UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES ”KING MIHAI I” FROM TIMISOARA
”YOUNG PEOPLE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN APPLIED LIFE SCIENCES”

05-06 November 2026



SHAPING THE RURAL TOURISM OFFER THROUGH THE LENS OF THE YOUTH TOURIST EXPERIENCE. CASE STUDY – PARȚA, TIMIȘ COUNTY

CIHAN SALIHA SUDE[1], FINDOS NAFIYE NALAN[2], FEHER ANDREA[3], TOADER COSMINA-SIMONA[3]
[1]*Erciyes University, Faculty of Tourism, Kayseri, Turkey*
[2]*Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Tourism, Isparta, Turkey*
[3]*University of Life Sciences „King Mihai I” from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania*
*Corresponding author’s e-mail: cosminatoader@usvt.ro

Abstract: *This study evaluates the impact of an educational and experiential tour in Parța commune (Timiș County) on young tourists (N=14). Utilizing a pre/post-visit survey methodology, the paper assesses shifts in perceptions, heritage attractiveness, and accessibility. Results demonstrate significant enhancement in regional rural tourism appreciation and highlight the core role of interactive cultural-gastronomic experiences.*

• Introduction

Rural tourism in Romania possesses vast, underutilized potential, particularly in historic regions such as Banat. Modern tourists—especially younger generations—are moving away from passive sightseeing toward experiential, immersive, and educational tourism. They seek authenticity, local gastronomy, and deep cultural connections.

Parța commune, located in Timiș County, provides an ideal case study. Renowned primarily for its exceptional archaeological heritage—most notably the **Neolithic Sanctuary** dating back approximately 6,000 years—Parța also features rich vernacular architecture, religious heritage and vibrant local traditions sustained by community members.

• Material and method

- **Target Group:** N=14 young participants (Average age: ~25 years).
- **Pre-Visit Questionnaire:** baseline knowledge, expectations, and excitement levels (1–5 scale).
- **Post-Visit Questionnaire:** route ratings, attraction ranking, accessibility (M37 line), and perception change.

• Results and discussions

- **Satisfaction & Overall Evaluation**

- 64.3% of participants rated the overall visit with maximum score 5/5 (28.6% rated 4/5).
- 100% Perception Shift: All respondents noted enriched perceptions of Banat's rural tourism potential (scores 4–5).

- **Experience Ranking & Impact**

- 1st Place: Neolithic Sanctuary Museum — Primary historical anchor (keywords: *ancient, sacred, archaeological*).
- 2nd Place: Ethno-Gastronomic Experience — High satisfaction from culinary tasting & traditional costume showcase.
- 3rd/4th Place: Vernacular Household & Greek Catholic Church — Essential architectural and spiritual context.

- **Logistics & Public Transport (M37)**

Transport schedule & travel time (~55–60 min) rated as convenient and comfortable.

• Conclusions

The study confirms that transforming rural tourism requires moving beyond static heritage display toward dynamic, multi-sensory storytelling. In Parța, combining archaeological depth (the Neolithic Sanctuary) with living heritage (vernacular households and local gastronomy) creates a high-impact youth tourism product. By addressing minor infrastructural and promotional gaps, Parța can solidify its position as a benchmark destination for cultural and rural tourism in the Banat region.