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CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST AND RESTAURANT CLUSTERS IN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS

In the context of our research, we note that mountainous regions in the majority of countries worldwide, despite having unique characteristics and tourism potential, still lag economically. This is associated with various factors such as challenging conditions for agricultural production, limited opportunities for industrial development, difficulties in developing transportation infrastructure, and remoteness from consumption centers and markets. However, it has been proven that the development of tourism and restaurant clusters can be an effective way to eliminate the economic backwardness of mountainous areas. The article aims to analyze concepts for developing tourism and restaurant clusters in mountainous regions. The authors have demonstrated that the development of tourism and restaurant clusters is a conceptual approach to creating a joint product and fostering collaboration among tourism or restaurant enterprises, the community, and other stakeholders in a specific area.

Keywords: cluster, cooperation, and coordination of actions, capital diffusion, gastronomic tours, culinary tours, culinary festivals.

JEL classification: D29, F20, F23, F41

СУЧАСНІ КОНЦЕПЦІЇ РОЗВИТКУ ТУРИСТИЧНИХ ТА РЕСТОРАННИХ КЛАСТЕРІВ ГІРСЬКИХ ТЕРИТОРІЙ

У межах дослідження звертаємо увагу на той факт, що гірські території більшості країн світу, хоча і мають унікальні особливості та туристичний потенціал, залишаються малорозвинутими з економічного погляду. Це пов'язано з негативним впливом різних чинників, серед яких складні умови для сільськогосподарського виробництва, обмежені можливості для промислового розвитку, труднощі у розвитку транспортної інфраструктури та віддаленість від центрів споживання і ринків. Разом з тим встановлено, що розвиток туристичних та ресторанних кластерів може бути ефективним способом ліквідації економічної відсталості гірських територій. Отже, мета статті полягає у виділенні та аналізі різних концепцій розвитку туристичних та ресторанних кластерів у гірських регіонах. Результати дослідження виокремлюють основні особливості концептуального розвитку туристичних та ресторанних кластерів у гірських регіонах, вказуючи на їх можливі варіації. Дослідження підтверджує можливість розвитку кластерів на основі інтегрованого формату послуг, що включає партнерство між різними зацікавленими сторонами для створення комплексних туристичних та гостинних пропозицій. Це сприяє розширенню асортименту послуг та підвищенню конкурентоспроможності. Доведено, що розвиток кластерів на основі екологізації та унікалізації продукту є можливим внаслідок зростання попиту на його екологічно чисті, природоохоронні та культурно насичені складові. Це сприяє збереженню навколишнього середовища та формуванню унікальних культурних та природних цінностей. Дослідження підтверджує можливість розвитку кластерів на основі спільного використання культурних ресурсів, через створення гібридних туристично-ресторанних продуктів. Це сприяє досягненню максимального задоволення клієнтів та ефективному використанню місцевих ресурсів. Доведено, що можливим є розвиток кластерів на основі дифузії капіталу,

що може забезпечити рівномірний розподіл економічного розвитку та покращення якості життя в гірських регіонах. Це відкриває нові можливості для розвитку підприємництва та підвищення доступності інфраструктури. Відзначено, що кожна з цих концепцій має унікальні переваги та вимоги, і їх взаємодія може сприяти створенню стійких та ефективних кластерних систем. Практичне значення дослідження полягає в формуванні можливостей для розширення розуміння та практичного застосування концепцій розвитку туристичних та ресторанных кластерів в гірських регіонах.

Ключові слова: кластер, співпраця та координація дій, дифузія капіталу, гастрономічні тури, кулінарні тури, кулінарні фестивалі.

Statement of the problem. In the context of our research, we note that mountainous regions in the majority of countries worldwide, despite having unique characteristics and tourism potential, still lag economically. This is associated with various factors such as challenging conditions for agricultural production, limited opportunities for industrial development, difficulties in developing transportation infrastructure, and remoteness from consumption centers and markets. However, using examples such as the Alpine region (comprising numerous mountainous areas in Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France), the Dolomites (encompassing various territories of the mountain massif in the Northern Italian Alps, Italy), and Tyrol (including numerous mountainous areas in the autonomous region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Austria), it has been proven that the development of tourism and restaurant clusters can be an effective means of addressing the economic underdevelopment of mountainous regions.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issues of identifying concepts for cluster development in local territories were addressed by: O.O. Korolovych, O.O. Maslyhan, V.V. Hobyk, Mashtaler O., Hutsul T., Cheban Yu., and Tsimbalistova O. However, the research series shows that defining and developing concepts for cluster development in mountainous regions is only the first step in addressing the problems of economic neglect. To achieve real progress, it is necessary to thoroughly study the opportunities and challenges facing these regions.

Objectives of the article. The aim of the article is to identify and analyze various concepts for the development of tourism and restaurant clusters in mountainous regions.

Summary of the main results of the study. Indeed, the development of tourism and restaurant clusters is a conceptual approach to creating a joint product and fostering collaboration among tourism or restaurant enterprises, the community, and other stakeholders in a specific area. Classically, a functioning cluster formation has fundamental characteristics that allow maximizing the potential of the territory, such as: shared resource utilization; exchange of knowledge and experience; cooperation and coordination of actions to enhance competitiveness and create favorable conditions for the development of a joint product. Therefore, regarding mountainous territories, the development of tourism and restaurant clusters is also promising, driven by a variety of positive effects resulting from the operation of the aforementioned characteristics. Conceptually, the development of tourism and restaurant clusters in mountainous regions is facilitated by effects such as:

1. Creation of a joint product with high added value. This is achievable through collaborative work and pooling resources, whereby tourism and restaurant enterprises can create innovative and unique joint products that will attract more visitors and generate higher profits. Examples include

the creation of gastronomic and culinary tours, culinary festivals, or themed evenings. This can be achieved through events that combine features of both tourism and restaurant products, including culinary masterclasses with local chefs, tastings of local dishes and beverages made from local products, organizing dinners or barbecues with local delicacies, and others, according to the specifics outlined in Table 1.

2. Improving the quality and diversity of services. Specifically, by combining the hospitality and restaurant businesses' various services and customer experiences, it's possible to create comprehensive package offerings that satisfy diverse visitor needs and complement the joint product. An example is creating packages that provide a comprehensive tourist experience, meeting diverse visitor needs, and allowing them to enjoy quality leisure and culinary experiences, simultaneously saving time and effort in organizing entertainment and dining.

3. Enhancing the attractiveness of a specific area. Collaborative development of tourism and restaurant businesses allows for increasing the attractiveness of mountainous areas for tourists, as each participant contributes to boosting visitor traffic through a variety of offerings, improved service quality, marketing initiatives, creating a unique image, and infrastructure development. The features of enhancing the attractiveness of mountainous areas through the development of tourism and restaurant clusters are outlined in Table 2.

4. Creating new job opportunities: Cluster development can lead to an increase in the number of jobs in the tourism and restaurant sectors, contributing to social development and raising the living standards of the region's residents, as well as the development of the local economy.

Taking into consideration the effects outlined above, modern concepts for developing tourism and restaurant clusters in mountainous areas aim to create sustainable models of cooperation that cater to the needs and interests of various stakeholders. These concepts include an integrated approach to tourist and hospitality services, differentiation of joint products through unique and eco-friendly features, utilization of cultural resources to diversify tourist and restaurant products, and ensuring capital diffusion from the central mountainous area to its adjacent satellites. Now, let's take a closer look at each of these concepts.

So, the concept of cluster development through the creation of an integrated format of tourist and hospitality services is based on cooperation between local authorities, businesses, communities, and other stakeholders to ensure a balanced and sustainable tourist and restaurant product. Key aspects of this concept include partnership, integration of various types of tourist and restaurant services (to create a hybrid product), and specific product innovations (see Figure 1).

The concept's implementation ensures the hybridization of the joint product created by cluster participants through

Table 1

Characterization of the features of creating a joint product with high added value

Joint product	Components of the joint product	Specifics of organizing events that ensure the combination of features of tourism and restaurant products
Gastronomic and culinary tours	Organizing excursions to local farms or markets	Participants learn about local products and ingredients, their production characteristics, and quality.
	Culinary masterclasses with local chefs	Participants study the techniques for preparing traditional dishes using local ingredients.
	Tastings of local dishes and beverages	Introduction to the culture and history of the region's cuisine.
Culinary festivals	Chef competitions and gourmet contests (culinary battles, tasting competitions, etc.) *	Participants attend competitions between professional chefs or food enthusiasts for the best preparation of dishes or for their taste qualities.
	Tasting booths showcasing various culinary dishes, beverages, or products	Exhibitions where visitors can taste various dishes, beverages, or products presented at a particular event. This allows guests to sample excellent taste and product quality, as well as explore the diversity of cuisines, styles, or brands.
Themed parties	Local cuisine parties (from casual outdoor gatherings to sophisticated events in restaurants or private homes)	Parties where participants can enjoy authentic dishes and beverages characteristic of a specific region or local culture.
	Barbecues or picnics with local delicacies and musical accompaniment	An event or part of a larger gathering where participants have the opportunity to enjoy dishes made from local products, prepared outdoors, often in scenic natural settings.

Note

* It may have various formats and rules, but the overall goal is to enhance culinary skills and discover the best dishes and culinary talents

Source: formed based on [1; 5]

Table 2

Characterization of the features of enhancing the attractiveness of mountainous areas through the development of tourism and restaurant clusters

Direction of increasing attractiveness	Participant's contribution to increasing visitor traffic	Specifics of enhancing attractiveness
Variety of offerings	Tourism and restaurant businesses can create diverse and innovative tourism products and services that attract various categories of visitors	Enhancing attractiveness occurs through joint efforts and coordinated actions
Improvement of service quality	Tourism and restaurant enterprises strive for continuous improvement in service quality, making the mountainous region more attractive to tourists.	Enhancing attractiveness occurs through competition and cooperation within the cluster
Marketing initiatives	Tourism and restaurant enterprises aim to promote the mountainous area as a tourist brand, attracting the attention of more potential visitors	Enhancing attractiveness occurs through a shared marketing approach to promoting the territory
Creating a unique image	Tourism and restaurant enterprises strive to create a unique image for the region, setting it apart from other tourist destinations.	Enhancing attractiveness occurs through the formation of cluster identity
Infrastructure development	Tourism and restaurant enterprises aim to invest in the development of tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, restaurants, and tourist routes.	Joint investments help make the region more attractive and convenient for visitors

Source: formed based on [1; 3; 5]

the integration of various types of tourism and restaurant services to develop new, integrated, and unique products that meet diverse visitor needs and expectations (including combining tourism and culinary elements and thematic and experimental restaurants).

The concept of eco-friendliness and uniqueness of the joint product is based on the natural and cultural values of mountain regions, as well as the preservation and restoration of natural resources and culinary heritage. Key aspects of this concept include the use of environmentally friendly materials in construction, design, and service, efficient use of energy and water resources, biodiversity protection, as well as the creation of a unique customer experience (see Figure 2).

The implementation of the concept ensures the creation of sustainable tourism clusters that promote economic development while preserving the environment.

The concept of shared use of cultural resources to diversify the formats of tourist and restaurant products is based on collaboration between restaurants, hotels, and local museums or cultural centers, enabling the creation of engaging and rich offerings for visitors. Key aspects of this concept include maximizing audience reach, synergy between sectors, leveraging local resources, and economic benefits (see Figure 3). The implementation of the concept ensures a combination of cultural and gastronomic elements, creating a unique and memorable experience for visitors and encouraging repeat visits and positive feedback.

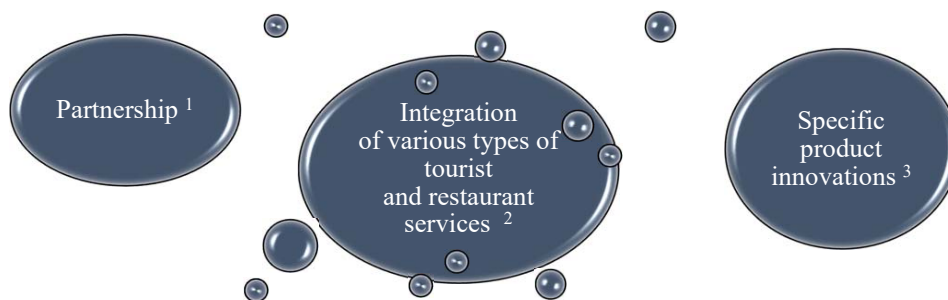


Figure 1. Key aspects of the cluster development concept through the creation of an integrated format of tourist and hospitality services

Note

¹ Collaboration between local authorities, businesses, and communities is the cornerstone of this concept.

² Integration of different types of tourist and hotel services to create a hybrid product.

³ Creating new and unique products that meet the needs and expectations of consumers

Source: formed based on [2; 3–4]

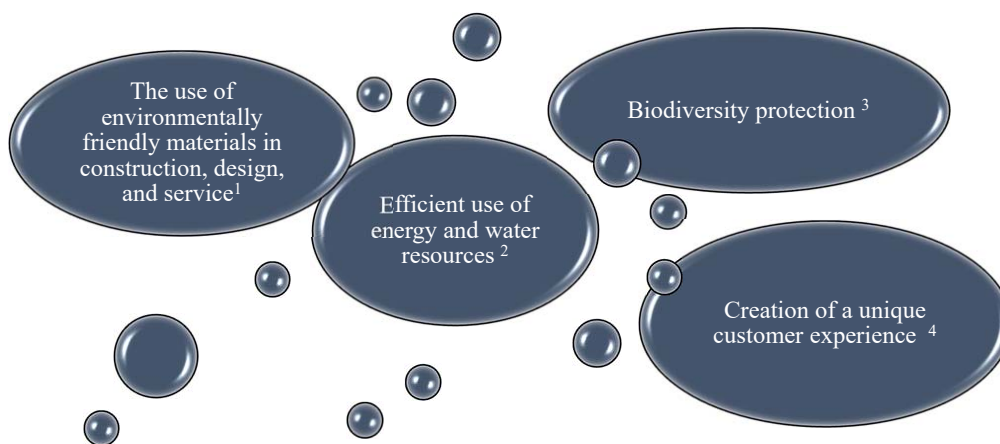


Figure 2. Key aspects of the concept of eco-friendliness and uniqueness of the joint tourist and restaurant product of the cluster

Note

¹ Utilization of renewable materials, natural colors and textures, as well as reduction of emissions and waste.

² Implementation of energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy sources, energy-saving systems, and water resource management to reduce the negative impact on the environment.

³ Preservation and restoration of biodiversity in mountain ecosystems through the implementation of nature conservation measures, preservation of natural landscapes, and control of tourist flows to reduce negative impacts on the wilderness.

⁴ Offering tourist and restaurant services that highlight the uniqueness and cultural values of mountain regions. This may include cultural events, ecological tours, culinary workshops, and traditional mountain rituals.

Source: formed based on [1–2; 4]

The concept of capital diffusion from the central mountainous area to its surrounding satellites is based on creating conditions for local economic uplift and improving the quality of life for local communities. Key aspects of this concept include the creation of new business opportunities, reducing territorial development disparities, and improving accessibility to services and infrastructure (see Figure 4).

The implementation of this concept ensures the formation of a stable and evenly developed economic base in the central mountainous regions and neighboring areas, which in turn contributes to improving the quality of life for local residents and fosters sustainable regional development.

According to the provisions outlined, it is evident that each of the highlighted concepts has its unique advantages and requirements, and their interaction can contribute to the creation of resilient and effective cluster systems.

Conclusions. Characterizing different concepts for the development of tourist and restaurant clusters in mountainous regions reveals the potential for a wide range of strategies and approaches. Based on the research findings, the following key conclusions regarding possible variations are presented:

– It has been demonstrated that cluster development based on an integrated service format is feasible, involving partnerships between various stakeholders to create comprehensive tourist and hospitality offerings. It contributes to expanding the range of services and enhancing competitiveness.

– It has been demonstrated that the development of clusters based on eco-friendliness and product uniqueness is feasible, which ensures increasing demand for environmentally friendly, nature-friendly, and culturally rich tourist routes. It contributes to preserving the environment and shaping unique cultural and natural values.

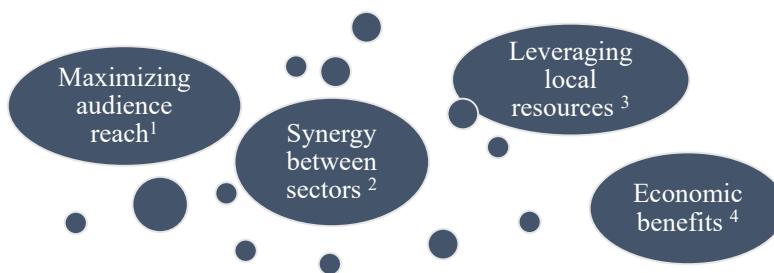


Figure 3. Key aspects of the concept of leveraging cultural resources to diversify the formats of tourist and restaurant products within the cluster

Note

¹ Collaboration across different sectors allows for creating offerings that appeal to a wide range of visitors. For example, tourists can visit a local museum or cultural center and then enjoy dishes of local cuisine at a restaurant that collaborates with the museum.

² Collaboration among restaurants, hotels, and cultural centers creates opportunities to develop unique and engaging visitor experiences. For example, the inclusion of cultural events or tours in the hotel's leisure program.

³ Collaboration with local cultural institutions allows for the utilization of local traditions, history, and cultural heritage to create a unique product. It contributes to the development and popularization of local culture.

⁴ The joint utilization of cultural resources can lead to increased tourist flow and profitability in the industry. Additionally, it can contribute to the development of the local economy by creating new job opportunities and attracting investments.

Source: formed based on [2; 4–5]

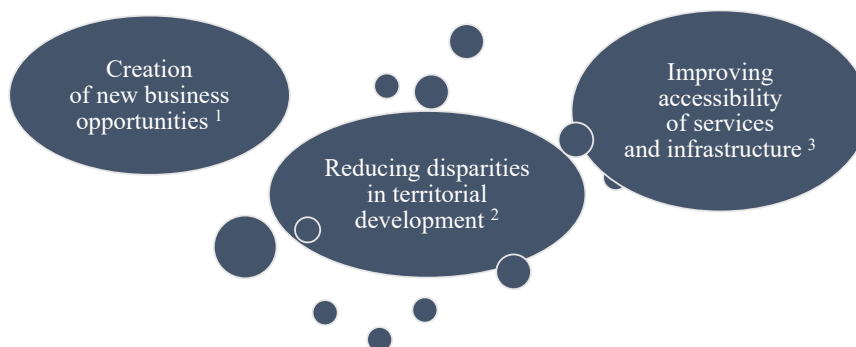


Figure 4. Key aspects of the capital diffusion concept in the cluster (from the central mountainous area to its surrounding satellites)

Note

¹ Capital diffusion can contribute to the development of new businesses and entrepreneurship in neighboring villages or towns located near the central mountainous area. It may include the development of tourism, agriculture, crafts, and other industries.

² The transfer of capital to neighboring areas helps reduce the development gap between the central mountainous territory and its surroundings. It contributes to greater social and economic growth across the region.

³ The distribution of capital can lead to improvements in infrastructure and the availability of various services in the neighboring towns and cities surrounding mountainous areas. It includes the development of roads, transportation networks, education, healthcare, and other social and commercial services.

Source: formed based on [2; 3–4]

– It has been demonstrated that the development of clusters based on the joint utilization of cultural resources is feasible, promoting the development of hybrid tourist-restaurant products that offer visitors rich and unique experiences. It contributes to achieving maximum customer satisfaction and harnessing local resources.

– It has been shown that the development of clusters based on capital diffusion is possible, aimed at ensuring a balanced distribution of economic development and

improving the quality of life in mountainous regions. It can open up new opportunities for entrepreneurship and enhance infrastructure accessibility.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that each of these concepts has unique advantages and requirements, and their interaction can contribute to the creation of sustainable and effective cluster systems. Naturally, further research should broaden the understanding and practical application of development concepts for tourism and restaurant clusters in mountainous regions.

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