



Comparing the Consumer Value Dimensions of Rural Tourism in Hungary and Malaysia

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Abstract: *This study introduces, analyses and compares rural tourism, and its consumer value dimensions in Hungary and Malaysia. Unlike Malaysia, Hungary lacks spectacular natural attractions, seaside or high mountains, but Hungary has always been an agricultural country and it is rich in cultural landscapes with traditional small villages and rural hospitality. Both countries have the potential to be an attractive rural tourism destination and be able to offer pleasant experiences to the kind of tourist in search of relaxation and recreation in a calm setting. In Hungary, no theoretical research has been conducted so far to show the consumer value factors in rural tourism, thus the primary aim of the research was to conduct a niche survey in rural tourism, which can contribute to the better understanding of the demand side and crystallise the factors with value to tourists. In Malaysia, the dimensionality of tourist perceived value in the rural tourism context is rarely studied either. The aim of this study is to compare these two countries based on empirical research. In spite of the cultural and geographical differences, the results show several similarities, namely that the functional, experiential and emotional factors are important determinants of the perceived value of rural tourism. It is therefore recommended that host providers, destination managers and governments should pay attention to the importance of these value dimensions to increase overall tourist value as well as to better develop the positioning strategies, the promotion and the competitiveness of rural*

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Consumer Value Dimensions, Hungary, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the third millennium we can see that the desire for experiences and intellectual challenges is strengthening and becoming more and more intertwined with the shifting of consumer behaviour from material values towards ethical and intellectual values. This is a clear reaction to the materialistic orientation of the consumer society. Instead of strongly materialistic factors, in the “new economy” intellectual skills and abilities are the major creators of value in the economic sense. However, a high level of material consumption is also necessary so that post-materialistic values could come forward. Complete industries were built upon these values, such as the production of organic food or sports equipment, as well as rural tourism experiences (Szabó&Hámori, 2006).

In global tourism, rural tourism is a refreshing phenomenon, which can help domestic and foreign tourists to learn about, better understand and sustain a country, a culture and its traditions, as well as to increase their respect for nature, to meet their desire for authentic experiences, all of which can significantly contribute to economic growth. The study of the role and opportunities of rural tourism has growing importance in academic research and the professional community as well. Rural tourism has been recognized as an effective catalyst for rural socio-economic redevelopment in many countries.

This paper seeks to compare the interpretation and the consumer value of rural tourism in two countries with different geographic features. The aim is to answer questions about what forms and dimensions value-oriented consumption appears in rural tourism, and which value elements have more and which have less relevance. The study is based on a database comprising information on the attitude of Hungarian and Malaysian rural tourists, their consumer values, and their major dimensions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Interpretations of Rural Tourism in Europe

The definition, the identification of rural tourism, as well as the description of its elements have been the target of several research papers. The international literature provides a wide range of definitions

for the meaning of rural tourism (Roberts & Hall, 2003). Taking the focus of the supply into account, several other terminologies are available (agro-, eco-, farm-, green-, etc. tourism) regarding tourism based upon the resources of families living in rural areas. The meaning of these definitions may differ from country to country, depending on the local "country" categories, traditions and cultural relations. In the majority of cases, however, the analysis of other content features is also required besides the definition, such as the institutional background, the structure of the countryside and the settlements, geographic features, existing sectoral policies, etc. The drawback of such a multitude of definitions is that uniform regulation is not possible or only with difficulties. The definitions of rural tourism can be rather different regarding the fact that in certain countries the emphasis is laid on the farms and the role of nature, while in other countries on the agricultural activities outside the cities (Hallet al.,2005). Based on the motivations of tourists, different layers of rural tourism can be crystallised. International practices also point out two levels of rural tourism, which in our assumption are an internal (core) service and an external (supplementary) service (Figure 1).



Source: Kulcsár (2015, p. 129)

Figure1. The direction of tourist motivation in rural tourism of European countries

The above mentioned classification points out that today, regardless of whether the countries consider this form of tourism as farm-tourism, agro-tourism, green tourism or rural tourism, etc. basically two topics are in focus:

- One of the topics which can be found in most cases is *being close to nature*, and the services attached to it (sledging, riding a horse cart, trekking, etc.) and programmes, including sports (cycling, mountaineering, rafting, horse-riding, etc.) and activities encouraging relaxation or learning (walking in nature, animal watching, collecting herbs or picking mushrooms, etc.).
- The other topic is *being in the countryside*, including rural culture, traditions and lifestyle, in which the focus is on rural, village or farm lifestyle, agricultural activities around the house, the role of domestic animals, gastronomic specialities and last but not least the relationship between the guest and the host, which is unique.

Similarly to the approach of Perales (2002) on traditional-modern rural tourism, we regard the presence of "being in the countryside" as a traditional core service, while ensuring "to be close to nature" as a complementary service. Nevertheless, the weight of the layers in the touristic services i.e. which type of service has a bigger value for the tourists (the traditional or the modern) is questionable. The directions of development and the criteria of success can be identified in possession of this information.

2.2. Interpretations of Rural Tourism in Hungary

The definition of rural tourism applied in Hungary does not clearly define product type tourism. The interpretation of rural tourism is becoming more and more wide-ranging, the boundaries of the definition are becoming "blurred" and in the Hungarian literature, besides rural, the terminology of countryside or countryside-rural is continually appearing. Its basic characteristic is its complexity and

the fact that it embraces several other products. Apart from providing accommodation in a village environment (on the host's premises), rural tourism can include cultural offers, gastronomy, wine tourism, walks in the nature, health tourism, horse-riding and children's camps (Szabó, 2006).

The term "rural tourism", widely used in the European literature can be translated as countryside or village tourism as well, but regarding its direction and content elements, it can mainly be interpreted as the Hungarian – not real value – village tourism (see Antal, 1996; Kovács, 2002; Szabó, 2006; Csizmadia, 2011). Similarly to the international literature, the Hungarian interpretation of village tourism is also extremely colorful. In the Hungarian interpretation, there is no clear dividing line between rural and country side tourism. The National Association of Rural and Agrotourism uses the term "village tourism" as a synonym for the most general form of rural tourism (Szabó, 2006). The term "village tourism" known in Hungary does not clearly define a type of touristic product. It is rather its complexity and its feature of embracing other products which can be regarded as a principle feature.

In accordance with the interpretation of the Strategy for the Improvement of Tourism, the narrow definition of rural tourism is "making use of the complex touristic facilities and the supply of the village, jointly offering village lifestyle, local traditions, culture and where it is available, agricultural facilities. In the broader sense of the meaning, rural tourism provides host accommodation anywhere, except for in spa and health resorts, including the village-like parts of any settlement (offering accommodation, catering and programmes) if the location and the activity meet the typical system of requirements of rural tourism" (Ministry for National Economy, 2011, p. 48). In its supply side, but also demand-oriented definition, the Ministry emphasizes that experiencing new, authentic adventures, the desire to learn and acquire knowledge are the most fundamental touristic motivations today.

Among the definitions found in the Hungarian literature we can find the following features of rural tourism: it supplements the family income, it is a touristic activity carried out in the countryside, and a provision of complex services in catering, accommodation and programmes, attached to agriculture and nature.

On the basis of all these we can assume that the interpretation of rural tourism from the Hungarian point of view is a complex form of tourism, in which village lifestyle and all the attached activities appear as the core (the basic) service of rural tourism, as the supplement of other services offered in the broader environment. The market of rural tourism has been undergoing significant transformations. On the one hand, due to the processes affecting the countryside, and on the other hand, because of new regulations, and the effects of the new classification and specialisation systems targeting quality growth. The qualification system awards 1 to 4 sunflowers to the village accommodations, depending on the comfort level and the equipment of the accommodation. The number of qualified accommodations was increasing approximately by 200 units per year reflecting the success of the system. Currently according to the database of the National Association of Rural and Agrotourism (2016) there are 2,660 rural tourism accommodations in Hungary, of which 1,210 are officially qualified. As for the demand side, there are currently 154,000 guests for 410,000 guest nights.

2.3. Interpretations of Rural Tourism in Malaysia

In Malaysia's economy, tourism is the third largest revenue generating industry after oil and gas, and the manufacturing industry. According to the data of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture of Malaysia (2017) the country had 25.7 million tourist arrivals and 69.1 billion MYR receipts.

Rural tourism was introduced as a new form of tourism by the Malaysian Government during the Seventh Malaysia Plan period (1996–2000) and is still actively emphasized as part of the national rural development agenda to create employment opportunities, increase income levels and reduce poverty among the rural people, who comprise 37% of the total population. The rural tourism products in Malaysia as advocated by tourism providers in the country include homestays, eco or nature tourism, agro tourism, cultural and heritage-based tourism and this diversity indicates that rural tourism has the potential to play a major role in enhancing the tourism yield. Moreover, rural tourism has contributed significantly in terms of income generation to the country (Nair et al., 2015). Homestay program began informally in the 1970s with some involvement of the local community

who provide accommodation in their own homes to foreign tourists by charging a very minimal price compared to hotels or resorts. This accommodation sector is also known by various terms such as farm stay, culture homestay, heritage homestay, education homestay, voluntary homestay, private accommodation, leisure stay, and cottage. A homestay program is said to have given a return in terms of household income which reaches thousands of dollars, and local communities continue to promote awareness of cultural heritage conservation (Yusof et al., 2013). Nowadays, the homestay programme is one of the most popular rural tourism offerings in Malaysia. According to Sunday Star (2012) report, there are 150 homestay clusters located all over Malaysia with 3,211 operators offering 4,309 rooms.

In Malaysia, like in Hungary, the current definition for rural tourism is rather vague, narrow and focuses on home stay programmes in rural areas. The definition of Malaysian rural tourism is very similar to the Hungarian, emphasizing the features of the products, such as natural, cultural and connected to local traditions. As rural tourism is an important component of the tourism industry in Malaysia, Nair et al. (2015) had redefined what rural tourism is, so that it encompasses the multiple dimensions and complexities. According to the authors (Nair et al, 2015, p.334) the current definition portrays certain limitations which need to be improved as follows: „Rural tourism is functionally rural and provides the opportunity for tourists to directly involve, experience, enjoy and learn the unique cultural, natural and historical attractions and activities provided by the local communities in rural areas, with cooperation from the government and businesses in order to provide socio-economic benefits without exploiting the environment”.

2.4. The Role of Consumer Value

The concept of consumer value can be examined from different aspects: we can take the approach of product-oriented sales (Schmitt, 2003 In: Kozma, 2009), Kotler’s marketing concept (see Kotler, 2003 In: Hou & Tang, 2008), as well as the recently introduced Customer Relationship Management, or consumer experience management (Schultz, 2003 In: Kozma, 2009). According to these new interpretations, consumer value reflects the largely subjective (Hofmeister et al., 2003) or personal opinion of the consumer as to what extent the received product or service meets his or her expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

According to Chikán and Demeter (2004) consumer value is created if the benefit of the consumer from a given transaction exceeds the complete cost of the possession of the received product and the service package. This subjective definition of value is rather comprehensive, which we can unfold through the definition of value dimensions (Gelei, 2006). Value dimensions deconstruct customer value into its elements, showing which major components or dimensions of the received product- or service package can significantly contribute to the growth of customer value (Walters, 2002 In: Gelei, 2006).

As a summary, we can say that the literature defines customer value in a one-dimensional and in a multi-dimensional sense of the meaning. Researchers defining customer value along one dimension, place the emphasis on the transactional value, where the consumer values the difference between the received product/service and the price paid for acquiring it. Other authors often define customer value as a multidimensional perceived value, describing it as ”complex” (Lapierre, 2000), ”having several factors” (Babin et al., 1994), ”dynamic” (Woodruff, 1997; Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000) or ”subjective” (Zeithaml, 1988).

The analysis of multi-dimensionality is a relevant approach for the unfolding of consumer value dimensions present in tourism. The following dimensions can appear among the components of consumer value:

- On the one hand, dimensions may appear that derive from rational (cognitive) decision and focus on functionality (e.g. the price and quality of the service elements),
- On the other hand, affective dimensions may emerge that have an effect on the consumer product-related perception (such as atmosphere, feelings, relationships, experiences).

The basis of every company’s (in this case, touristic service providers) long-term success and competitiveness is the long-lasting satisfaction of their consumers, which occurs if they can create value for them. Therefore, the definition of consumer value components and dimensions is highly

critical in tourism as well (Yuan & Wu, 2008). In the field of tourism there are relatively few studies on the identification and measurement of consumer value dimensions (Sánchez et al., 2006), nevertheless, we can assume, based on the achieved results, that due to it being so abstract, impossible to conserve, heterogeneous and complex, the one-dimensional (trade-off) model of value would be too simple to define consumer value with. Instead of the functional (mainly price and quality based) approach, the socio-psychological approach might be appropriate (Williams & Soutar, 2000).

We can say that consumers can acquire values from different types of experiences. Experience value compared to consumer value focuses on value components, which are preserved in the consumer after these experiences. Thus, there are a lot of similarities between experience value and consumer value, yet, research on experience value is rare. Yuan and Wu (2008) used the consumer value concept for the measurement of experience value, since most researchers of the field agree that the major dimensions of consumer value are made up of emotional and functional characteristics.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Despite the fact that models of consumer value have already been adapted in the literature on tourism, empirical studies are not very widespread. The basis of success of rural tourism in Hungary could be the identification of tourists' motivations, attitudes, as well as factors that carry value for them, since it may reveal useful information both scientifically and practically.

In the Hungarian quantitative research a double questionnaire survey was carried out. We conducted our survey in cooperation with the National Association for Rural and Agrotourism. Within the frame of this cooperation, the association helped us choose and get in contact with touristic service providers in the regions of Hungary, where the number of guests in rural tourism is outstanding and the activity of the enterprise is successful. Sampling was based on expert recommendation. Using the method of non-probability sampling, we sent questionnaires to 25 touristic businesses distributed in all counties and regions, where they had it completed by their guests with the method of convenience sampling. Our aim was to study the characteristics of guests participating in rural tourism at a certain point in time, thus, we must also take caution not to use results from this sample to generalize to a wider population.

We sent out 300 questionnaires altogether. Out of the received 148 questionnaires, we could process 132 questionnaires. When selecting the subjects an important principle was representativeness and randomness, which means that the sample should approximately have the same features statistically as the population (guests taking part in rural tourism) to be analysed. Nevertheless, since in Hungary the characteristics of the guests are not known, and we do not have exact figures about the basic population, the conditions of representativeness could not be controlled.

We forwarded our retrospective online questionnaire (N = 220) to tourists who had already taken part in rural tourism in the last 3 years and who have valuable observations. With the double questionnaire survey our aim was to investigate if there is a significant difference in the answers of consumers interviewed in the location and in the form of retrospective online research. The questionnaire consisted of closed, nominal ordinal, semantic differential questions and questions measured on the Likert-scale.

Consumer value research in tourism can be divided into three groups from theoretical viewpoints: qualitative research, primary research applying qualitative and quantitative methods and indicator-based comparisons (partial factors indicating the components and dimensions of consumer value) with complex (qualitative/quantitative) primary research (Kulcsár, 2017). The most accurate comparison on consumer values of rural tourism is by Jamal and herco-authors (2011), who undertook a survey of 353 tourists to homestay villages, and investigated by confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation model (SEM) the factors bearing value for tourists in the case of Malaysian rural tourism to show and rank in order of importance the functional and experience aspects of consumer value, examining how the value can be improved through different experiences.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Consumer Value Dimensions in Hungarian Rural Tourism

During the analysis we applied descriptive statistics, primarily frequency analyses, and multi-variant data analysis techniques, crosstabs-analysis, and factor analysis with the help of SPSS 18 statistical

program package. Based on the major aspects of the analysis, the results of the questionnaires conducted on the field (N = 132) and online (N = 220) were compared, so that we can learn basic differences. It was also important to investigate whether the composition of the samples from two different sources is different or not.

Independent two-sample t-test was used to test the significance. The compared data (gender (p = 0.074), sender region (p = 0.367), tourist motivation (p = 0.956), interpretation of rural tourism (p = 0.476) and region of holiday (p = 0.258) confirmed that the composition and preference of the two samples did not contain any significant differences, moreover, they rather tended to strengthen each other, so we will continue to analyse the data together, in a 352 subject sample.

In the Hungarian research, we were particularly interested to know how today’s touristic trends – individual consumption, conscious travelling, the search for authenticity and value, complex touristic packages – can influence Hungarian rural tourism. What is the key motivation of tourists when they choose rural tourism, and what does rural tourism mean to them? The findings show that in Hungary the consumers of rural tourism choose this form in order to experience the countryside (27.8%), but apart from that, there is a group of consumers for whom undisturbed relaxation in itself is a major motivation (26.1%). The order of motivations can change according to age groups, destinations, residence and people travelling together. On the whole, from the findings of the research we can draw the conclusion that in the first place, tourists choose rural tourism because of the values of nature and local programmes, while visiting the sights of the surrounding area comes in the second place and in the third place, learning about the country lifestyle and activities around the house could be recorded (Table 1).

Table1. Order of preference of programme

Ranking	Programme preference	Online	On site	Together
1.	Hiking and discover the nature	544	387	931
2.	Visiting the main attractions of the surrounding area	638	383	1021
3.	Getting acquainted with farm activities around the house*	802	460	1262
4.	Participating in traditional programmes**	806	459	1265
5.	Visiting festivals	814	547	1361
6.	Silent passive activities***	916	536	1452

*E.g. vintage, bread baking, canning, **E.g. crafts, folk-dancing, ***E.g. reading, board games

Source: Kulcsár, 2015, p.137

We can conclude that in accordance with the European trends in tourism the majority of consumers in rural tourism travel to experience the complexity of country lifestyle, culture, nature and authentic programmes, although the most important for them is discovering the values of nature and recreation in fresh air in a beautiful environment. Thus, a new model of Hungarian rural tourism could be established based on international practices (see Figure 1 above) and our study where nature-orientation is in the internal, essential circle, while country lifestyle, culture and heritage belong to the circle of supplementary services.

In order to identify the latent structures behind the consumer’s responses namely the consumer value dimensions of rural tourism, firstly 33 value indicators were identified, and their importance was examined. The consumers indicated on a 1–4 point evaluation scale how important the different indicators are. After all a factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) on these value indicators was carried out. The main aim was to measure the dimensions and relevance of these factors, setting up the order of their importance.

The factor analysis was conducted with Varimax rotation. The method serves data compression and the identification of data structure, where the number of initial indicators is contracted into factor variants, which are directly non-observable. The adaptability of indicators for factor analysis was tested by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)-criterion, and the variance quotient methods. After the factor analysis of indicators linked to the physical environment and human interactions, 10 factors were separated:

- *F1. Host attitude:* it is important for the guests that the host is helpful and friendly, and has information about the touristic attractions and events of the area.

- *F2. Attractive accommodation:* it is important for the guests that the accommodation is nicely decorated both inside and outside.
- *F3. Clean, well-equipped accommodation:* it is important for the guests to have clean and well-maintained accommodation, equipped with comfortable furniture.
- *F4. Interaction and activity at the accommodation:* it is important for the guests to have a stay which is rich in emotional experiences, i.e. to have personal contacts and be part of the programmes during their stay.
- *F5. Authentic accommodation:* it is important for the guests that the rural accommodation represents authenticity and has the typical features of traditional folk architecture both inside and outside.
- *F6. Peaceful relaxation:* it is important for the guests that during their holiday they have a harmonious relationship with the local people and with other guests, not disturbing each other's activity.
- *F7. Presence of animals:* it is important for the guests to see domestic and farm animals on the host's premises.
- *F8. Nicely arranged, clean settlement:* it is important for the guests that the accommodation is located in a clean, nicely arranged and peaceful settlement surrounded by nice environment.
- *F9. Online availability:* it is important for the guests also to receive information about the host's services and get in touch with him online.
- *F10. Cheap accommodation close to a major attraction:* it is important for the guests to have a low-priced accommodation, not far from the major tourist attractions of the area.

Finally, after the factor analysis we averaged all factors based on the value of importance of their indicators (importance of indicators come from consumers' responses given to the survey questions with an evaluation scale (1 = not important; 4 = very important)). As a result, we got the importance of the given indicator group(factors), from which we drew the conclusion that for guests the most important group of indicators during their rural holiday is the orderliness and cleanliness of the settlement(destination), followed by the neat and attractive arrangement of the accommodation, while the third group of indicators in rank is the personality, preparedness and helpfulness of the host (Table 2).

Table2. *The order of importance and dimensions of rural tourism's consumer value factors*

Ranking	Value factors	Number of indicators	Mean	Dimensions
1.	Nicely arranged, clean settlement (F8)	2	3.63	Functional (Quality)
2.	Attractive accommodation (F2)	3	3.51	
3.	Host attitude (F1)	7	3.49	
4.	Peaceful relaxation (F6)	3	3.42	Affective(Experience - recreation)
5.	Clean, well-equipped accommodation (F3)	5	3.39	Functional (Quality)
6.	Online availability (F9)	2	3.29	
7.	Cheap accommodation closer to major attractions (F10)	2	3.17	Functional (Prise)
8.	Interaction and activity at the accommodation (F4)	4	2.98	Affective(Experience – human interaction, activities)
9.	Authentic accommodation (F5)	2	2.89	Affective (Experience - milieu)
10.	Presence of animals (F7)	1	2.64	

Source: Kulcsár, 2015, p.139

Interpreting the order of the factors we can conclude that for rural tourists, indicators linked to the conditions of the physical environment are of greater importance than those linked to the human factors. Apart from this we can see that the strive for "modernisation" is valid for the analysed circle of consumers. Based on the results of the factor analysis and the ranking regarding value indicators, we

conclude that for tourists in rural tourism functional (quality, price) value dimensions are of primary importance, they have a greater value than affective experience dimensions (recreation, human relations and activity, environment).

The answer to our research question is that for consumers the most important value dimension in rural tourism seems to be quality, i.e. the functional arrangement of the accommodation and the host. These are followed by factors like peaceful relaxation, and appropriate price in the third place, and experience through personal interactions and programs in the fourth position. The fifth valued dimension is the experience in an authentic country environment.

4.2. Consumer Value Dimensions in Malaysian Rural Tourism

Concerning the research methodology of Malaysian case study, Jamal and her co-authors collected the value and experience indicators of former research studies and models (Sánchez et al., 2006; Otto & Ritchie, 1996), which were prepared with the participation of 8 people (mainly from the national rural tourism association, as well as service providers, domestic and foreign tourists) and completed with the results of the interviews undertaken with them. The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the program supply of rural tourism, highlighting which one presented experience for them and how important they were. The listed value dimensions were the following: in the case of the *functional* value the price, the quality and the facility itself were important, in the case of the *experience* dimension the activities, the culture, the acquired knowledge and human relations were dominant, while the *emotional* aspect also appeared as an experience dimension. The resulting 37-element indicator list was evaluated and refined by a group of expert consultants with scientific degrees, and as a result, a list containing 30 partial factors was created, which was measured by the researchers in a survey with 353 participants, on a 7-point Likert-scale.

As a result of the exploratory and reinforcing factor analysis, researchers found that the consumer value is influenced by 20 variables in 5 dimensions. The resulting value dimensions in their order of importance were: 1. *emotional*, 2. *experience (guest-host relationship)*, 3. *experience (activity, culture, knowledge)*, 4. *functional (quality of accommodation)*, 5. *functional (price)*. The current research also justifies the former findings of Komppula (2005), according to which in rural tourism the role of emotional and experience factors is more important than that of the functional dimensions, such as price and quality.

4.3. Comparison of the Research Findings of European (Hungarian) and Asian (Malaysian) Case Studies

In spite of the cultural and geographic differences, the two research studies show several similarities. Both studies were seeking the answer for the possible dimensioning of consumer value. The methodological structure of the research is also identical. The number of subjects in the sample is almost the same, although in the Hungarian research, the field work was completed with online interviews as well. In Malaysia, the research was conducted in the field, including 3 settlements with a sample of 353 subjects. The Hungarian research was carried out on the one hand involving 12 accommodation facilities from 12 settlements, with a sample of 132 subjects, and on the other hand, with an online questionnaire-based survey with a sample of 220 subjects.

Comparing the findings of the research, the accidental coincidence of two interesting factors is remarkable. On the one hand, the number of sample subjects is almost the same in the two studies, and on the other hand the number of identified value dimensions is identical, although they have different contents in certain cases. A similarity of the studies is the majority of affective (emotional and experience) dimensions as opposed to functional dimensions, but while in Malaysia these are more important for tourists, in Hungary – apart from the recreational experience – these are only secondary compared to functional value dimensions. In both countries, similar value dimensions are represented by experiences through human relationships, experiences through programs, and value which can be attached to functionally interpreted quality and price. In the Hungarian research findings the difference is that the emotional value did not appear among the identified value dimensions, however, two aspects of the experience value emerged in Hungary, but not in Malaysia: recreation and country environment (Table 3).

Table3. *International comparison of rural tourism researches*

	Malaysian research	Hungarian research
Aim of research	Analysis of consumer value dimensions in homestay (rural tourism)	Analysis of consumer value dimensions in rural tourism
Sample	Interviewing 353 English and Japanese tourists from 3 settlements by simple random sampling on a 7-point evaluation scale	Interviewing 132 tourists and conducting 220 online interviews (altogether 352 subjects) from 12 settlements by simple random sampling on a 4-point evaluation scale
Methodology	1. creating indicators from secondary data, 2. testing indicators including experts (N=8), 3. measurement of consumer value based on 353 validly completed questionnaires	1. creating indicators from secondary data and from the results of consumer interviews (N=30) using the critical case technique, 2. testing indicators including experts (N=7), 3. measurement of consumer value based on 352 validly completed questionnaires
Analytic tool	descriptive statistics, factor analysis (KMO=0.91, variance quotient=56%, p=0.001)	descriptive statistics, cross-tabs-analysis, IPA method, variance-analysis, factor analysis (KMO=0.85, variance quotient=69%, p=0.05)
Findings	5 identified consumer value dimensions. Order: 1. Emotional value, 2. Experience value (guest-host relationship), 3. Experience value (activity, culture and knowledge), 4. Functional value (quality of facility), 5. Functional value (price)	5 identified consumer value dimensions. Order: 1. Functional value (quality), 2. Experience value (recreation), 3. Functional value (price), 4. Experience value (human relationships, activity), 5. Experience value (environment)

Source: *Own editing*

The reason for the differences may be that in Malaysia rural tourism is more community-dependent than in Hungary. There, learning about the traditions, culture and gaining knowledge is more significant for tourists than just relaxation in a peaceful and natural environment, or than the complex experience of the area’s natural and cultural values.

In the Hungarian rural tourism context, we should also strive to create these human relationships through which the experiences could be more intensive and the demand for the product would also be higher. Instead of „accommodation only" service offered in order to decrease the prices, all-inclusive package services could be offered with a high level of experience and high quality standard (Fotiadis, 2009). This could be the basis to welcome the creative experience industries as well. Of course, in order to achieve it, we should first solve the problem of generational change which is critical in the Hungarian supply, then work out the marketing activity suitable for rural tourism. What should determine our professional endeavours is that we want to create a successful rural tourism which can produce value for the service provider and the consumer alike. Only those settlements or accommodation can be competitive which are secure and hospitable characterised by appropriate price-value ratio, and which aim to meet the tourists’ needs, providing high quality service and a complex experience for them.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The primary aim of this study was to compare the consumer value dimensions of rural tourism in a European country (Hungary) and an Asian country (Malaysia).The two research studies in this paper adopted a multidimensional approach to perceived value and tested the influence of both functional and experiential dimensions on tourist evaluations in a rural tourism context. The results of this study suggest that rural tourists’ value perceptions are not only dependent on functional aspects of value but also on emotional and experiential features. Host providers and marketers are therefore advised to take into account the order of importance of the various value dimensions to better develop positioning strategies and to promote this particular type of tourism. Tourists’ evaluations of each aspect of their experience are extremely important because they will subsequently affect variables

such as satisfaction and behavioural intentions. To support rural settlements, to preserve rural culture and to develop rural tourism is extremely important for both countries. This is an excellent way for governments to increase their destination competitiveness on the basis of finding and comparing consumer values. More and more research in the field of rural tourism can contribute to the better understanding of the demand side and crystallise the factors with value to tourists, helping the better elaboration of development strategies and matching the supply to consumers' expectations.

As a conclusion, we cannot say that rural tourism is mostly chosen by people in favour of traditional values, who do not want to keep up with the accelerated modernisation or are not affected by the idea of globalisation. Guests with progressive ideas but with less commitment to traditional values are also represented in a similar proportion in rural tourism. On the other hand, we can say that most guests consider themselves economising (mainly in the case of Hungary), so for them it is important to buy the service at the lowest possible price, although this does not mean the highest priority. These conclusions are affected, on the one hand, by the type of product, since compared to most touristic products, rural tourism offers its services at more favourable prices, but on the other hand, we must not forget that recent unfavourable changes in the world economy also had an impact on tourism.

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