

# Chapter 7

## Consumer Shopping Orientations and Online Purchases of Rural Tourism Services

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main goal of the chapter is to find out which consumer shopping orientations can be brought in connection to purchases of the services of rural tourism in online channel. Besides theoretical framework concerning rural tourism services and their relation to sustainable development of rural areas, as well as factors of online purchases, the chapter presents the results of primary research. The research is part of wider research conducted concerning online shopping behavior in Serbia. A total of 300 respondents participated. Convenience sampling was implemented. The results confirm that online sale of rural tourism services can be explained when considering consumer shopping orientations and that these orientations can be connected to demographic characteristics of consumers. Finally, managerial implications are considered.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There can be identified a positive connection between development of rural tourism and sustainable development of rural areas. These consequences can be identified concerning all, economic, social and ecological issues. In order to promote future development of rural tourism services, it is needed to understand their consumers and be able to communicate the value to them appropriately.

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An opportunity for communication the value of rural tourism services as well as for completing the sale process concerning them is present in online channel. The number of different factors determines the success of this channel. A classification of them can be found in the literature (e.g. Chang, Cheung, & Lai, 2005) and characteristics of a supply and internet as a sale channel, consumer opinion concerning such purchases as well as their personal characteristics can be distinguished. Consumer shopping orientations can be listed among their personal characteristics.

Having all previously listed in mind, there are several objectives of this research:

**Objective One:** To define theoretical framework connecting rural tourism services, sustainable development, online purchases of those services and consumer shopping orientations.

**Objective Two:** To explore whether there can be identified the same consumer shopping orientations (recreational, experiential, convenience and economic) in research in Serbia as in research abroad.

**Objective Three:** To define the nature of correlation of each of consumer shopping orientation and online purchasing of rural tourism services.

**Objective Four:** To explore whether, which and to which extent consumer demographic characteristics influence the level of their shopping orientations.

**Objective Five:** To provide adequate managerial recommendations for providers of rural tourism services.

The knowledge regarding the topics can be used for increase of sale of services of rural tourism in domestic context of the authors (Republic of Serbia).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sustainable development presents a widely discussed concept and can be explained in the modern conditions together with “environmental science” and “circular economy” as being important in finding solutions for a better environment (Sauvé, Bernard & Sloan, 2016). Hereby, the authors start from definition of sustainable development as: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need” (p. 2) and stress ecological, social and economic goals within it.

When it comes to rural tourism, Lane and Kastenholz (2015) identify its evolution from sightseeing to a number of experiential activities. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2016) suggest that although tourism in general influences host communities economically, socially, and environmentally, there are differences between urban and rural tourism. Lane and Kastenholz (2015) also stress that a number of topics emerge regarding rural tourism (governance, leadership, networking, product development and marketing) and suggest creation of New Generation Rural Tourism, based on recent developments in management and marketing.

Trukhachev (2015) identifies several potential contributions of rural tourism to sustainable development of rural areas (p. 3055):

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