hierarchy can be used by managers to better understand employees' needs and motivation and address them in ways that lead to high productivity and job satisfaction.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

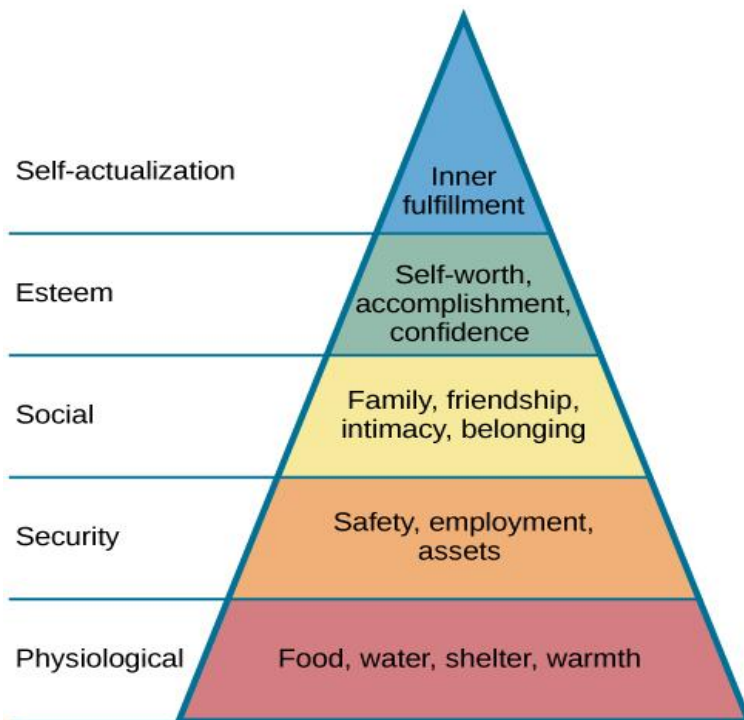


Figure 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (KELLERMAN, 2013)

Beyond this, however, a person often feels the motivational impulse when he wants to satisfy his need for self-actualization. For these reasons, the employer must consider valuing the employee's work, understanding the type of his needs and the problems that manifest at the family level, so as to find the most suitable motivation mechanisms. We remind you that often in rural tourism, the employer-employee relationship is not an ordinary one, in the present case the parties sometimes know each other well or very well, they may have a previous relational history, they may have common goals and objectives. The employee may face various personal challenges, and the employer's support in solving them will be the most effective tool for long-term motivation and retention. The employee will develop attachment and stand in solidarity with the employer when he, in turn, needs support. Creating an organizational culture of closeness, mutual support and valorisation of skills and abilities, will cause the employee to give the best performance at work, every day. The employer must take into account the fact that in rural tourism it is extremely difficult to adhere to a standard 8-hour schedule; sometimes the employee will have to sacrifice part of his personal life to fulfil work duties, which must be reflected in the reward for the work done. It is also possible that due to the small number of employees, the employer himself will take care of the management of the human resources he has in his organization, to work alongside them, this fact bringing him significantly closer to the dreams, desires, aspirations and needs that they feel them. Moreover, in this case where the employer and the employee are not strangers, anonymous to each other, as in many situations that characterize classic tourism, the special context can offer the manager the

opportunity to combine different motivational mechanisms and techniques, the applied strategies being the result of these combinations, which can sometimes be extremely original. They can make the difference between an uninspired management that only looks at the interests and possibilities of the employer, and a management that considers the needs of the employee. Also, the employer will have to constantly review his applied strategies (number of selected techniques, tools, rhythm of application, etc.) so that he can improve them, in order to obtain the best long-term results (Johnson, Finney, 2010).

Herzberg's motivation theory is one of the content theories of motivation. These attempt to explain the factors that motivate individuals through identifying and satisfying their individual needs, desires and the aims pursued to satisfy these desires.

Two-factor theory distinguishes between:

Motivators (challenging work, recognition for one's achievement, responsibility, opportunity to do something meaningful, involvement in decision making, sense of importance to an organization) that give positive satisfaction, arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself, such as recognition, achievement, or personal growth (Herzberg, 2014).

Hygiene factors (e. g. status, job security, salary, fringe benefits, work conditions, good pay, paid insurance, vacations) that do not give positive satisfaction or lead to higher motivation, though dissatisfaction results from their absence.

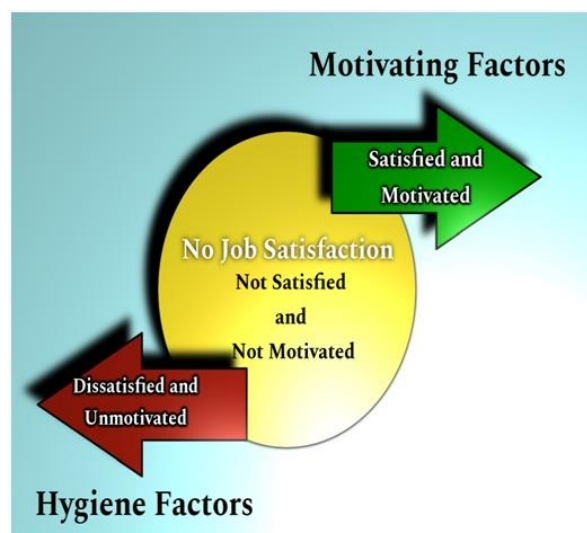


Figure 4 Explanation of Herzberg Theory (Agile-Mercurial.com, s.d.)

McClelland's theory says that everyone is driven by one of three needs: achievement, affiliation or power. Different people are motivated by different drivers, sounder standing what specifically motivates a person to complete a task can vastly improve the likelihood that they'll complete the assignment and do it well (McClelland, 1961).



Figure 5 Explanation of McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory (Crowjack, 2023)

After this foray into the definition of human resources and the presentation of motivation strategies, in the following chapter, we will present the objectives, goals and actions of the strategy of motivating human resources in rural tourism.

2.4 The objectives, goals and actions of the strategy for motivating the human resource in tourism.

The productivity and performance of the organization must increase and reach an optimal level to bring benefits. After this foray into the definition of human resources and the presentation of motivation strategies, in the following chapter, we will present the objectives, goals and actions of the strategy of motivating human resources in rural tourism.

A strategy, no matter how good it is, is only effective if it is accompanied by an open, modern management with a new vision, which implies the ability to influence the work behaviour of employees in the direction of obtaining superior performance.

The overall purpose of reward management is to support the achievement of the organization's strategic objectives, both long-term and short-term, by ensuring a well-motivated workforce with superior professional skills and high commitment (MANOLESCU, 2003). The mission of the rewards management is to ensure the balance between human aspirations and the competitive requirements imposed on the market, favouring the most rational use of all the organization's resources.

As for the reward management strategies, they define the organization's intentions in relation to the reward policies and systems to be developed to secure and motivate the necessary staff to achieve organizational objectives.

The purpose of the staff reward strategy is supporting initiatives in the field of employee recruitment and development, improving organizational performance and improving the climate of relations between employees, by considering salary negotiation processes.

The employee's compensation sums up all the material and monetary benefits, present and future, determined by the quality of the employee and the activity carried out by him. The components of the rewards, their size and weight are determined by the role, utility and social necessity of the activities/services provided or the products obtained. Reward decisions must be viewed strategically. The task of harmonizing and matching the organization's objectives with the reward system rests with the organization's management.

The reward system must be substantiated considering the following aspects: The organizational culture of the economic entity, the desired behavioural models, employee priorities, behaviour / reward synchronization relationships and ease of implementation. Within organizations, (Stan, 2012) it can be found that there are two types of reward strategies: strategies oriented towards the *position held within the organization*, which are based on the principle that all members of an entity are valuable and have a significant contribution to the achievement of the organization's objectives. Thus, the reward is proportional to the position of the job within the organizational structure and to the seniority of the job holder. These strategies target salary increases in the form of a percentage added to the current salary level, performance not being a criteria for granting benefits, the correlation being made especially with the increase in the cost of living.

Performance-oriented strategies are based on the *principle of rewarding employees* in direct relation to the level of their contribution to the achievement of the organization's goals and performance. These contributions must be possible to evaluate and measure, and the reward system must be differentiated, so that employees with higher performances will receive higher benefits than those who register poor performances, the latter may receive sanctions for not fully fulfilling the duties of the job (Bright, Cortes, 2019). Depending on the type of management and the targeted objectives, the benefits will be granted individually or to teams. Certain types of benefits may be given to the entire organization, but in this case exceptional individual or group performance will be rewarded separately.

Evaluating the effectiveness of a reward strategy must consider a set of clear and consistent objectives:

The certainty that employees who make major contributions will receive the appropriate recognition, so that other employees also feel the need to increase their work performance. Strengthening the appreciation that the organization gives to real performance while also highlighting employees who have special merits, in order to provide models to the collective of the organization, through an active and efficient communication system and ensuring various reward tools, so that they produce the intended effect (Gheorghiuță, 2018).

Confirmation of the fact that a combination of various reward tools has a synergistic motivational effect. Stimulating the behavioural models that management wants to promote within the

organization. Ensuring the recognition that high-performing employees deserve, from peers and management.

Since in any organization there is internal competition, the salary system cannot be completely fair, and the consequences can be negative, the management must take into account the fact that the drastic reduction of salary benefits in case of non-achievement of objectives can often have effects totally opposite intentions. For this reason, it is recommended to incentivize employees who exceed the set standards, both to reinforce these behaviours and to encourage the rest of the employees to work harder (Raymond, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, 2008).

A solution in this regard is training-motivation, which designates the totality of actions carried out by management or on their behalf, by which all employees are determined to fully use their availability (physical, intellectual, etc.) in order to achieve the performances set for each compartment or individual employee.

We must not exclude the fact that the employee reward system must translate into the results obtained by the organization, because they generate costs that are found in the final product, and the competition will sanction any increase in rates that does not bring an increase in the quality of services provided.

Given that in rural tourism we are talking about small businesses, which are not established by specialists in this field, often the systems and levels of financial reward for employees are designed chaotically, at random, without aiming at well-formulated objectives, without being planned and developed according to performance. Given that the economies of the countries evolve differently, together with the pressure of the associative formations of employees, there is often the need for salary increases that lead to inequity, the result can be costly and can cause dissatisfaction and demotivation among employees. Therefore, the reward system must be planned and oriented towards results, so that the financial resources spent are found in the results obtained, qualitatively and quantitatively, for the organization, and for the employees, to be consistent with the efforts made.

In establishing the reward system, several aspects will be taken into account (Stan, 2012):

The effect of applying the system must be to stimulate and reinforce the desired behaviours, informing the employee about the reasons that led to the awarding of the rewards. The existence of a clear and correct system for evaluating the performance of employees, so that there is no confusion about the importance and impact of the contributions made to the development of the organization. The management will ensure that at least half of the employees will receive at least one reward annually, for this the level of creativity and knowledge is important (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 2006). The importance of an immediate reward reaction mechanism, for employees to adequately value the moment and the level of motivation to increase.

A decisive factor for ensuring the progress of the organization and for developing the attachment of the employee to achieve the objectives is the management style implemented and its effect on the human resource (Țuclea, 2006). Thus, given the increasing complexity of economic relations and the demands of the organization's internal and external environment, the manager's authority must reflect not only his leadership position, but also the legitimate needs of employees to be recognized and to develop professionally and personally. In this sense, the participative management style approach can be considered the most appropriate management strategy, which however requires the following conditions to be met: research, knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors that characterize the company's environment; consideration of how economic trends and developments at local, national and international levels may affect the organization; adequate description and compliance with the company's objectives, in order to ensure their achievement; building and implementing clear and secure organization and control systems; Fulfilling the previously listed conditions generates the maintenance of a high level of involvement and motivation, which leads to in-depth knowledge of the workforce that needs to be motivated, so that the centres of interest that can be acted upon can be clear and also the ability to build and propose attractive and motivating offers for employees.

Human resource is the most important resource of the enterprise, but also the most difficult to manage. In the modern conception, employees are no longer recruited and selected, but are sought and attracted for their skills and competences, which contribute decisively to the development of the tourism enterprise.

Given that in rural tourism, human interaction is deeper and more visible than in classic tourism enterprises, it is necessary to develop the quality of the human resource so that the tourist package is appreciated by the consumer and he returns whenever possible (Stan, 2012).

In addition to the classic means of creating a state of motivation among employees, today there are a number of methods that require less financial resources spent on it, but greater creativity and openness of management is required for their application (Armstrong, 2006), not without taking into account consideration of individual differences between employees: creating the right framework and atmosphere that favours teamwork, creating good quality relationships between employees, as well as between management and employees, through information and transparency; establishing the company's objectives together with the employees and valorising their ideas and initiatives in this regard. Avoiding conflicts through competent and competitive management, under the conditions of respecting the right to speak and personal freedom. Favouring the transfer of knowledge and practical skills between employees. Ensuring the involvement of employees in the decision-making process, in order to make the most of everyone's potential. Ensuring the framework for the manifestation of ethical behaviours, mutual respect and justice. Ensuring the predictability of the

entity's evolution and clearly establishing the paths of achievement. Creating certainty for the employee that there is a professional future for him, in that group.

It is important that the employee who has special merits in the development of the organization, is named in front of the others and his contributions are made known to them, so that the management of the company knows and effectively uses the characteristics, skills and abilities of the employees, offering each of them suitable opportunities for to prove his worth in the company.

Conclusions and highlights for research

Considering the theoretical framework presented previously, the research part of this paper will have to take into account both the interests and opinions of the owners of tourist facilities belonging to rural tourism, as well as those of the employees of such companies. This is necessary to establish, on the one hand, the specifics of the tools commonly used by employers to motivate employees, and on the other hand, the input that employees can bring regarding what they believe they would like to undertake the employer, may be relevant for the selection and proposal of effective strategies in this field.

As it is shown in the theoretical framework of the paper, the human resource used in rural tourism and agrotourism has a certain specificity that the employer must take into account in the process of identifying and applying motivation strategies. These two chapters create a theoretical foundation of rural tourism and the motivation of the schools that work in this field, in order to make these terms better known and understood.

The motivation of employees in rural tourism can take different forms and it also varies from one unit to another. The forms it can take are: positive motivation; negative motivation; cognitive motivation; affective motivation; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; economic motivation and moral-spiritual motivation.

For these reasons, motivation is a decisive element in achieving success. All these elements that specifically characterize the human resource in rural tourism are important when effective motivational strategies are selected.

A summarize of the motivational theories:

Author	Theory	Element	Usage
Maslow	Hierarchy of needs or needs pyramid	Needs	physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem, and self-actualization

Herzberg	Bifactor	Appropriate qualification	By mapping out the importance of both
McClelland	Needs satisfaction	Mutual support	Valorisation of skills and abilities

Table no.4 Motivational theories

In conclusion, we believe that he is ready to carry out the quantitative research part and the detailed methodology will be found in chapter 3.

3 Research methods and methodology

3.1 Research Method

The research of natural, social, cultural or other phenomena requires structured work, based on scientific principles, validated research methods, techniques and tools that lead to correct and complete results.

When we talk about research methodology, we refer to a system of rigorously established principles and norms for the organization of the activity, through which research methods, procedures and techniques are developed. Any methodology is based on the principles that govern the field of study in which the research is carried out.

Although the principles guiding the research are theoretical, the methodology is the result of the interaction between theory and empirical research.

The concept of method represents a set of ways, rules, means of research, consciously appropriate in order to solve certain problems that constitute the purpose of the research. This ensemble is closely related to the nature, characteristics and content of the studied phenomenon, thus ensuring the correlation with the subject (Crăciun, 2015, p. 20).

In order to ensure the effectiveness of a method, it must result from a previous theory, which has given verified and validated practical results.

There must be a unity between theory and method, which manifests itself on three levels:

The normative plan - having the foundations in previous theories, the applied method has the role of premise for further research that can lead to a new theory;

The integration plan – through its results, the method makes it possible to explain the researched phenomena;

The epistemological and psychological level – the explanation of the researched phenomena also requires the assumption of a specific vision and approach.

Criteria	Types of methods	The Method
The relationship to the time factor	Transversal methods – reveal the relationships between the components of a phenomenon, at a given time	The Observation The Investigation The Test
	Longitudinal methods – study the evolution of phenomena in dynamics	The Biography The Case Study The Panel Studies
	Experimental Methods	The Experiment
	Quasi-experimental methods	The Investigation

The degree of intervention of the researcher on the object of study		The Survey The Challenged Biography
	Observation Methods	Document Study The observation
Number of units studied	Statistical Methods	The Investigation The Survey Mathematical-statistical analysis
	Case studies methods	biographically The case study Monograph
The place occupied in the process of empirical investigation	Information gathering methods	Statistical registration The field study The Investigation
	Information processing methods	Quantitative methods Qualitative methods
	Methods of interpreting research data	Comparative methods Interpretive methods

Table no.5 Classification of research methods

As shown in table 5 (Chelcea, Mărginean, Cauc, 2009, pg. 32-33), there is a wide variety of research methods, which are selected according to the purpose and objectives of the investigation carried out.

In this research, the quantitative method has been chosen as a research method. The quantitative method, used in the present research, is part of the category of information processing methods, in which the data take numerical forms (Creswell, 2009), with the aim of determining the frequency of certain attitudes, opinions, the most used tool being the questionnaire. This method is rational, the evaluation and investigation of phenomena is done by measuring and statistical processing of information, facilitating abstraction and generalization.

The quantitative research method presents several advantages in use:

Effective use of the time factor, because it can be systematized, structured and applied on rational bases, resorting to measuring the phenomenon and using symbolic elements in expression, operating with previously built formal structures.

Presents solid arguments for validating the results obtained and the conclusions formulated;

Makes it possible to generalize the conclusions;

Allows axiomatization and by extension, construction and theoretical reconstruction in the field of investigation.

By comparison, the qualitative method includes a wide variety of approaches, numerical data are not used, aiming not at measurement, but at describing a phenomenon, presupposing interpretation and explanation. The qualitative method involves the collection of facts/materials or empirical data (cases, personal experiences, reports, etc.) that are subjected to analysis and serve to identify different moments in the dynamics of a phenomenon, the description and evolution of the investigated units.

3.2 Research process

A research process includes going through a set of logically linked stages, during which a series of tools and working techniques are used, in order to collect relevant information for the subject under investigation, process and interpret the information, formulate conclusions and, where appropriate, identify solutions for their practical application.

research purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - definitions, key concepts and theories about rural tourism and human resources from rural tourism. - strategies for motivating the human resource in rural tourism. -information on how the need for human resources in rural tourism can be covered, as well as what could be the ways in which a guest house owner can motivate his employees so that they show loyalty and work hard to make the business work
objectives	identify and describe selected strategies for motivating the human resource in rural tourism
research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -quantitative method -questionnaires construction -Table no 8

Data collection	Webropol platform
data analyses	-Spearman correlations -U Mann Whitney test
research results	-motivational tools and mechanisms based on chosen motivational theories

Table no.6 Overlay Matrix – Research process

According to the model proposed by Sackett & Larson Jr. (figure 5), the starting point in the process consists in formulating one (or more) questions, starting from the assumption that finding out the answer finds its meaning in reaching a theoretical or applied objective. The development of the stages is linear, following the selection of the research method, with the development of work tools and analysis procedures, the implementation of the study. A particularly important moment (as important as the formulation of the question to which the answer is sought), is the formulation of conclusions, related to the objective that the research had in mind.

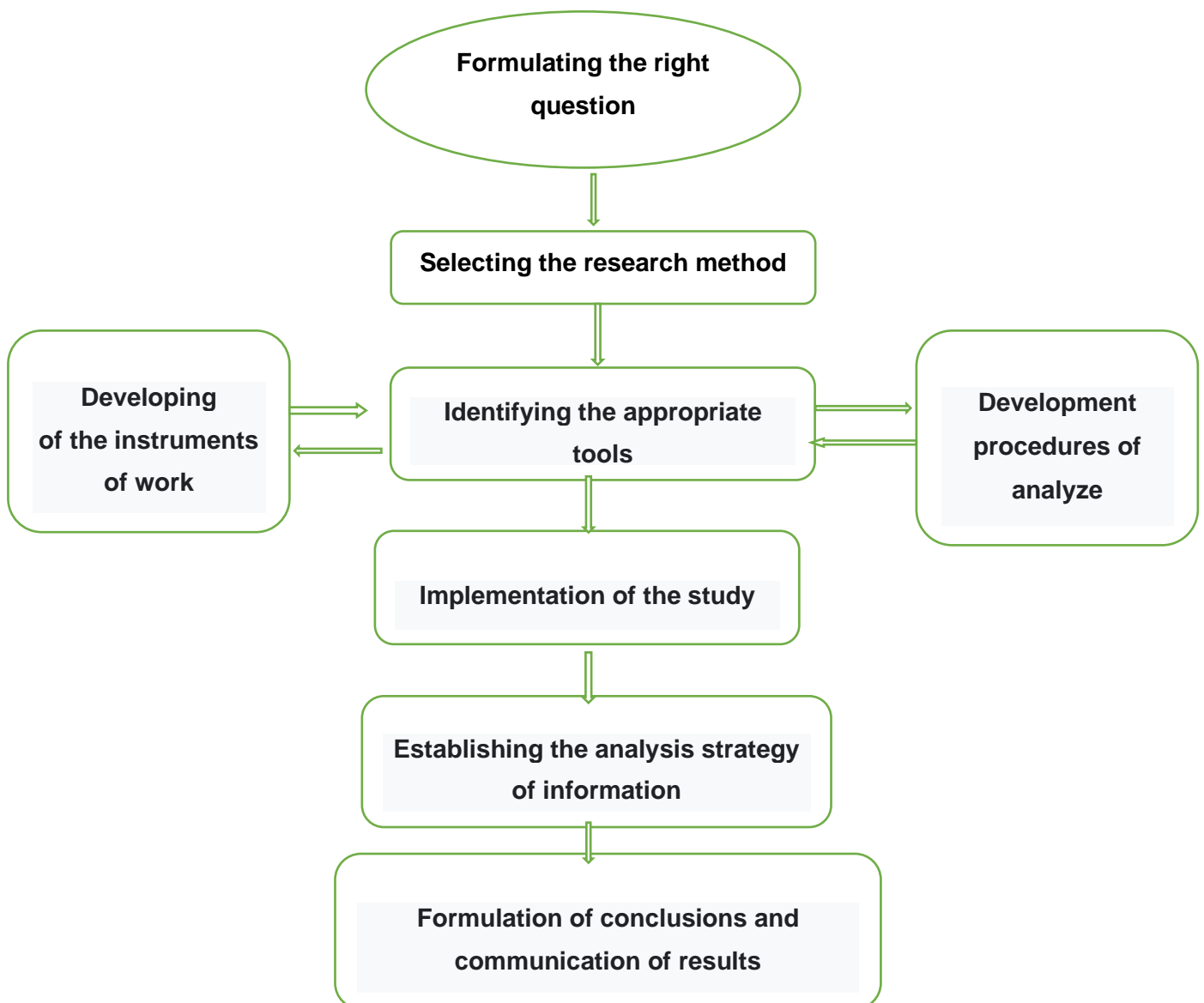


Figure 6 Model of a research process (Sackett, Larson Jr., 1990)

Another model for approaching research processes is the one developed by Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, who come up with an approach that puts theory in the center and that has a cyclical character (fig. 5).

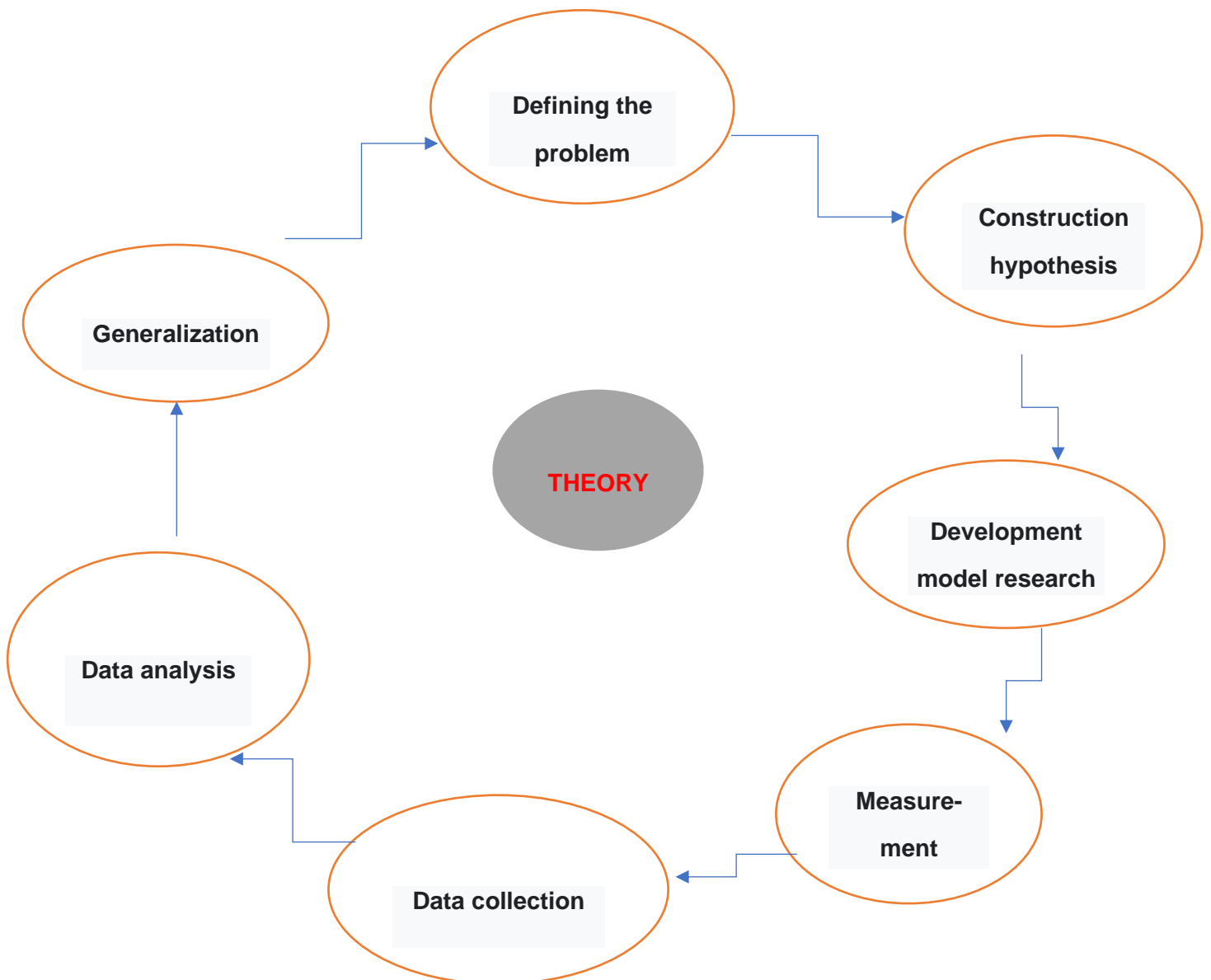


Figure 7 Model of a research process (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, 2000)

This model emphasizes the importance of theory in research and sees the process as an opportunity to improve the theoretical framework.

All models have as their starting point the questioning of reality and the clear formulation of a problem that, once solved, would allow both the expansion of the field of theoretical knowledge and the identification of practical solutions to solve the investigated problem.

In the present research, the quantitative research method was chosen, using the Hershey (Hershey, Jacobs-Lawson, Thomas, 2006) model and having the Questionnaire as the main working tool. The investigated sample consisted of owners of agro-tourism facilities in Romania, as well as employees in this field. The data collection will be done through Webropol, because they can be applied remotely, they are intuitive, easy to use, having as an advantage the possibility of an initial synthesis of the data. Afterwards, a comparative analysis will be made between the information collected from employers and employees. Based on the research, appropriate motivational tools will be identified for the staff employed in rural tourism.

The theories that were the basis of establishing the problem to be researched and the research process are: Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory; David McClelland's theory of motivation; Friedrich Herzberg's bifactor theory.

Although there are cases where some people contradict this theory (they move on to satisfy higher-order needs without fully satisfying their basic needs), Maslow's theory is used in human resource management and motivation because it provides a clear and relatively simple perspective on the motivational processes of individuals.

David McClelland's theory of motivation identifies three types of motivation shared by all people: the need for affiliation, the need for achievement, and the need for power (Royle, Hall, 2012). McClelland shows that motivation must be understood as an unconscious process, similar to psychoanalytic approaches.

The need for affiliation refers to the manifestation of strong desires to belong to social groups, and individuals who feel this type of motivation tend to accept the opinions and preferences of those around them, choose collaboration instead of competition, do not accept risk and uncertainty.

The need for achievement is based on drives that cause individuals to strive to achieve high goals, manage calculated risk, prefer to work alone, but want feedback on how they have completed their tasks. McClelland is of the opinion that the level reached by an individual's need for achievement is influenced both by his ability to set goals, by the stability of the internal locus of control, and by the way his parents stimulated his spirit of independence during childhood.

Herzberg's bifactor theory started from the finding that the author made during some research, that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate dimensions of the motivational phenomenon (Sachau, 2007). The factors associated with satisfaction are: recognition, responsibility, the possibility of advancement, personal development and the work itself. (Herzberg, 2014) These are motivational factors. The factors associated with dissatisfaction are: supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations in the work group, salary level, job security, HR policies of the organization.

Dissatisfaction factors are also called hygiene factors which, when they have acceptable levels, reduce dissatisfaction, but do not necessarily lead to high levels of motivation, but when they are missing, they act as a source of dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's theory is used in the HR policies of organizations because it shows how motivation correlates with the work environment and rewards, the most important role being the motivational factors.

As it is shown in Table 4, there are a wide variety of ways of collecting data and information that are used in research. The quantitative method mainly involves the use of questionnaires, both for accuracy and for the fact that numerical data can be collected and processed with the help of statistical tools, the results being possible to rank and compare.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used tool in sociological research, in marketing research, in psychology and psychiatry, in fact, in any field that investigates human desires, feelings, orientations, habits. The accuracy of decisions in management, entrepreneurship, human resources, depends on the quality of the research that provided the information that was the basis of the decision-making process. In this sense, the design of a research must take into account the type and characteristics of the information collection tool that is used.

The questionnaire is an investigative tool composed of a set of relevant, meaningful questions, correlated with the research objectives, and the answers must help to elucidate the problem that triggered the process (Constantinescu, 2011).

The design of a questionnaire starts from the correct forecasting of the time needed to be able to obtain an effective investigative tool, taking into account the fact that:

The questions in the questionnaire must be formulated in such a way that the answers contribute to elucidating and solving the problem;

To have control mechanisms on the correctness of the collected information;

To have an optimal number of items, so that the respondent does not give up completing it;

The questions should be formulated in such a way that it is easy to understand and process for the respondent;

The questionnaire must go through a testing process before its use in research, which increases the time of development and validation.

The way of formulating the statements in the questionnaire must fully target the objectives of the research. If one of the items does not refer to the main objective or to one of the secondary objectives (if they exist), it must no longer be found in the final form of the instrument. In the same vein, if the answers to a question do not contribute to the achievement of the set objective, then the research will prove incomplete. Thus, for a good correlation of the stages and objectives with the

results obtained, it will be necessary to start with establishing the objectives, the research variables and then continue with the formulation of the questionnaire items.

An important requirement in constructing a questionnaire is estimating response times, as many respondents are discouraged by the long time required to complete it. In this case, the research results will not be relevant because the number of responses will be too low.

In the specialized literature, there are a number of recommendations on how to construct the questionnaire (Borgatti, 1998): It is recommended that the vocabulary and wording used be appropriate for the group of respondents (abbreviations, professional jargon, etc.); Avoiding ambiguous, vague, unclear formulations, to which an exact answer cannot be given; Avoiding wording that can be interpreted differently by respondents (frequent, regular, etc.); Avoiding wording that addresses the emotional area of the respondent or that may harm self-respect (tendentia wording); Avoiding the use of wording that causes the respondent to give a "correct" answer and not an honest one; Avoiding questions that also contain the essence of the answer (it's not like that...); Avoiding formulations that contain more adjectives and verbs than necessary; Avoiding formulations that actually contain two questions in one; Avoiding statements that include future intentions of the respondent, because there is no certainty that they will materialize; Avoiding formulations in which negations or double negations are found.

Also, the questionnaire items will have a certain order and logic in the construction of the questionnaire (Constantinescu, 2011);

The order of the questions will follow the principle "from general to particular", to ensure the respondent's familiarity with the topic;

The order of the questions will respect the principle "from simple to complex" in order not to generate a rejection reaction in the respondent;

The order in which the questions will be found in the questionnaire will follow the principle "from real to abstract";

Closed questions will be placed at the beginning of the questionnaire;

The questionnaire will contain the relevant questions for the research in the first part;

The questions aimed at placing the respondent in certain demographic categories will be placed in the last part of the questionnaire.

Generally, an effective questionnaire will be structured in three parts to ensure logic and internal consistency of content: introductory questions (so-called icebreakers), content questions and descriptive questions (Cătoi, 2003).

The questionnaire will contain closed questions and open questions. Open-ended questions allow for a free answer, at the respondent's disposal and wording, and closed-ended questions prompt

the respondent to select one or more answers from a predetermined list. Using these types of questions has a number of advantages and disadvantages (Borgatti, 1998), as shown in table 6.

Question type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Closed-ended question	Easy and quick to answer Answers across respondents easy to compare Answers easier to analyze on computer Response choices make question clearer Easy to replicate study	Can put ideas in respondent's head Respondents also have no opinion can answer anyway Respondents can feel constrained/frustrated Many choices can be confusing Can't tell if respondents misinterpreted the question Fine distinctions may be lost Critical mistakes easy to make Force respondents into simple responses
Open-ended question	Permit unlimited number of answers Respondents can qualify and clarify responses Can find the unanticipated Reveal respondent thinking processes	Respondents give answers on different level of detail Answers can be irrelevant Inarticulate or forgetful respondent's are at disadvantage Coding responses is subjective and tedious Requires more respondent's time and effort Intimidates respondents When respondent omits a response, can't tell if it's because of belief or just forgetfulness

Table 7. Advantages and disadvantages of using closed/open questions.

The present research is based on the application and processing of the results of two distinct questionnaires, a questionnaire addressed to employees who work in tourist reception units included in the category of rural tourism and a questionnaire addressed to the owners or managers of such companies. The questionnaire is the most used method in undergraduate thesis research, quantitative level and the preferred instrument for students. As a justification for the use of the

questionnaire, has been taken into account following aspects: it is relevant for the specifics of the topic studied and the objectives of the research, the time available to the respondent, the material resources available to the researcher; the quality and number of available operators; the type of population to which the questionnaire is addressed to. The construction of the questionnaires started from the need to collect the main information related to the needs of employees and employers (Theory of Maslow, McClelland and Herzberg (appreciation, belonging, self-esteem-Maslow, affiliation-McClelland, interpersonal relations-Herzberg)--subchapter 3.5. The questionnaire construction technique, as it is known in the wider world, involves the inclusion in the questionnaire of at least the following categories of questions: Opening questions like general questions, targeted questions can be addressed in the form of closed, open questions, with predetermined or freely chosen answers.

After constructing the questionnaire, as an academic world practices, the internal validation of the questionnaire is supposed to be done. Determining the degree of consistency of the questionnaire, the validity of the construct (questionnaire), etc. This stage has been ignored because the questionnaires used in this research are unique, they are not of interest to other researchers, they are not widely used (no one will take me back as the object of my research and will not reuse my questionnaires, but in the situation in which they want to continue the research on the same topic, he will build his own questionnaires)

Presentation of the questionnaire addressed to employees.

The questionnaire applied to the employees of the tourist reception units (Appendix 1) included in the research is made up of 11 distinct items, 10 closed questions (with an answer of your choice) and 1 question with an open answer, as follows: 2 demographic items, showing the age category and gender of the respondent (item 1 and 2); 3 items that show the respondent's work experience (the period of time worked in the boarding house), the daily work schedule and the number of breaks that the manager grants (items 3, 4, 5); 2 items investigating the degree of satisfaction felt by the respondent at his workplace and the quality of the relationship he has with the employer (item 6 and 8); item showing the opportunities for promotion to a higher position (item 7); 1 item that investigates the types of motivational factors from the job held, which the respondent prefers (item 9); 1 item that shows which is the most important motivational factor, which can cause the employee to take on more tasks at work (item 10); 1 item that reflects the quality of the employee's work, through the opinion expressed by customers (item 11).

A simpler survey instrument with few items was preferred because it was taken into account that employees need to make use of work time and the response was not wanted to affect work breaks. Also, the questions are simple, with optional answers, in order to be able to carry out statistical processing and obtain numerical information, allowing comparisons, rankings and generalizations.

Presentation of the questionnaire addressed to the owners (managers) of rural tourism reception units.

The questionnaire addressed to the owners of rural tourism reception units (Appendix 2) consists of 11 items, 3 being open questions (the answer being formulated by the respondent) and 8 being closed questions (the answer being optional): 4 questions (3 open and one closed) that show the year of establishment of the reception unit, the location and the advantages it capitalizes on (relief, natural resources, other tourist attractions), the size of the guesthouse, as well as the types of services it offers (items 1, 2, 3 and 4); 1 item that can show the amount of work required during busy periods, to cover the company's needs (item 5); 1 item indicating the number of employees and the complexity of positions in the company (item 6); 1 item showing the quality of the employer-employee relationship (item 7); 1 item indicating the average duration of an employment contract (item 8); 1 item that investigates the reasons why employees leave the workplace, in favor of other opportunities offered by other employers (item 9); 1 item showing the specific motivation methods used by the owner of the receiving unit (item 10); 1 item (similar to the last item in the questionnaire intended for employees), aimed at the degree of satisfaction expressed by customers, regarding the quality of the services offered.

Following the analysis of the information collected from the application of the two questionnaires, the needs of the employees and their motivational mechanisms will be identified. This information can be used to propose solutions for motivating and retaining valuable employees, as well as integrating and motivating new employees.

For the confirmation of the experiment stage, a set of two questionnaires were applied, based on the three theories that were the basis of the work, namely Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory; David McClelland's theory of motivation; Friedrich Herzberg's bifactor theory, which will contribute to solving the research problem, which aims at the motivation strategies of employees who work in rural tourism. The questionnaires were applied to both employees and employers through the Webropol platform.

The purpose of the ascertainment experiment was based on the analysis of the answers provided by the respondents, by using the automatic calculation program from Windows, SPSS version 20. All the data analyzed with the statistical program SPSS can be found in the appendices of the work.

3.2.2 Data acquisition methods

The information was collected during the period May 2023 – July 2023. The research was carried out on a group of 58 employees and 14 employers, aged between 18-60 years, the group being heterogeneous from the perspective of other criteria, such as the social environment and the economic level of the family they come from, the level of training, etc. The selection was carried out by

simple random sampling, thus resulting in a heterogeneous group, which reveals the qualitative differences at the level of motivation strategies. The subjects were selected from 14 rural guesthouses in Romania, located in various geographical areas, the environment of origin being the rural one for the whole lot. The 14 rural guesthouses were the only ones to respond from a randomly selected group of 35 rural guesthouses. They were contacted through email, shortly presenting the research carried out and asking them to kindly take part in it. The questionnaire is used as a data collection technique, Data collection was carried out on the Webropol platform. Through this platform, the questionnaire has been sent to both employees and employers. Also, based on the answers received from both employees and employers, a database was created on the Webropol platform.

I contacted the target audience (employee + employer) through the Webropol platform by sending questionnaire links to the email of the agro-tourism guesthouses, the responses received to the questionnaires being also on the Webropol platform. The questionnaire was opened for the respondents for a period of 15 days.

3.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed with the help of coding. For the statistical-mathematical analysis in SPSS, it was necessary to transform the questions from the questionnaires into variables. They are characterized by name, type, label, values and measures. Have been set as ordinal variables those that bring general information about employees, such as age and gender; have been set as variables with a nominal character those that offer the possibility of a free answer from the interviewee, and the variables that bring concrete data in support of research received the measure type as scale.

Initially, the distribution of respondents according to age and gender was analyzed. More than half of the respondents are aged between 18 and 35 (Figure 8). Out of the total of 58 respondents, the share of women constituted 45%, and that of men 55%. (Figure 9). Note that no gender discrimination was committed, practically both women and men are represented in the sample to the same extent. After collecting the data, we created a database, which will be analyzed in SPSS. The data analysis was carried out in SPSS to statistically and mathematically prove the truth value of the hypothesis. In chapter 1, the question from which I started the research was also the title of the thesis, i.e. the strategies for motivating employees in agro-tourism. The analysis of the collected data (the answers given by the respondents) was done by using the automatic calculation program from Windows, SPSS version 20. All the data analyzed with the SPSS statistical program can be found in the appendices of the paper. Non-parametric statistical tests are used to compare the means of two sets of scores whose distribution is not normal (bell-shaped). Non-parametric tests are also called rank tests because they are based on the transformation of scores into ranks. The use of

these tests, even if they are less efficient than parametric tests in the sense that they have a lower probability of producing statistically significant results, is preferred in some situations because the condition of normal distribution on a scale with equal intervals must not be satisfied.

Graphic representation of the characteristics of the researched group according to age and gender.

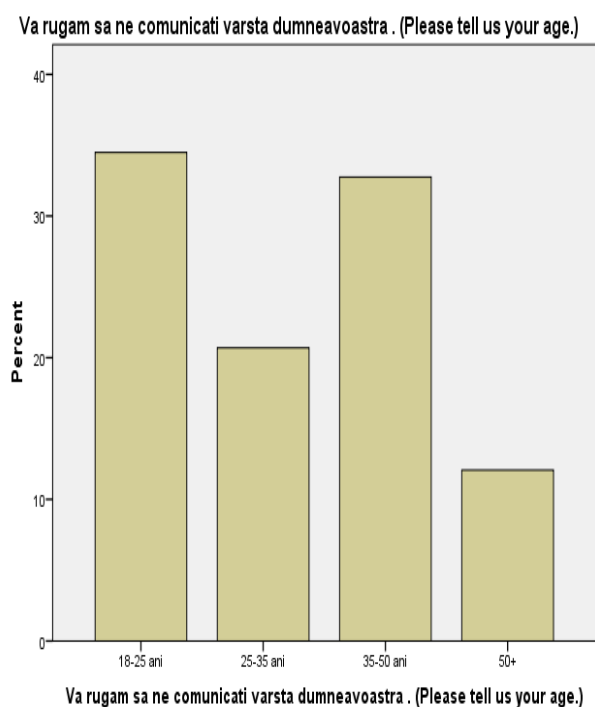


Figure no 8. Age chart

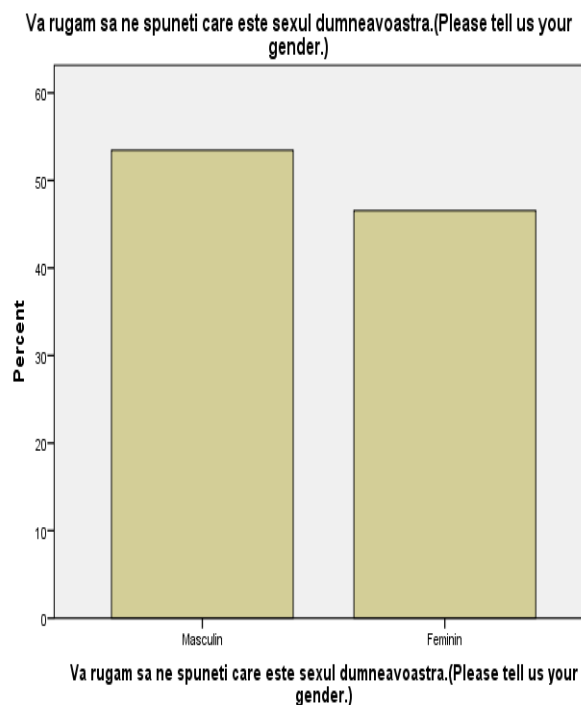


Figure no 9. Sex chart

3.4 Ethics in research

Research ethics is the way in which moral principles – the perception of what is right and what is wrong – are applied throughout the research process: planning, conducting and reporting (Myers, 2009)). Carrying out a the research requires recognition of the ethical rules and principles of the companies and employees involved in the research. There was an ethical dilemma regarding the possibility of leaving the questionnaire completely anonymous or allowing the researcher to see the names of the respondents. The results could have provided more useful information for the future, but if there was no anonymity, it would be a breach in GDPR (the legislation in force regarding the protection of personal data). In analyzing the data, it was important to understand the reliability of the data and its limitations. The ethical responsibility of the researcher was to avoid over-interpretation of the data, to avoid misunderstandings and confusion.

3.5 Research results

This chapter presents the results and offers suggestions regarding the motivation methods of rural tourism employees. The order of importance of these motivations was not studied. The analysis of

the answers provided by the employees was made through the lens of the three theories Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, David McClelland's theory of motivation and Friedrich Herzberg's bifactor theory.

In order to answer the research questions, a set of two questionnaires were applied, based on the three theories that were the basis of the work, namely Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory; David McClelland's theory of motivation; Friedrich Herzberg's bifactor theory, which will contribute to solving the research problem and which aims at the motivation strategies of employees working in rural tourism. The questionnaires were applied to both employees and employers through the Webropol platform.

Survey results show that when respondents talk about appreciation, they attach emotion and commitment to it. Consequently, it could be assumed that a leader who is able to appeal to empathy and show respect and appreciation can build a strong relationship with his subordinates, leading to a high level of employee engagement. In other words, without being able to create a sense of appreciation, effective communication and an atmosphere of trust do not have as strong an effect on employee motivation. This thesis is not structured similar to a doctoral research, as such I do not use specific working hypotheses to compose and confirm or deny a general hypothesis. The correlations made between the selected variables has only the role of highlighting, from a statistical-mathematical point of view, the best strategies for motivating the staff in Romanian rural tourism on the selected samples. Correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strong the relationship is between them or the degree of association between the two. The Spearman correlation assumes a quasilinear relationship between 2 variables and is less affected by outliers. It is used in the situation where a variable or all the variables present a pronounced asymmetry.

One aspect analyzed in the thesis was related to motivational factors versus satisfaction factors. There is a connection between Q6 and Q8 from employee's questionnaire, represented by an $\rho = 0.583$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ and $N = 58$, respectively the employee's relationship with the employer and satisfaction with the workplace. Thus, according to Maslow (love and belonging, self-esteem) in correlation with McClelland (affiliation) and Herzberg (interpersonal relationships) it can be concluded that employees who have an amicable relationship with the employer are satisfied with their workplace.

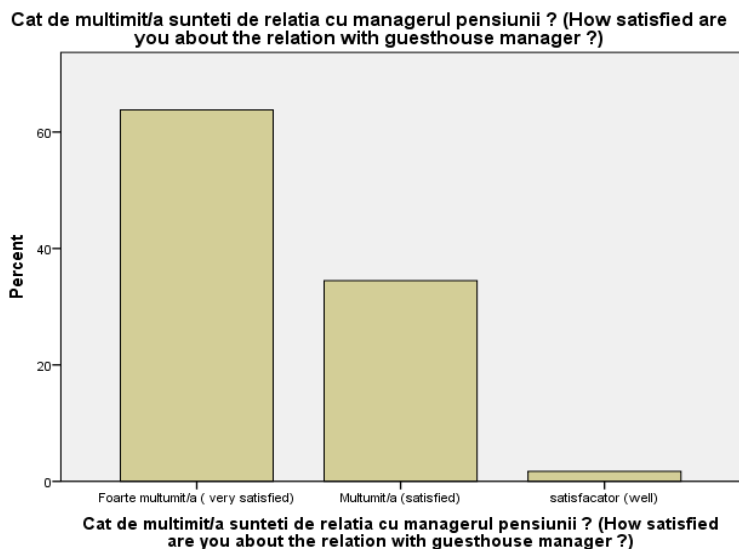


Figure no 10

From the analysis of questions Q9, Q8, Q6 and Q11, it appears that the possibility of advancement to another position is not closely related to the motivation on the part of the employers, nor to the relationship with the manager, nor to the satisfaction from the current workplace, nor to the satisfaction of the clients. Most likely, professional and personal skills (according to (McClelland, 1961) and (Herzberg, 2014) theories) are the only basis for promotion.

Q7-Q6 rho = -0.079, $p = 0.557 > 0.05$, N = 58

Q7-Q8 rho= -0.066, $p = 0.625 > 0.05$, N= 58

Q7-Q9 rho= 0.157, $p = 0.239 > 0.05$, N= 58

Q7-Q11 rho= 0.183, $p = 0.170 > 0.05$, N=58

The analysis of questions Q6 and Q9, where rho= 0.015, $p = 0.910 > 0.05$ and N=58, which means a lack of a strong correlation between these variables, leads to the finding that employees obtain satisfactory incomes so that they do not expect additional material motivations from the employer, showing the feeling of security and stability (according to Maslow's and Mc Clelland's theories).

The idea that incentive pay, in which employees are given an opportunity to earn more money if they produce more, works for some but not for others. Every employee, consciously or not, sets a personal salary level at which they are satisfied. Until the employee reaches this level, money motivates, after that, it doesn't.

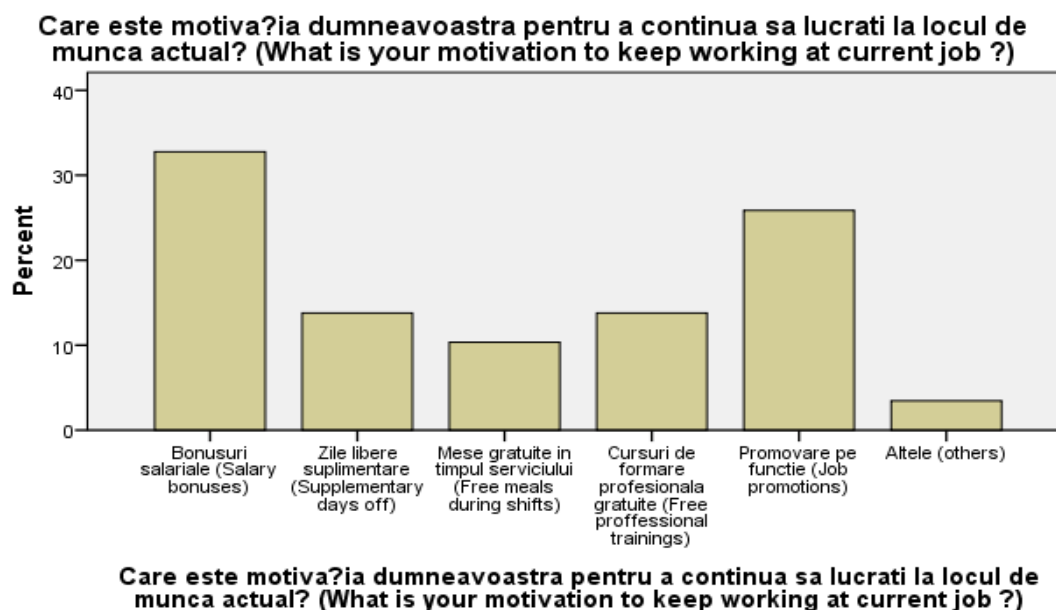


Figure 11. Presentation of the results of the questionnaire applied to employers.

From the analysis of the employers' answers to the applied questionnaire, two relevant aspects for the present paper are highlighted:

A strong correlation $\rho = -0.614$, $p = 0.020 < 0.05$, $N = 14$ between questions Q8 and Q7 is observed. The better the employer knows the employee, the longer the duration of the employment contract (it is in accordance with (MASLOW, 2013)'s theory regarding security).

Job satisfaction is of great importance to managers because it is expected that a satisfied employee will be able to perform better. There is a direct link between lack of performance and job satisfaction (Figure 12).

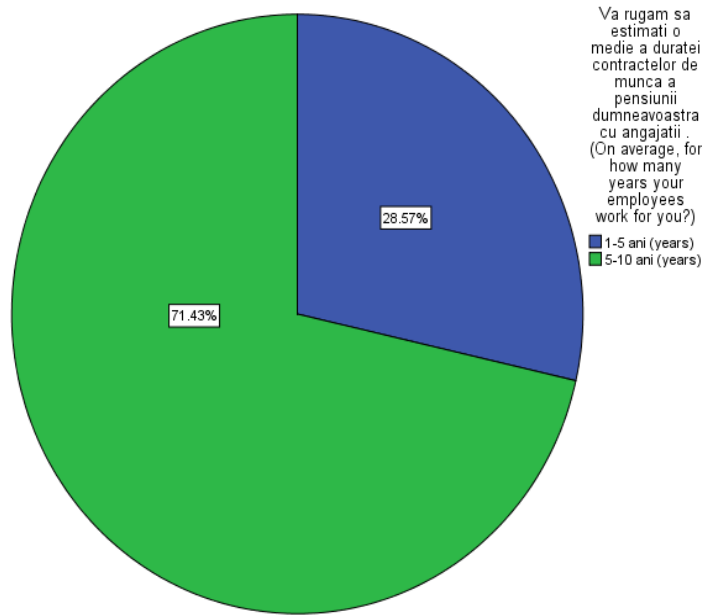


Figure 12. Duration of employment contracts

Employers' concern to obtain maximum involvement from their employees must take into account both the needs of each individual and the specific motivations that arise at the group level. The results indicated that an employer builds an emotional connection with the employee, and this leads to the feeling of being understood and treated as an individual. The business will work better if its employees are loyal, if they feel useful and wanted, if they feel respected and if they feel their opinion matters. (Figure 13)

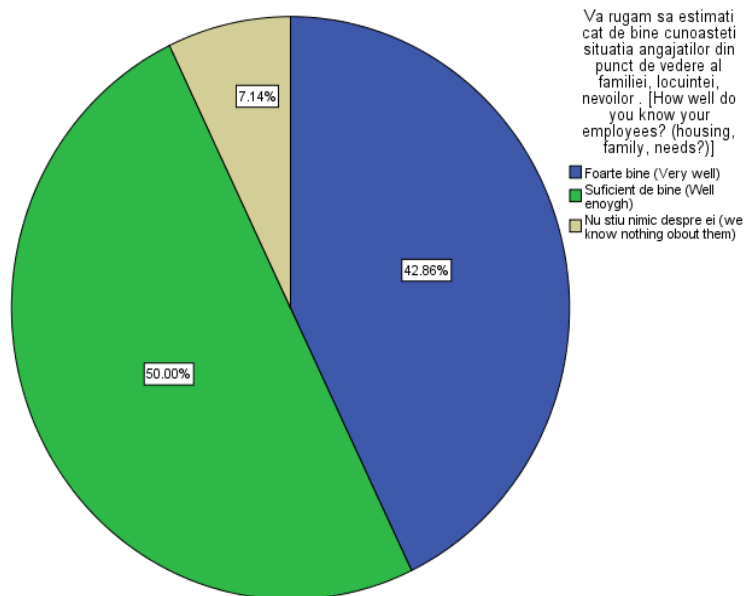


Figure 13. How well employer knows employees.

Notice that the more amicable the relationship between the employer and the employee is, the better the clients' appreciation of the guesthouses' services.

Integration of individual needs and aspirations in needs and objectives organizational effect is the satisfaction and satisfaction of the clients in the boarding house, therefore implicitly the increase of the employer's profit. (figure 14)

Worthy of attention is the correlation between the answers to questions Q7 and Q11, $\rho = -0.524$, $p = 0.054$, $N = 14$.

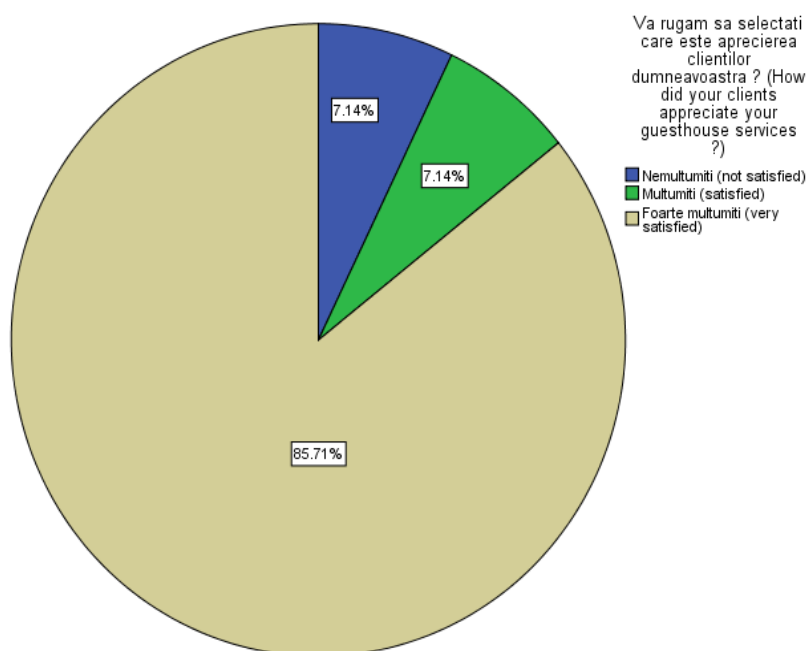


Figure 14. Clients appreciation.

On the other hand, starting from the objective of this thesis, namely *“the purpose of this research is to identify and describe some strategies for motivating the human resource in rural tourism, in order to increase the efficiency of the activity”*, from those two questionnaires the questions that highlight the best answer to our research: **How satisfied are you about the relationship with guesthouse manager?** and **What is your motivation to keep working at your current job?** were selected for a joint database to be analyzed.

To compare the scores on the variables **How satisfied are you about the relationship with guesthouse manager?** and **What is your motivation to keep working at current job?** of the two groups, employees and employers, the non-parametric U Mann-Whitney statistical test was used with the aim of revealing the differences of opinion between the two groups. **Note 1:** although the questionnaires are different and applied strictly to the target groups, each of the two questions above aim to highlight, the first question on the one hand, the degree of satisfaction and the

importance of the relationship between employees and employers, and, the second question on the other hand, to highlight the most frequent ways of material motivation for employees (see descriptive in Appendix 6). **Note 2:** The first variable above contains the scores from both groups to the question about satisfaction related to the employee-employer interpersonal relationship, even if the questions in the two questionnaires are formulated differently, more precisely one in the opposite sense of the other; the second question is composed of five scale variables, one for each answer in the questionnaire. The Mann-Whitney U test can be used both on small groups and on large groups, having no limitation in this sense since, being a non-parametric test, it makes fewer assumptions about the characteristics of the population from which the data came. Mann-Whitney U does not test the differences between the mean scores, but tests the differences between the scores transformed into ranks, although they are less effective than its parametric equivalent (t Student). However, the significance of 5% assures us in our research that the results of the Mann-Whitney U test are statistically significant.

From the two tables (Appendix 5) the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the variable scores Q8 – satisfaction related to the employee-employer relationship do not statistically significantly differ ($U=314.50$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{bidirectional}=0.129>0.05$) between the answers of the employees and those of the employers. Taking into account the average scores of employees $M=34.92$, close to the average scores of employers $M=43.04$, the interviewed employees consider that the employee-employer relationship is a motivating factor, which is in accordance with the employers.
2. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the scores of the variable Q9_r1 – the motivation related to salary bonuses differ significantly statistically ($U=191.00$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{bidirectional}=0.000<0.05$) between the answers of employees and those of employers. Taking into account the average scores of employees $M=32.79$ much lower than the average scores of employers $M=51.86$, this difference shows that the interviewed employees are not motivated by salary bonuses, while employers consider offering salary bonuses as a form of employee motivation.
3. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the scores of the variable Q9_r2 – the motivation related to additional free days differ significantly statistically ($U=234.00$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{bidirectional}=0.001<0.05$) between the answers of the employees and those of the employers. Taking into account the average scores of employees $M=33.53$ much lower than the average scores of employers $M=48.79$, this difference shows that the interviewed employees are not motivated by additional free days, while employers consider offering additional free days as a form of employee motivation.

4. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the scores of the variable Q9_r3 – the motivation related to free meals during work differ significantly statistically ($U=129.00$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{\text{bidirectional}}=0.000<0.05$) between the answers of employees and those of employers. Taking into account the average scores of employees $M=31.72$ much lower than the average scores of employers $M=56.29$, it is obvious that the interviewed employees are not motivated by free meals during work, while employers consider offering free meals during work as a form of motivation of employees.
5. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the scores of the variable Q9_r4 – motivation related to advanced training courses differ significantly statistically ($U=288.00$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{\text{bidirectional}}=0.014<0.05$) between the answers of employees and those of employers. Taking into account the average scores of employees $M=34.47$ lower than the average scores of employers $M=44.93$, this difference shows that the interviewed employees are not motivated by training courses, while employers consider offering training courses as a form of employee motivation.
6. The U Mann-Whitney test shows that the scores of the variable Q9_r5 – the motivation related to promotion by function do not differ significantly statistically ($U=366.00$, $N1=58$, $N2=14$, $p_{\text{bidirectional}}=0.463>0.05$) between the answers of employees and those of employers. Taking into account the average scores of the employees $M=35.81$, close to the average scores of the employers $M=39.36$, it is obvious that the interviewed employees consider promotion on the job as motivation in accordance with the employers.

In conclusion, in accordance with the three theories that were the basis of the research, the analysis reveals that the employer who establishes an interpersonal relationship with employees, who knows the employees well, their needs and problems, his family, can establish a long-term contractual relationship with the employees, having benefits on both sides. As a direct effect of the good relationship between employer and employee, the job promotion is the second good motivation that could be taken into account. Consequently, support was seen as a gesture of trustworthy and ethical behavior.

4 Discussion

4.1 Consideration of results

Summarizing the different definitions of rural tourism presented in chapter 2, we can say that rural tourism is a form of tourism that includes units that use only rural tourist guesthouses and agro-tourism guesthouses for accommodation and meals, benefiting from an unpolluted and picturesque environment, tourist attractions natural and cultural-historical values, traditions and customs present in the rural environment. Employee motivation is the key element that determines and directs employees towards certain results or outcomes. The lack of adequate staff motivation generates a multitude of problems at the organizational level.

The present work, from our point of view, brings the following contributions at a scientific and theoretical level: the development of a questionnaire that provides an overview of the factors that motivate employees and that increase their level of satisfaction, as well as their impact on the state of happiness of individuals, and then the analysis of existing correlations between employee motivation and the different constructs used; citing the most important works in the field; the analysis of specialized works regarding the motivation of employees and rural tourism; defining all the concepts that underlie the creation of the motivational model.

The function of coordination and organization involves, on the part of the employers, the training of the human resource in the achievement of the objectives with the achievement of a desired level of performance. Therefore, when fulfilling the function of training and motivating employees, employers have the task of making employees understand that the better they use their own potential, they can contribute at the same time to the fulfillment of their own and organizational objectives.

In this context, employers must consider the following aspects: employees fulfill different roles that determine their needs and behavior; every employee has a unique personality, through which he is distinguished from the others, potential, interests, ambitions, behavior, so it becomes necessary to treat employees differently; interpersonal relations must be based on the principle of loyalty.

Employers who want to increase the motivation of the workforce in rural tourism must take into account several important elements. The employer must harmonize the granting of rewards in accordance with the different needs of the employees. In order to motivate correctly, the employer must establish a link between performance and reward. Employers can develop high but realistic expectations for employee performance and, at the same time, motivate employees to perceive that they are capable of the desired performance through normal efforts.

In this research, the main technique for motivating employees is good interpersonal relationship with the employer. Since the guesthouse's employees are mostly young, job promotion is a very good motivating factor, but the main factor that determines a lasting contractual relationship, with benefits for both parties, is the interpersonal relationship between employee and employer.

Another motivating factor, which can be taken into account is the favorable environment framework. The guesthouse manager is aware that job satisfaction is very important for any employee, including the conditions in which each employee works, the relationships between employees, maintaining a pleasant climate among the guesthouse employees, rewarding according to results, communication and constructive dialogue. It is known that for short periods of time, employees can be motivated by various material or moral incentives, but only a good organizational climate can support their long-term motivation.

Employees are paid for their work, but many employers offer rewards for exceptional results. The expression "exceptional results" does not reflect a fixed value but varies from one position to another, from one organization to another, therefore the manager must recognize and reward truly exceptional results.

4.2 Further research

The analysis and synthesis of good motivational practices within rural guesthouses in Romania, shows that the salary policy is not the only element with a mobilizing character on the employee's motivational behavior. The absolutization of the role of salary and other material rewards in motivating employees is diminished by other alternative and/or complementary ways of motivation. Next, five motivational tools and mechanisms, linked to the motivational theories studied in this report, which can lead to an increase in the work satisfaction of the organization's employees and the added value for it, are presented.

Proposed motivational elements	A. Maslow theory of hierarchy of needs		F. Herzberg's bifactor theory		D. McClelland's motivational theory	
	Needs	Variables	Needs	Variables	Needs	Variables
Bonuses for employees	Physiological Needs	Q9	Hygiene factors	Q9	Existential needs	Q9
Favorable environment framework	Security Needs	Q3	Hygiene factors	Q9	Existential needs	Q9

Professional training	Social and group-belonging need, self-actualization needs	Q8, Q9	Hygiene factors	Q9	Existential needs	Q9
Promotion	Self esteem and respect needs	Q7, Q9, Q11	Motivation factors	Q7, Q9, Q11	Development needs	Q7, Q9, Q11
Quality interpersonal relationship	Organization belonging needs	Q8	Motivation needs	Q8	Affiliation needs	Q8

Table no 8. Five motivational tools and mechanisms

Bonuses for employees.

A salary increase is an important form of employee motivation, but often for financial reasons it cannot be money bonuses. For these reasons, human resources specialists have introduced the voucher system for employees as extra-salary benefits. Meal, holiday or sports vouchers, or gift vouchers bring the same motivational benefits to employees.

Motivating employees by creating a favorable environmental framework.

If the general working conditions are regulated by the legislation in force (Labor Code, collective and individual labor contracts), then there are a number of other environmental factors that motivate employees to work better and increase their level of satisfaction. Thus, the granting of frequent breaks during the work schedule, the creation of a relaxation space and other factors of this kind can lead to an increase in the motivation of employees.

Professional training as a motivation for teamwork.

People rarely work alone, isolated from each other, and the idea of a group is thus strictly related to all social situations, and almost every member of an organization is part of one or more groups. Team building is another effective non-financial employee motivation methods. The benefits are both for the employees and for the company, because it will thus form a team that knows its

values, potential and is able to complete a given task and on the other hand, it increases competences on each employee. This will be a good job promotion base. Professional training is - most of the time - a group construction, and in this way, for the organization to register high performance, it is necessary to deeply motivate employees through their membership in consistent and satisfying work teams for each among them (Pânișoară, Pânișoară, 2005).

Job Promotion.

Hierarchical (vertical) promotion is not the only motivational way that increases employee satisfaction. The transfer of employees from one position to another diminishes the routine at work and leads to increases in productivity in the organization. Horizontal transfer (rotation of positions) allows employees to accumulate experience in several fields, projects, activities, but at the same time it is also about transfer of responsibility. This can lead to both job expansion and enrichment.

Quality interpersonal relationship

The quality of labor relations in a guesthouse is essential, constituting a competitive advantage of it, thus, the management must be constantly concerned with identifying the needs of employees and supporting them, adopting an open and cooperative attitude of working in a team. A closer relationship between manager and employee makes decisions even more objective than if this relationship did not exist, due to the fear of one of them, or even both of them, not to lose their credibility. The key to developing and maintaining trust in relationships with those around has two components: permanent communication and the existence of a professional attitude of the parties involved, defined by responsibility and by separating the subjective from the professional, and a transparent communication, positive attitude and pro-activity, as well and by the concern for quality in everything to be done. In an organization, interpersonal relationships are essential. They represent the interaction between two or more participants, these being individuals and groups. Organizational values imply a certain type of behavior or living conditions that are personally and socially more desirable for a particular business system, while organizational norms represent the measures, regulations and rules of a business system.

In conclusion, it can be stated that in the future an educated, motivated workforce benefiting from modern and friendly management will constitute a strategic advantage in any field. As a result, only those companies that will prove to be able to provide adequate and inspired leadership and that will present an attractive image will be able to show interest in a well-trained workforce. Having employees at an appropriate level of training, the responsibility for improving and maintaining an appropriate attractiveness of that organization will fall to managers at all levels.

4.3 Evaluation and self-assessment

This thesis focuses on an interesting topic and of great interest for Romanian rural tourism. In addition to many challenges, even though the report and academic writing were accomplished, working on this report took self-discipline, time management, and a lot of work to be able to execute it well. Despite this fact, I believe it is a process I had to go through and from which I learned so many, being motivated by the desire to return to my native country, and with the help of European funds to open and manage a tourism business. This research was carried out on a small scale, as the questionnaires were applied to a number of 58 employees and 14 employers, which suggests that generalizations should be interpreted with great care. This research only aimed at identifying the most effective strategies for motivating the staff in Romanian rural tourism that present particularities. Therefore, in this thesis, the results and conclusions of the research are limited to the specifics of the Romanian area, of the majority Romanian employed staff as well as of the general European legislation and especially the Romanian ones. However, the subject of the research is universal and, therefore, it can be expected that similar results are possible on a larger sample.

People answering a questionnaire may have intended to answer in a way that they expect to be correct. Therefore, the role of the researcher could have caused bias. One way to approach this was to keep responses completely anonymous and conduct the study for a group where the researcher is an outsider. Conducting the questionnaires, contacting the respondents and applying the questionnaires was a good skill gained from the thesis process, as well as analyzing the collected research data is a valuable skill gained. Not only the topic of employee motivation strategies in rural tourism, but also the entire thesis process was a challenge to me and will have an impact on my future career. All the competences acquired in this thesis process will be useful to me, especially in people management and human resource management. Also, by analyzing this, I learn to properly manage tourism employee motivation strategies in an effective way without compromising relationships between colleagues. By writing this thesis, I wish to increase readers' interest in the subject studied and how to perceive it as something useful and enriching for any workplace. In conclusion, I tried through this study to find ways to motivate rural tourism employees. The research has created a valuable foundation from which stakeholders can begin to develop their studies in this field. In addition, this research can be used in the practice of rural tourism units, as well as in other organizations in different fields.

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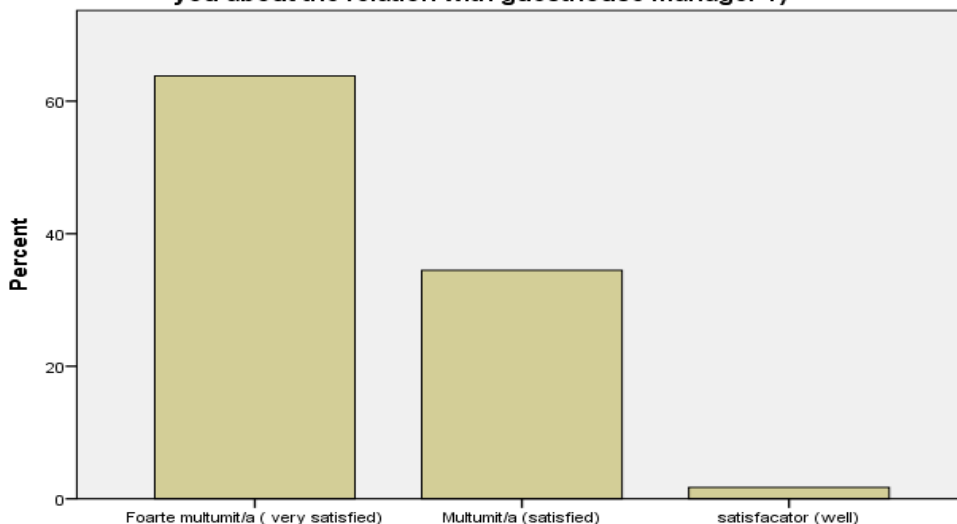
Appendix 1 - Employees survey statistics

Correlations

Descriptive Statistics

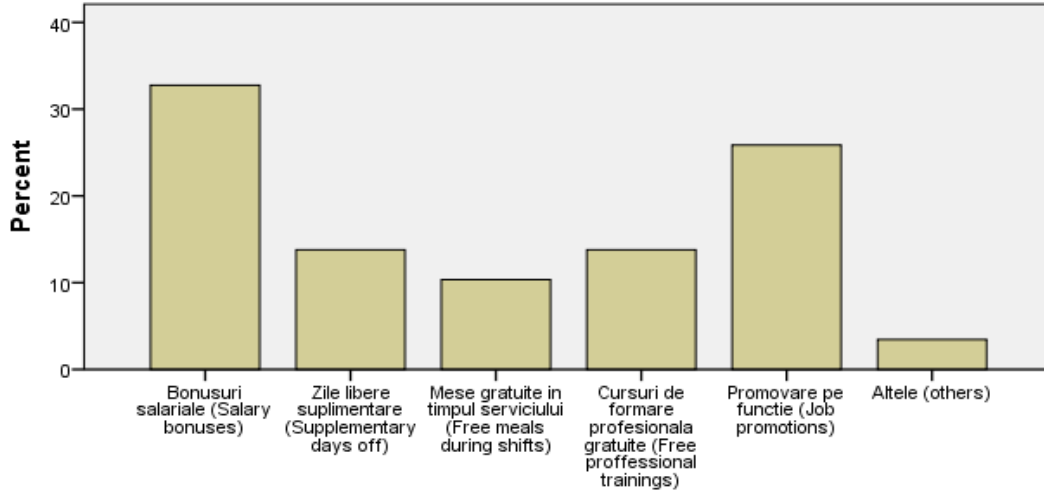
	Mean	N
Va rugam sa ne comunicati varsta dumneavoastra . (Please tell us your age.)	2,2241	58
Va rugam sa ne spuneti care este sexul dumneavoastra.(Please tell us your gender.)	1,4655	58
De cati ani lucrati la acesta pensiune ? (For how many yeears do you work at this guesthouse ?)	1,5345	58
Cate ore lucrati pe zi ? (How many hours do you work daily ?)	2,4138	58
Cate pauze aveti in timpul programului ? (How many breaks do you have during working hours?)	2,3621	58
Cat de multumit/a sunteti de locul dumneavoastra de munca ? (How satisfied are you with your work ?)	1,4310	58
Aveti posibilitatea sa promovati pe alt post ? (Do you have the opportunity to get a job promotion in guesthouse ?)	1,0690	58
Cat de multumit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)	1,3793	58
Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	2,9655	58
Care este aprecierea clien?ilor pensiunii fa?a de munca dumneavoastra ?(What is the guesthouse clients' appreciation about your job ?)	2,6897	58

Cat de multumit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)



Cat de multumit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)

Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

Correlations

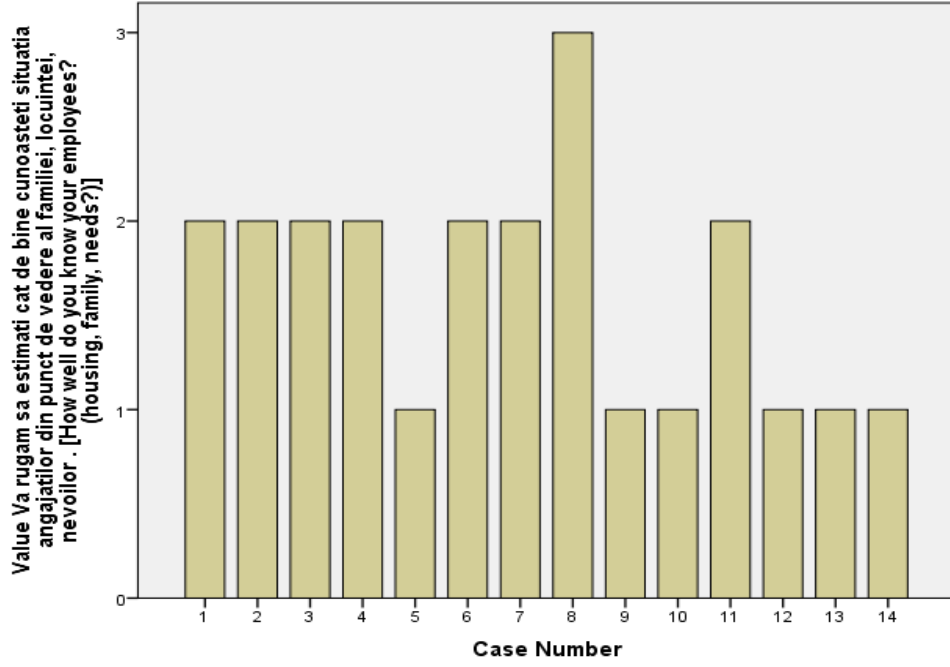
		Cat de multimit/a sunteti de locul dumneavoastra de munca ? (How satisfied are you with your work ?)	Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)	Aveti posibilitatea sa promovati pe alt post ? (Do you have the opportunity to get a job promotion in guesthouse ?)	Care este aprecierea clien?ilor pensiunii fa?a de munca dumneavoastra ?(What is the guesthouse clients' appreciation about your job ?)	Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	
Spearman's rho	Cat de multimit/a sunteti de locul dumneavoastra de munca ? (How satisfied are you with your work ?)	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,583**	-,079	-,158	,015
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,557	,236	,910
		N	58	58	58	58	58
	Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)	Correlation Coefficient	,583**	1,000	-,066	-,208	-,025
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,625	,118	,851
		N	58	58	58	58	58
	Aveti posibilitatea sa promovati pe alt post ? (Do you have the opportunity to get a job promotion in guesthouse ?)	Correlation Coefficient	-,079	-,066	1,000	,183	,157
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,557	,625	.	,170	,239
		N	58	58	58	58	58
	Care este aprecierea clien?ilor pensiunii fa?a de munca dumneavoastra ?(What is the guesthouse clients' appreciation about your job ?)	Correlation Coefficient	-,158	-,208	,183	1,000	,029
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,236	,118	,170	.	,831
		N	58	58	58	58	58
Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Correlation Coefficient	,015	-,025	,157	,029	1,000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,910	,851	,239	,831	.	
	N	58	58	58	58	58	

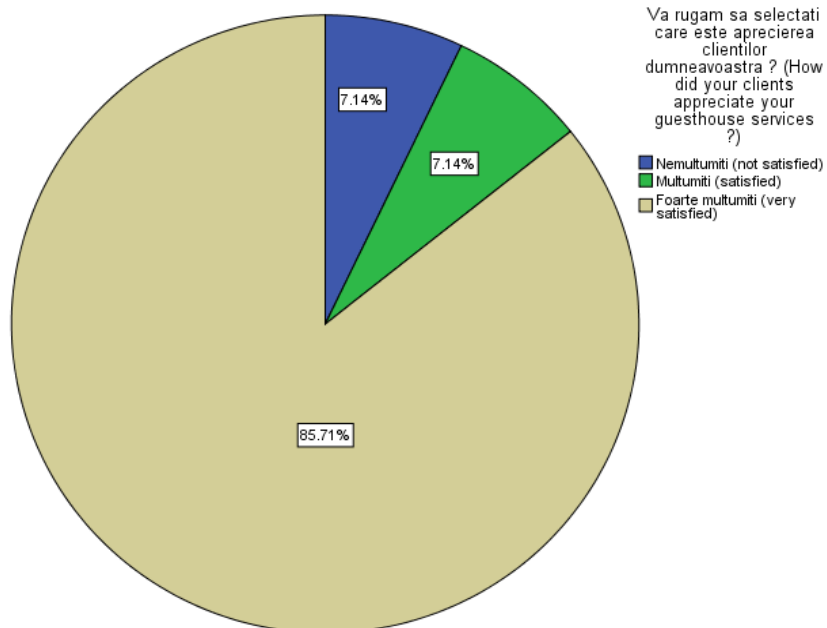
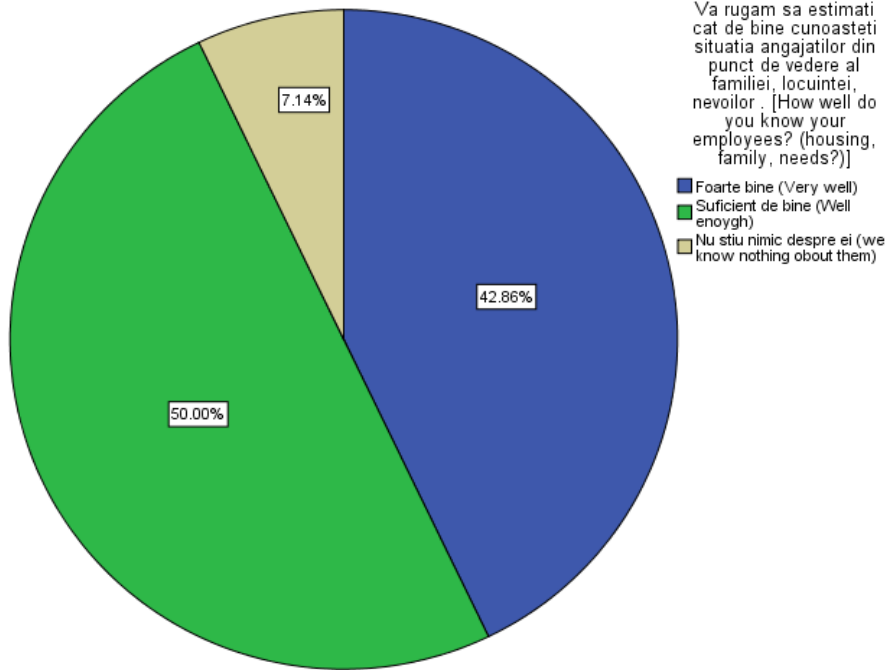
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 2 – Owners survey statistics

Correlations				Va rugam sa estimati cat de bine cunoasteti situatia angajatilor din punct de vedere al familiei, locuintei, nevoilor . [How well do you know your employees? (housing, family, needs?)]	Va rugam sa estimati o medie a duratei contractelor de munca a pensiunii dumneavoastra cu angajatii .(On average, for how many years your employees work for you?)	Va rugam sa selectati care este aprecierea clientilor dumneavoastra ? (How did your clients appreciate your guesthouse services ?)
Spearman's rho	Va rugam sa estimati cat de bine cunoasteti situatia angajatilor din punct de vedere al familiei, locuintei, nevoilor . [How well do you know your employees? (housing, family, needs?)]	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	-,614*	-,524	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,020	,054	
		N	14	14	14	
	Va rugam sa estimati o medie a duratei contractelor de munca a pensiunii dumneavoastra cu angajatii .(On average, for how many years your employees work for you?)	Correlation Coefficient	-,614*	1,000	,225	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	.	,439	
		N	14	14	14	
	Va rugam sa selectati care este aprecierea clientilor dumneavoastra ? (How did your clients appreciate your guesthouse services ?)	Correlation Coefficient	-,524	,225	1,000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,054	,439	.	
		N	14	14	14	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).





Appendix 3 – Employees Survey



Employees Survey

Întrebările obligatorii sunt marcate cu o stea (*)

1. Va rugam sa ne comunicati varsta dumneavoastra . (Please tell us your age.) *

- 18-25 ani
- 25-35 ani
- 35-50 ani
- 50+

2. Va rugam sa ne spuneti care este sexul dumneavoastra.(Please tell us your gender.) *

- Masculin
- Feminin
- Mai bine nu spun (better not tell you)

3. De cati ani lucrati la acesta pensiune ? (For how many yeaaars do you work at this guesthouse ?) *

- 1-5 ani (years)
- 5-10 ani (years)
- 10+ ani (years)

4. Cate ore lucrati pe zi ? (How many hours do you work daily ?) *

- 1-5 ore (hours)
- 5-8 ore (hours)
- 8-10 ore (hours)

5. Cate pauze aveti in timpul programului ? (How many breaks do you have during working hours?) *

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 3+

6. Cat de multumit/a sunteti de locul dumneavoastra de munca ? (How satisfied are you with your work ?) *

- foarte multumit/a (very satisfied)
- multumit/a
- satisfacator

7. Aveti posibilitatea sa promovati pe alt post ? (Do you have the opportunity to get a job promotion in guesthouse ?) *

- Da (yes)
- Nu (no)

8. Cat de multumit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?) *

- Foarte multumit/a (very satisfied)
- Multumit/a (satisfied)
- satisfacator (well)

9. Care este motivația dumneavoastră pentru a continua să lucrați la locul de muncă actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?) *

- Bonusuri salariale (Salary bonuses)
 - Zile libere suplimentare (Supplementary days off)
 - Mese gratuite în timpul serviciului (Free meals during shifts)
 - Cursuri de formare profesională gratuite (Free professional trainings)
 - Promovare pe funcție (Job promotions)
 - Altele (others)
-

10. Ce va motivează să faceți mai multe sarcini la locul de muncă?(What will motivate you to do more tasks at job ?) *

11. Care este aprecierea clienților pensiunii față de munca dumneavoastră ? (What is the guesthouse clients' appreciation about your job ?) *

- Nesatisfacator (not satisfied)
- Satisfacator (satisfied)
- Foarte mulțumiti (very satisfied)

Appendix 4 – Owners Survey

**Owners' questionnaire**

Întrebările obligatorii sunt marcate cu o stea (*)

1. Va rugam sa ne precizati anul deschiderii pensiunii dumneavoastra. (Please tell us your guesthouse opening year.) *

2. Tinand cont de formele de relief, resursele naturale si atractiile turistice locale, va rugam sa ne descrieti localizarea pensiunii dumneavoastra. (Regarding the landforms, local natural resources and tourist spots, where is your guesthouse located ?) *

3. Cate camere are pensiunea dumneavoastra ? (How many rooms is your guesthouse ?) *

Altele (other)

7. Va rugam sa estimati cat de bine cunoasteti situatia angajatilor din punct de vedere al familiei, locuintei, nevoilor . [How well do you know your employees? (housing, family, needs?)] *

- Foarte bine (Very well)
- Suficient de bine (Well enoygh)
- Nu stiu nimic despre ei (we know nothing about them)
- Consideram ca nu e important (we think it is not important)

8. Va rugam sa estimati o medie a duratei contractelor de munca a pensiunii dumneavoastra cu angajatii .(On average, for how many years your employees work for you?) *

- 1-5 ani (years)
- 5-10 ani (years)
- 10-20 ani (years)

9. Care sunt motivele invocate de angajati atunci cand acestia decid sa demisioneze, chiar daca dumneavoastra ati asigurat pregatirea lor profesionala pentru postul ocupat ? (What are the reasons most often cited when an employee decides to leave the position he/she holds in your company, even if you spent for his/her professional trainings ?) *

- Salariul (Money)
- Programul de lucru (work schedule)
- Neadaptarea la conditiile de lucru (inadaptation to the manager's conditions)
- Motive personale (personal reasons)
- Altele (other)

10. Va rugam sa selectati metodele de motivare a angajatilor dumneavoastra. (What kind of employees' motivations do you use ?) *

- Bonusuri in bani (salary bonuses)

- Zile libere suplimentare (Supplementary days off)
 - Mese gratis in timpul serviciului (Free meals during shifts)
 - Cursuri de pregatire profesionala gratuite (Free professional training courses)
 - Promovarea pe functii (job promotion)
 - Altele (other)
-

11. Va rugam sa selectati care este aprecierea clientilor dumneavoastra ? (How did your clients appreciate your guesthouse services ?) *

- Nemultumiti (not satisfied)
- Multumiti (satisfied)
- Foarte multumiti (very satisfied)

Appendix 5. U Mann Whitney test

Test Statistics

	Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)	Q9_r1_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r2_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r3Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r4Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r5Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)
Mann-Whitney U	314,500	191,000	234,000	129,000	288,000	366,000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,129	,000	,001	,000	,014	,463

a. Grouping Variable: grup

Ranks

	grup	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guest-house manager ?)	angajat(employee)	58	34,92	2025,50
	angajator(owner)	14	43,04	602,50
	Total	72		
Q9_r1_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	angajat(employee)	58	32,79	1902,00
	angajator(owner)	14	51,86	726,00
	Total	72		
Q9_r2_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	angajat(employee)	58	33,53	1945,00
	angajator(owner)	14	48,79	683,00
	Total	72		
Q9_r3Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	angajat(employee)	58	31,72	1840,00
	angajator(owner)	14	56,29	788,00
	Total	72		
Q9_r4Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	angajat(employee)	58	34,47	1999,00
	angajator(owner)	14	44,93	629,00
	Total	72		
Q9_r5Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	angajat(employee)	58	35,81	2077,00
	angajator(owner)	14	39,36	551,00
	Total	72		

Appendix 6. Database employers and employees combined statistics.

Statistics

	Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)	Q9_r1_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r2_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r3Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r4Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)	Q9_r5Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)
Valid	72	72	72	72	72	72
Miss- ing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1,43	,43	,24	,24	,19	,28

Cat de multimit/a sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Foarte multimit/a (very satisfied)	43	59,7	59,7	59,7
Multimit/a (satisfied)	27	37,5	37,5	97,2
satisfacator (well)	2	2,8	2,8	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

Q9_r1_Care este motivatia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	41	56,9	56,9	56,9
true	31	43,1	43,1	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

Q9_r2_Care este motivatia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	56	77,8	77,8	77,8
Valid true	15	20,8	20,8	98,6
false	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

Q9_r3Care este motivatia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	55	76,4	76,4	76,4
Valid true	17	23,6	23,6	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

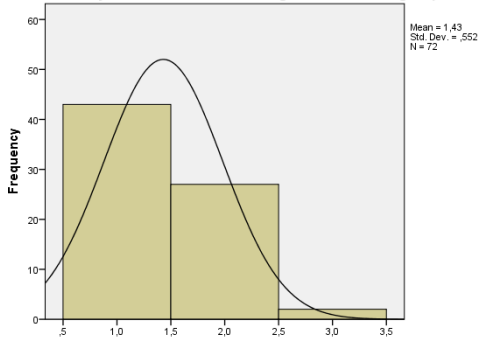
Q9_r4Care este motivatia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	58	80,6	80,6	80,6
Valid true	14	19,4	19,4	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

Q9_r5Care este motivatia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

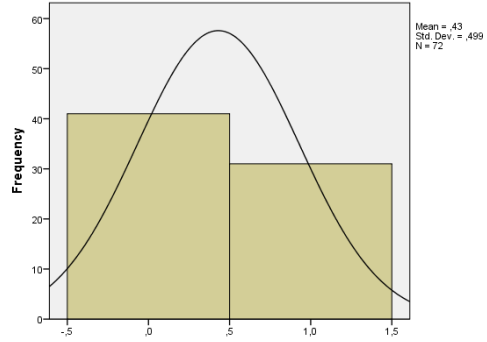
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	52	72,2	72,2	72,2
Valid true	20	27,8	27,8	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

Cat de multiti/sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)



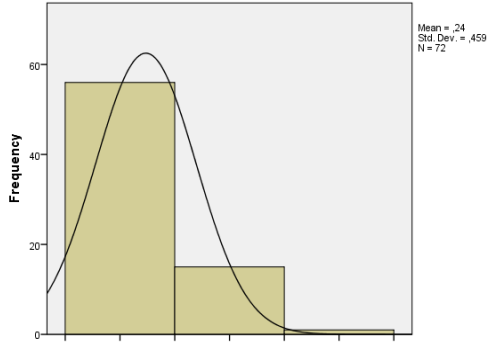
Cat de multiti/sunteti de relatia cu managerul pensiunii ? (How satisfied are you about the relation with guesthouse manager ?)

Q9_r1_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



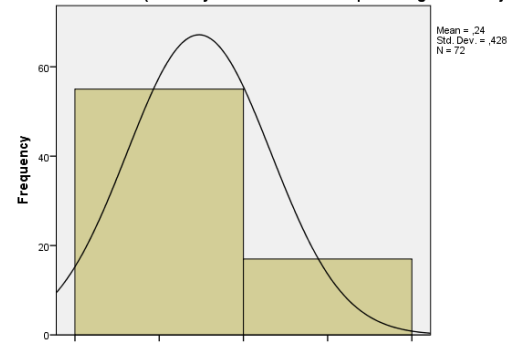
Q9_r1_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

Q9_r2_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



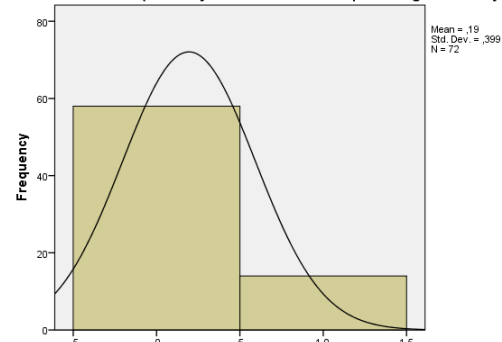
Q9_r2_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

Q9_r3_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



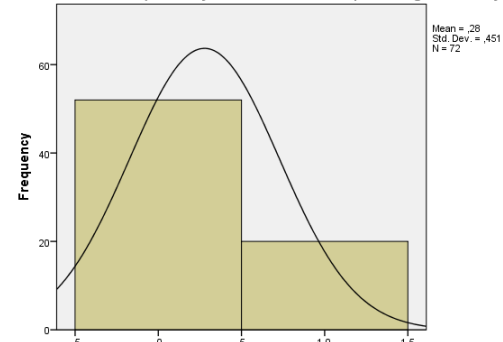
Q9_r3_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

Q9_r4_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



Q9_r4_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)

Q9_r5_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)



Q9_r5_Care este motiva?ia dumneavoastra pentru a continua sa lucrati la locul de munca actual? (What is your motivation to keep working at current job ?)