

THE CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY, 2019

# iGeneration

Collection of Papers

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Contemporary Trends in Tourism and Hospitality, 2019

# get ready for **iGeneration**

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Novi Sad | Vojvodina | Serbia

University of Novi Sad | Faculty of Sciences DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT

> Contemporary Trends in Tourism and Hospitality, 2019

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# HOW ARE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS CHANGING THE HOTEL INDUSTRY? CAN YOUR HOTEL BENEFIT FROM IT?

Cvetanka Ristova<sup>A\*</sup>, Tanja Angelkova Petkova<sup>A</sup>

#### Abstract

When it comes to marketing, few tools in the hotel industry are as powerful as social media. Social media influencers are a hot topic these days in the hotel industry. Thanks to their sizable caches of personal data, platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have made it easier than ever for hotels to target specific markets based on age, location, gender and interests. Even with the impact of social media in general, one of the fastest growing methods for choosing a target audience now are social media influencers. Hotels are using influencers as the face of their advertisements, because influencers endorse opinions about their products, which are shared on social media platforms and help spread viral conversations about the hotel brand online and have completely changed the way guests are making their accommodation decisions. In the age of people posting and sharing their lives online, guests are more inclined to make hotel accommodation decisions based on what the influencers they follow are posting. Therefore, for hotels, using social media influencers enables the opportunity of a practice of building relationships with the influencers who build relationships for the hotels. Whether a social media influencer's audience is small or large, an influencer can reach consumers via their blogs and social networks that the hotel may not be able to.

Keywords: Industry, Influencers, Hotel, Hospitality, Social media

#### Introduction

With most hotels being dependent on word-of-mouth, which with the advent of social media has spread beyond from a limited group to the whole world, and good reviews from loyal guests, makes the social media a perfect tool for marketing promotion and branding in the tourist market (Ristova and Angelkova-Petkova, 2018a). Since hotels nowadays have a harder time reaching out to guests, influencers play a growing and important role in word-of-mouth marketing. More

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and more hotels are engaging them for campaigns, and the benefits are numerous. Just by getting an influencer from respective niche, meaning a specific market segment, share a post; the hotel can get thousands of targeted people viewing the post overnight. Influencers are a great way to build a larger follower base in a short period of time in the hotel industry, and the basic success is based just on the fundamental basis of peer-to-peer recommendation (Terttunen, 2017). This research further seeks to understand the notion of social media influencers to a better understanding of the process of engaging influencers in hotel marketing and promotion.

#### The phenomena of social media influencer

Over the last decade, we have seen social media grow rapidly in importance. Social media is now a part of the digital technology that now is connecting the guests with their opinions and recommendations with millions of people, including their friends on the social media, and common travelers with similar opinion who they never actually met (Ristova and Angelkova-Petkova, 2018b). Inevitably, these people look up to influencers in social media to guide them with their decision making. According to Freberg et al. (2011), social media influencers are a new type of endorsers who are independent and shape audience attitudes through different types of media. Francalanci and Hussain (2015) explain it as users of social media who have acquired a wide audience. De Veirman et al. (2017) explains that a social media influencer can be defined as a user of social media who accumulated a great following and established credibility and whose high reach and authenticity can lead to impact and persuasion in interaction with their following. Social media influencers are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a particular topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views. Social influencers are self-made; they have built their own audience over time based on their expertise and smoothly become opinion leaders. Bakshy et al. (2011) stated that 'influencers are content creators and storytellers, and they know how to create enthusiasm' (p. 65).

Following how fast the technology and with it the social media developed, the concept of social media influencer grew substantially in the past 10 years. Influencers now share relevant opinions that generate authentic conversations. They have earned through time and engagement their relationship with their followers and it developed a two-way communication that an influencer genuinely provides to people who are interested in what they post on their social media profiles (Alic et al., 2017). Influencers now operate on blogs and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest or YouTube. Having the most authentic and active relationships between the influencer and their followers, brands are now recognizing and encouraging because influencers can create trends and encourage their followers to buy products they promote.

#### The rise of social media influencer marketing

Daniel Newman describes influencer marketing as the "next golden goose" of marketing (Newman, 2015). It is, therefore, no surprise that in recent years with the development of social media, we have experienced an entirely new form of brand communication via social media: influencer marketing. Social media influencer marketing is the most important new approach to marketing in a decade for those professionals at the leading edge of purchasing decision-making. Social media influencer marketing is also a term that refers to leveraging the ability of key people to support a brand and spread the word to their followers. It has been established as a highly-effective method for brands to build and engage with audiences on social media.

But, in order to clarify what influencer marketing is, an overview of the term itself is necessary, therefore several definitions and points of view currently exist. Kádeková and Holienčinová (2018) defined it as "influencer marketing involves marketing products and services to those who have a sway over the things other people buy. This market influence typically stems from an individual's expertise, popularity or reputation." (p. 91). Brown and Hayes (2008) define an influencer as "a third party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision, but may never be accountable for it". Keller and Berry (2003) state that influencers are activists, are well-connected, have impact, have active minds, and are trendsetters, though this set of attributes is aligned specifically to consumer markets. Social media influencer marketing by Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) is defined by as "a technique that employs social media (content created by everyday people using highly accessible and scalable technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, microblogs, bookmarks, social networks, communities, wikis, and vlogs) and social influencers (everyday people who have an outsized influence on their peers by virtue of how much content they share online) to achieve an organization's marketing and business needs." (p. 189).

#### How are influencers changing the hotel industry?

Confirming that influencers are becoming one of the most successful ways to increase awareness about a marketing promotion (Al-Msallam and Alhaddad, 2016), the hotel industry is benefiting greatly from using influencers in marketing campaigns, particularly among younger travelers, who can be significantly influenced on where they plan their trip based on someone else's vacation social media posts and photos. Google commissioned Ipsos MediaCT, an independent marketing research company in their publication Google Travel Study "The 2014 Traveler's Road to Decision" listed travel and hotel industries as the perfect industries for influencers, showing that the Internet is the most influential when it comes to inspiring leisure travel decisions. Especially when it comes to attracting younger generations, such as millennials and gen Z'ers, to the hotel, using an influencer to promote the hotel brand and facilities can draw a high level of attention and popularity, resulting in increased revenue and better visibility (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014). Especially, millennials tend to accept the meanings from social media influencers whom they admire or consider as a resemblance to themselves (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017).

Even though at first social influencers were considered as shallow and superficial people, nowadays, influencers have acclaimed its status as a principal player in the digital marketing strategy for the hotel industry. People consider them a "more credible celebrity version", meaning they trust them. So, when a social influencer posts his vacation picture somewhere in a hotel or resort, the chances that his followers consider visiting this place are actually really high and the key, as a hotelier, is not to resist these disruptive forces, but work with them and embrace them. Influencers in the hotel industry are the new generation of reviewers who can provide a real-life experience of the hotel venue through user-generated content on social media. They reach future customers by engaging on a personal level and building durable and trustworthy relationships with their followers, hotels' potential guests. Agha (n.d.) states that with its roots in the traditional form of word-of-mouth, influencers are now part of a lucrative digital marketing strategy that is influencing in the changing of hotel brand awareness, customer loyalty and driving direct bookings. This is because digital word of mouth is diffused significantly faster than its precursor and has the potential to reach a much larger audience. Knowing this, there's no good reason why the hotel industry could not profit from engaging influencers into their marketing strategy. Putting a well-known face to the hotels' brand, commercial, or one-time offer is something that can boost the hotel's popularity and increase the level of visibility in the online space. Nilsson and Vennberg (2016) study have shown that strong influencers can transform commercial promotions to valuable information and attract readers. But despite its apparent advantages, influencers are a wasted investment if hotels are not working with the right ones.

#### Which influencer is right for the hotel industry?

While the acknowledged value of using influencers in the hotel industry, selecting them to use in a campaign can prove difficult. Deciding on who to enter the partnership with in the first place has to begin with the end goal.

*Know What You're Looking For* - A travel marketer has to be sure in what results does he want for his campaign to achieve in order to know with what, or in this case with whom to achieve it. As with traditional marketing strategies, knowing the target audience is the key. (Alic et al., 2017). A hotel should know what types of guests typically attracts - and wants to attract. Also, a hotel should look at with whom its guests are interacting with. They need to check their shares and retweets to see who are the most active sharers. And check who the competition is targeting too. Only afterwards, the hotels have to look for influencers whose followers have similar characteristics to what you're on the lookout for.

*Choosing a platform* - As of 2019, the most important platforms on which hotels could employ influencers are: Instagram (89%), YouTube (70%), Facebook (45), Blogs (44%), Twitter (33%), LinkedIn (19%), Pinterest (15%), Twitch (6%), Snapchat (3%) and other (1%) (Bailis, 2019). But a hotel should choose the platform, according to what suits their target audience best. And even though, each social network platform has its own attraction to certain demographics with sex, race and income playing a large part in popularity (Biaudet, 2017), the truth is that none of them compares to Instagram. Instagram posts have become ubiquitous because they are easy to produce, approve, and publish, therefore easy to scale up. Compared to videos or longer-form content, a single photo and caption requires relatively less production cost and effort, making it a more affordable option for hotels looking to test Instagram influencer marketing (Nandagir and Philip, 2018).

*Finding the influencers* - At this point, the hotel should have a clear picture of what qualities their ideal influencer should have, and a full understanding of how they will impact your current (or future) target audience. One approach is to do an online search. Search for the hotel industry, the hotel itself, keyword, product, or message, and the word "blog" to find the blogs more likely to be clicked on. The same can be done with do the same with #hashtags. Hotels might search for anything that might be relevant, meaning to find the most prevalent people talking about them on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or other platforms. Alternatively, it's always worth keeping one eye on what the competitors are doing. Hotels can also try searching directly through their own social media interaction and find influencers that are actively engaging with the hotels' content.

*Choosing the influencers* - With millions of influencers to choose from, how could possibly the hotels select the right ones? Spencer-Harper (2018), suggests 3 key factors to ensure that hotels choose the right influencers: relevancy, engagement and authenticity. Putting the 3 key factors together, first it means working with influencers whose content and style is relevant to the hotel brand, and whose followers are likely to be the hotel target market. Second it means working with influencers who have loyal fans and score above a 2% engagement ratio. And, finally, it means working with influencers who have genuine, authentic audiences and aren't faking it.

#### Why use social media influencers? Key benefits for the hotel industry

Monitoring social media brings results, and people may already be talking. It's a hotel's responsibility to find the influencers that align well with their audience. Influencer marketing represents a bold, productive development, while using the power of social media to cut through the noise and getting messages to the right guest. Influencers do exactly that, targeting the guests that matter most and connecting them with the hotels. So, when people, like, comment or share a message on a hotel page, the message will also appear on their own pages and become visible to their friends. Thus, the number of likes, comments and shares are viewed as measures of WOM induced by a social media message (Leung et al., 2015). This paper has shown how influencers are outperforming traditional marketing in many ways. Since more and more hotels recognize its benefits, this progressive form of marketing is on the rise. Below, the authors compiled a list of the top benefits of using social media influencers that illustrate its effectiveness in the hotel industry:

*The personal touch* - There are no big-name marketing companies behind the words these influencers use to post about products. A social media influencer is seen in the eyes of their followers as someone approachable, natural and real. The informal tone of their content and friendly tone of communication on their profiles makes them feel close and authentic and that makes it a massive source of their appeal (Alic et al., 2017).

*People trust them* - Influencers are normal people. They aren't millionaire celebrities, or part of the royal family. People spend a lot of time on social media, and influencers are seen as the most trustworthy marketing method. Influencer marketing is seen as credible, likeable and authentic, because people follow the influencers by their own will to get inspiration (Biaudet, 2017).

*No hidden agendas* - Followers recognize influencers who get paid up to a million dollars per post aren't necessarily the best metric for authenticity. They tend to value social influencers who speak honestly, authentically and without a hidden agenda, because followers know that influencers are everyday folks, complete with class schedules, student loans and day jobs who write what they want, when they want— that is both powerful and empowering.

*No politics* - Social media influencers help build direct relationships with its key consumers. Over its online conversation, no one else is controlling content beside the direct voice of an influencer. Nobody with a secret agenda is telling influencers what they need to write about. The truly transparent conversations happen through the two-way conversation that is established for the product via social media (Booth and Matic, 2011) are the reason why followers have the genuine trust in the influencers.

*Target marketing made easier* - According to Matthews (2013) consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from a third party (ex. influencers) rather than a brand itself. The

influencer can be thought of as a friend connecting a brand with their target consumers. The influencer does not only bring their own followers, but they also bring the followers network. A brand should choose the platform and influencer according to what suits their target audience best. When identifying the right influencer for a company it is important to know that the name chosen has influence over buying decisions. One has to be specific about which products or service line are under consideration, and the segment being targeted (Brown and Hayes, 2008).

*Cost Effective* - An interesting insight is that influencer marketing is a relatively cost-effective way to generate brand content that can be reused. It feedbacks into the company content calendars going forward. If they've got a really nice content that has been created by an influencer, then the company can repurpose that and use it in a campaign going forward (Hobson, 2016).

#### Conclusion

Since hospitality has pioneered into the digital transformation of travel purchase decisions, guests have totally changed the way they book hotels, turning to social media to discover and ultimately purchase their next holiday. The influence of social media on a hotel performance and reputation is indisputable. Being active in this environment has given hospitality the opportunity to share information about the hotel more effectively and to better understand the guests and all interest groups, giving them a stronger, closer and a more transparent relationship with them. But as a result, for hotels adapting to the way guests want to engage with them, the rise of influencers has happened. Seen as non-traditional means of advertising, has exactly help influencers to change the hotel industry and offer guests authentic experiences and advice when making holiday purchase decisions. Influencers are able into tapping into the subconscious of the guests, and putting the hotel brand in the forefront of their minds, provoking emotion and desire just by posting pictures of the hotel. So, the hotel industry can benefit a great deal by collaborating with social media influencers, because influencers can generate stunning content, drive bookings and accomplish many other marketing goals. They also infuse every post with their unique perspective and their brand voice that later will add variety to the hotels' content. Small details transform a post into a vivid aspiration. Still, finding and choosing the right influencers to deliver this to the hotel is important, because an influencer is more than a person who has a lot of social media followers. In general, the cornerstone for the hotel needs to be that the hotel's target audience and theirs are the same. Also, choosing an influencer to work with, initially becomes a representative of the hotel. Although, much more time goes on to finding and choosing the right influencer, if the hotel put in the work to find the right one, initiating an influencer partnership can add tremendous value. This paper aims to show that partnering with an influencer can be a cost-effective form of high-quality content with built in distribution. It is highly measurable and can be targeted to very specific audiences to capture high-quality leads and engagement. This simply done through the right influencers, where the hotel's content is placed in front of guests that are already interested in the hotel's niche. Hotels don't have to spend additional funds on testing and finding their audience - the influencer has already fostered it on social media. Creating that quality, authentic content with a personal touch from the influencers alongside the fact that will resonate more with an audience, it will also aim to feel a real connection and trust to the hotel.

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# PRESENCE OF HOTELS IN SERBIA ON MAJOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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#### Abstract

Hotel industry in Serbia has been in the expansion stage in recent years. In addition to increasing the number of tourists, the hotels have significantly benefited from the use of online reservation systems and facilitated promotion through the Internet and social media plat-forms. The dynamic development of social media platforms and their increasingly intensive use, on both the demand and supply side, creates a need for a theoretical and practical approach to the study of this phenomenon. This paper aims to determine the presence of hotels in Serbia on major social media platforms, by analyzing number and activity of their official accounts on chosen platforms. The results of the analysis indicate that hotels in Serbia are present on social media platforms, but that the presence varies depending on the particular platform, and that those that are more popular with the users tend to attract hotels, since they can reach a larger audience of potential consumers.

Keywords: Hotels, Social media, Promotion

#### Introduction

Internet use among the population in Serbia has increased significantly in the last decade, so in 2017, 72.2%, of its citizens used internet. This is still below the European level (85.2%), but also above the global average (54.4%) (Internetworldstats, 2018). One of the reasons for this could be the increased popularity of social media. In 2017, there were 3.6 million Facebook users in Serbia, i.e. 51% of the population used this social network, which is above the global (26.3%) and European (41.7%) average (Kemp, 2018). Large number of Internet users in Serbia spent online time on social media (67.8%), while 7.9% of them used the Internet to book accommodation for travel (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2017). According to the same survey, 37.5% of companies used social media for their business. Since the distinction of tourist and hotel product is an inability to test it before use, the importance of the internet and social media in promotion is greater than in industries of a different nature. Hotels in Serbia recognized that, and

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in the end of the first decade of the XXI century, a large number of them had active web sites (Stankov, 2010). As with the emergence of web 2.0 there was a phenomenon and rapid expansion of social media, hotels in Serbia began to recognize their importance for promotion purposes (Kalinić and Vujičić, 2019). This paper aims to determine hotels' presence on major global social media platforms, by examining their official social media accounts. This can provide insights of hotels' social media preference for promotion activities, in relation to current capabilities of examined social media platforms.

#### Characteristics of major social media platforms

Technological advancement, a simple user interface of web 2.0 applications, and the opportunities they offer have led to the great popularity of social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This primarily reflects in the constant increase in the number of users, which in January 2018 amounted to 3.19 billion, or the majority of Internet users who in the same period accounted for 4.02 billion users. More precisely, the number of social media users increased by 362 million in relation to the same month of 2017. This data is also supported by the fact that in the last quarter of 2017, Facebook and YouTube websites were ranked second and third in overall global traffic. In terms of total number of search queries on Google in 2017, Facebook is the most searched term, followed by YouTube. The frequently used abbreviation for Facebook, fb, is in tenth place, while Instagram is the 14th most popular search term. The average number of social media accounts rose to eight per user of the Internet. In this regard, Facebook leads the list of social media platforms with 2.16 billion active users at a monthly level (Kemp, 2018). After Facebook, the most monthly active users visit YouTube, 1.5 billion, and Instagram, 800 million. Twitter is in sixth place with 330 million users. Although these platforms are globally popular, access to them is partly or completely prohibited in certain countries, such as China, North Korea, Iran, and others (Talmadge, 2016). This has opened up space for the development of other social media platforms in these countries, so some Chinese platforms have become one of the most popular (Qzone, Sina Weibo, Baidu Tieba, YY) with hundreds of millions users, which is not surprising given the population of that country. The Russian network Vkontakte concludes an example of other popular social media platforms with 97 million users (Kemp, 2018).

#### Facebook functionalities for hotel promotion

As the most user-friendly platform, Facebook attracts the most attention in both academic and business circles. For hotels, initial step is to create Facebook page. Each Facebook page has a unique structure to start from, and which is, in fact, an empty sheet of paper that the company needs to fill. Based on a review of contemporary research into the use of Facebook for business purposes (Hays, Page and Buhalis, 2013; Mariani, Di Felice and Mura, 2016; Roque and Raposo, 2016), as well as on the basis of progress in this field, the next section will explain the basic characteristics of the Facebook page in more detail. These characteristics are not finite; on the contrary, taking into account the dynamic nature of this social media, they are options that offer different possibilities depending on the needs and capabilities of each organization. What is very important is the authenticity of the site, and if the user is not directed from the organization's official website, the question arises as to whether the site's Facebook page is authentic (Stankov, Lazić and Dragićević, 2010). In this respect, full authenticity is achieved only when

the Facebook page is manually verified as it is recognized by assigning a special verification sign, which is placed next to the page name (Facebook for Developers, 2018).

The Facebook page can be enriched with page tabs, and thus serve as a separate web page with different content. In addition to standard tabs such as About Us, Photos, Video, and others, organizations can create their own tabs that contain different types of applications, reservation forms, questionnaires, integration with other social media and others. Created tabs can provide a much richer experience with users when interacting with the organization's side, and add value to them (Pitre, 2015). In the page settings, hotels can set up a business template to make the best use of the features provided by this network. In terms of using Facebook pages for promotion purposes, there are many functionalities with which organizations need to be familiarized with. In this sense, Facebook allows to selecting the auditorium based on various parameters. This can be performed with the help of a tool called Audience Insights, which, in addition to the demographic characteristics of the auditorium, provides insights into which pages they like, how often they access Facebook and from what devices, transaction activity of the user, and also whether transactions are done online and other (Facebook for Business, 2014). In digital marketing, Call to Action is often used as a motivation for users to take the desired action when visiting a website (Eisenberg and Eisenberg, 2006). This feature on Facebook pages is provided in the form of a button at the top of the page, which allows hotels to connect with other content on and off Facebook, which can additionally help hotels in their promotional activities. There are currently seven types of action calls available: reserve now, contact us, use the app, play video games, buy now, sign up and watch video (Facebook for Business, 2014).

#### YouTube functionalities for hotel promotion

YouTube platform was established in mid-2005 and was based on technological innovations. The functionalities that have evolved over time, along with a system of recommendations that suggested similar videos to users based on videos they watch. These functionalities were crucial for rapid development of the platform, and since 2008, it has consistently been among the ten most visited websites globally. In this regard, YouTube is a social media platform and content aggregator (Burgess and Green, 2013).

Creating a business account is simple, and consist of indicating that it is a business account and specifying the name of the account which will be displayed to other users. After that, You-Tube provides functionality that differs from personal accounts. As with most social media platforms, hotels need to select a profile photo (Channel Icon), as well as a photo of the header of the account (Banner). YouTube's functionalities for business also include tabs that hotels can customize and modify according to their needs. The default tabs are home page, videos, playlists, channels, discussion, and "about us". The last tab allows hotels to fill in basic contact information, as well as links to the official website and official accounts on other social media platforms, as well as a short text that describes their brand more closely. When creating and publishing video for promotional activities, hotels must pay attention to certain aspects of the post so that interested users can easily find them. This includes adding keywords and phrases to the title, as well as the description of the post, detailing the transcripts and titles written on the video, selecting the theme markers and the cover image of each video post. In addition, YouTube provides some analytical capabilities to business accounts, which include user knowledge, such as demographic characteristics, location, engagement, and others (Barnhart, 2017).

#### Twitter functionalities for hotel promotion

Twitter is a social media platform that can be defined as a microblogging platform primarily focused on text content. It allows users to express their feelings, share news, and various information in a format that is limited to 280 characters (initially 140). Given the limitations in publication length, this platform is simplified, which is reflected in profile characteristics, as well as in dynamics of content creation, so that every second, six thousand posts (tweets) are published. This has influenced Twitter to become one of the leading social media platforms that serve information to the public. One of the main features of this platform is the use of hashtags, which further describes the publications and gives them a context. Thanks to this, it is easier to find posts, which contributes to Twitter being a source of news and information. Additionally, this also enables the identification of trends that are at a global, national, and regional level, which can contribute to hotels that carry out their promotional activities on this platform (Philander and Zhong, 2016). In terms of business users, this platform has proven to be an important promotional channel especially for small and medium enterprises (Twitter and Research Now, 2016).

Functionalities of Twitter for hotels are reflected in the possibility of creating a business account through which they can perform promotional activities. The basic components of the business account include, the Twitter username, which is displayed with the prefix @ and allows the user to tag a business page, as well as to mention the account in the user's posts. It generally contains some components of the official name, and is shorter compared to it. Above the User Name, Twitter displays the name of the account that can be changed as needed. Below this, hotels are allowed to fill up a short text up to 160 characters where they can provide basic information about their facility, or more often the brand. The hotel's location, as well as the official website are also visible below this text. Business accounts also include a profile photo, which is smaller in size and which, and is an icon on each post. Additionally, the photo in the header of the account is larger and allows setting up not only visual content, but also dynamic animations and videos. When it comes to posts, business accounts are allowed pin posts that they consider important so that it appears at the top of the profile, and serves to provide users with information regardless of when they visit the profile, and if in the meantime, there were still postings on the page (Twitter, 2018).

#### Instagram functionalities for hotel promotion

Instagram is a social media platform focused on creating and sharing image content, launched in 2010. It allows users to share their experiences in a simple way through high quality photos. The features of this platform allow users to create, share and upload photos without having to leave the platform. The main feature of this platform is that it is a mobile-first, that is, all functionalities are only available through a mobile application, while they are limited if accessed from personal computers. Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram does not allow the publication of exclusively textual content, but only with the photo, or with later introduced functionality video, and is limited to 2,200 characters. On the other hand, hashtags are of great importance, and textual content appears in this form. They give context to photography or video, and can include, among other things, location, emotion, photo editing techniques, and the content itself (Highfield and Leaver, 2014).

The functionality of Instagram for hotels promotional activities, enable the creation of a business account that provide insights on followers and posts. These features are available in

the Instagram application for mobile phones. As with consumer accounts, in the case of business users, it is possible to link to an existing account on Facebook, while hotels can add information such as address, phone number or e-mail to their business account. These data are shown under "Contact" which is placed at the top of the page. This allows potential customers to contact the hotel, or get directions. The hotels are encouraged to verify their account, after which the blue verification mark will appear on their account, similar to other social media platforms. A call to action is still in the implementation phase on this social media platform, and so far, it allows hotels to create a button that can contain one of four different options like "buy", "order", "schedule" and "book". In addition, the ability to purchase products and services directly through Instagram is in the development stage and is available only in certain countries. User insights, provide business accounts with the ability to obtain information about the gender, age, and location of users who interact with the page. Additionally, customer insights provide information on how users interact with the hotel's accounts, through the "likes", comment and saved posts, and through various parameters that indicate the popularity of posts relative to the time component, location, or hashtags (Instagram for Business, 2016).

#### **Data Collection**

Data on categorized hotels in Serbia was obtained from the official database of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2017). According to the October 2017 document, on the territory of the Republic of Serbia (without data for AP Kosovo and Metohija) there were 336 hotels.

After acquiring the database, a search of hotels' websites was performed, and afterwards, a search of their social media accounts. Factor for selecting social media platform was, their popularity, and number of users, both globally and in Serbia. According to this, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube platforms were selected. Search was carried out using the Google Chrome v68 web browser. In addition, it was determined whether there were any activities or posts on these accounts. Active accounts were considered as ones where at least one post occurred in the period between November 1, 2016 and October 31, 2017.

#### Results

The first task was to determine the presence of hotels in Serbia on the most popular social media platforms. Table 1 shows that Facebook is by far the most popular platform among hotels in Serbia for promotion of their products and services, with 305 out of 336 hotels (90.77%) having an official account on this social media platform. Little over half hotels, 181 out of 336 (53.86%), have an official account on Instagram, making it the second most popular platform. Considerably fewer hotels are present on Twitter and especially YouTube. In the case of former, 104 hotels have and official account (30.95%), and in the case of the latter, only 52 of them (15.47%).

Social Media platform	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Youtube
Number of hotels with official accounts	305	104	181	52
% of total hotels	90,77%	30,95%	53,86%	15,47%

Table 1. Presence of hotels in Serbia on social media platforms

Source: Author

The next analysis was aimed at determining the activity of hotel official accounts on social media platforms and providing a clearer picture of it. Results determined that there were activities in 259 accounts on Facebook, 160 on Instagram, 45 on Twitter and 33 on YouTube. However, when the number of active accounts is compared with the number of hotels with accounts on each platform (Table 2), Instagram has the most active accounts, i.e. 160 out of 181 (88.4%) of hotel accounts are considered active on this platform. Most of the hotels are active on Facebook as well, although a bit less compared to Instagram, with 259 of 305, or 84.91% of hotels accounts that were considered active.

Table 2. Percentage of hotels' active accounts on given social media platforms

Social Media platform	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube
Number of hotels with active accounts	259	45	160	33
Number of hotels with accounts	305	104	181	52
% of total hotel accounts	84,91 %	43,27%	88,4%	63,46%

Source: Author

Hotels were considerably less active on YouTube and Twitter. Even though hotels had fewest accounts on YouTube, results indicate that the majority of them were active, with 33 of 52 accounts (63.46%) having activity in the examined period. On the other hand, less than half of hotels' Twitter accounts, 45 out of 104 (43.27%) were active.

#### Conclusion

As Facebook is the dominant and generally accepted social media platform with over two billion active users, high presence and activity of hotels in Serbia is not surprising. In addition, Instagram has about 800 million users, and Twitter 328 millions of them, and in this sense, the presence of hotels in Serbia on social media platforms generally follows this order, indicating that hotels value number of users that can be reached through a platform. However, the extremely high activity of the hotel at Instagram, and also low on Twitter and YouTube requires a special attention. Both Instagram and Twitter platforms are in some way specialized, Twitter for short text releases (up to 280 characters), and Instagram for sharing multimedia content (posts containing only text are not allowed). Timelines of these social media platforms also differ, and even though Instagram is of a more recent date (founded in October 2010), it surpassed the Twitter (founded in March 2006) by the number of users in mid-2015 (Kharpal, 2015). In addition, the very nature of these two social media platform differs, and thus allows the hotels to publish various types of content and engage with different audiences.

Hotels in Serbia are least present on YouTube, yet this social media platform has around 1.5 billion users, and is therefore only behind Facebook. However, it must be taken into account that this platform is specialized in sharing video content, and that it is just one way of commu-

nicating with users. Production of video content, especially of high quality, certainly requires additional resources. This implies a need for staff with particular skills and knowledge, or commissioning third parties specialized in the production of video content, which also requires additional financial resources. YouTube, which was established in February 2004, represented a revolutionary platform on a global scale. Over time, with the development of technical capabilities, other social media platforms added features that allow posting of video content. Consequently, at the end of October 2014, Facebook passed YouTube by the number of video posts. All this indicate that number of users of a social media platform plays a major role for hotels when deciding where to carry out their promotion efforts. However, other factors should not be neglected. This includes design and technical capabilities of a social media platform as well as the resources needed to engage with users and achieve promotional goals.

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# IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG YOUNG PARTICIPANTS OF MUSIC FESTIVALS IN VOJVODINA AND HUNGARY

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#### Abstract

In the recent years the Y and Z generations have become a target group of various economic sectors and they are playing an increasingly large role in the tourism industry as well. Since these generations are "digital natives", they are using information intensively from the web in their decisions and they adapt rapidly to trends. Users share an increasing number of experience and knowledge on the Internet which affect others' consumption habits, (touristic) decisions, image and opinions on different places and events. Within the studied age groups, the tourist behaviour of Z generation are given particular importance, becoming a priority target group, since they will enter a stage of life in the next decades, in which they are able to spend the most on tourism. Knowing about travelling habits and decision-making processes of young generations can be useful for the tourism service suppliers, because their habits can substantially affect the future tourism development directions. During our research we analysed the relationship between social media use and travel decision-making among the young participants of music festivals in Vojvodina and Hungary. On the one hand we made a questionnaire survey among the Y and Z generations of two festivals in the study area (in the Youth Days of Szeged and in Green Future of Ada), and we also asked the students from the University of Szeged. As social media can indirectly contribute to the promotion of festivals and settlements through the public posts of the festivals, on the other hand we analysed the posts of a popular photo-sharing site (Instagram), searching the headings (hashtags) for references to the geographical places associated with the selected music festivals. Based on the results it can be concluded that young people's travel and festival decisions are increasingly influenced by the social media, so the role of online marketing can be significant to reach these generations. Therefore, the shared social media content linked to festivals can strengthen the attractive potential of a tourism destination and with appropriate marketing, they can make some places better known by changing their image.

*Keywords*: Y and Z generations, Travel habits, Festival tourism, Social media, Destination image

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#### Introduction

With the explosive development of technology and mobile communications, Internet plays a major role in everyday life and also in tourism. Within the Internet, one of the most conspicuous is the growth of social media, creating new trends and opportunities for tourism. Users have more and more available information and shared experiences on social media sites (Dudás et al., 2017) which have an impact on others' consumption habits, (tourist) decisions, and opinions on different places (Málovics et. al., 2015). The accelerating globalization, and competition for tourists makes the marketing ideas, that can shape the image of a destination more and more important, because different tourist benefits can come from image building (Michalkó, 2014). Social media content plays a major role in the choice of the tourist destination, which can be observed mainly in the Y and Z generation (born after 1980), creating new trends and opportunities for tourism. Today's young people travel a lot to diverse destinations, to different events (such as festivals) where they can enjoy community experiences. Most people book on the Internet, crave for information, use the opportunities provided by the Internet to make the most of their trips and share their experiences instantly on different social sites (Pendergast, 2010). Therefore, it is worth examining the behavior of these generations, as they are the travelers of the future, influencing each other's consumer habits. Visiting the festivals provides good conditions for the creation and enjoyment of non-routine experiences, thus making festival tourism more and more popular for them. In particular, music festivals are very popular among them, so we had focus on light music festivals, which are the most popular among younger generations, so we can examine the significance of new opportunities provided by technology in festival tourism. Our aim was to assess the relationship between social media usage and travel decision-making process among young festival visitors who are participating in festivals in Vojvodina and Hungary. To do this, we made a questionnaire survey among the Y and Z generations of two festivals in the study area (in the Youth Days of Szeged and in Green Future of Ada), and we also asked the students from the University of Szeged. Since social media can indirectly contribute to the promotion of festivals and settlements through the entries of the festivals, we also analyzed the posts related to festivals by an increasingly popular image sharing site (Instagram).

#### Literature review – The role of social media in tourism

Nowadays, when the usage of Internet is common, the easiest and fastest way for tourists to get information about the potential travel experience is searching on the Internet. The various interactive communication interfaces have become the most important source of information, where users together make the content and share their travel experiences (Eszes, 2007). These include social networking sites (e.g. as Facebook, Twitter), photo and video sharing portals (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat), travel-related blogs, and special tourism-related websites (e.g. TripAdvisor, Foursquare). These sites are information gathering platforms and also sharing interface for potential travelers. These are especially used by the Y and Z generations, as the travel decision of the younger generation is mostly based on others' opinions and shared experiences (on the recommendation of friends and acquaintances). These generations have the most friends on social network sites, so the relevant information is easily and quickly accessible to them (Málovics et. al., 2015). According to Streit (2014) and Málovics et. al. (2015), the members of these generations are more informed, more aware, faster, more adventurous and more mobile

than the previous generations in their ages, and the most important motivation in choosing a destination is to get experiences (Kovács, 2014; Iványi – Bíró-Szigeti, 2016).

Sharing experiences online, on social media sites, and keeping track of others' posts is becoming increasingly popular among them (Klausz, 2017). Although in user-generated content, such as websites and tourist service ratings, high personal tastes and subjectivity can be seen, nevertheless young users feel more confident making decisions based on the opinions of others (Fotis et al., 2012). These generations trust in the opinion of the Internet community (in other consumers) and they are very active in social media networks, where they become opinion leaders, so these networks are becoming the main and the most important and trusted source of information for them (Segarra, 2015). This is especially true for generation Z, who are digital natives, so, they no longer need to learn how to use the Internet, since this has been the part of their daily lives since childhood (Málovics et. al., 2015; Klausz, 2017). In many cases, text messages are obsolete to them, in pictures and videos is possible to efficiently transmit information, besides that the interaction allowing channels, the creation of content and the sharing of opinions are especially important to them. That is why special attention has to be paid to young people in marketing of different destinations, since according to WYSE Travel Confederation analysis, travel among young people has become one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism. Thus, in the coming years, it is expected that tourism will be mainly shaped by the Y and Z generations, as they enter the age to make their own tourism decisions (Mester, 2008). They decisions between destinations most often are already made on mobile Internet and on smartphone in the pre-travel phase, and information is also searched on the Internet during their trip, so they can get quick, immediate answers and guidance (Veres et al., 2017). They completed their journey by sharing their experiences and opinions on the web, so the Internet and social media cover the entire travel process.

The use of different social media sites for marketing purposes is also gaining importance, despite this sites were originally made for communication between individuals. Various events and destinations not only assess the needs of potential tourists by actively participating in major social networking sites, but these platforms give them access to visitors' feedback through reviews (Oklobdžija, 2015). If an event, or a branding specialists from different destinations on these interfaces targets these segments and conveys their message to them, then young people will follow and like their pages, so they will constantly receive information about it. They are loyal to beloved brands in the long run, but if the page for some reason is no longer interesting to them, it stops being liked and this stops following (so they don't get any more information). Therefore, based on a well-designed brand the potential tourist identifies this information as quality, so it influences the content of their imagination about that brand or destination, and this can influence their travel decisions, too (Spiegler, 2010).

#### **Research methodology**

In the course of the research, we conducted an online questionnaire survey among the students who are participating in festivals, and we asked the participants of two music festivals on the Hungarian-Serbian border area: the Green Future (in Ada) and at the Szeged Youth Days (so-called SZIN) in Szeged. For comparability, the aim of the research was to ask the university students age group - 18 - 25 years old people -, so we could not apply probability sampling, which resulted the overrepresentation of the examined age group. The sample was also not representative of territorial coverage, since both the online and the personal questionnaire survey were mainly answered by young people from Vojvodina (north part of Serbia close to the Hungarian border) and from South Plain (south part of Hungary close to the Serbian border). Online 84, at the Green Future 148, and at the SZIN 119 questionnaire was filled out. The survey covered several issues, in this study our aim was to assess the relationship between the social media usage and travel decision-making process among young festival visitors. Since social media can indirectly contribute to the promotion of festivals and settlements through the entries of the festivals, we also analyzed the posts related to 10 examined festivals (Table 1) by an increasingly popular image sharing site (Instagram).

Name	Organizing settlement	Analyzed keywords	N.o. of analyzed records
Sziget	Budapest (Hungary)	#sziget2017	6386
VOLT	Sopron (Hungary)	#volt2017	2828
EFOTT	Velence (Hungary)	#efott2017	2451
Balaton Sound	Zamárdi (Hungary)	#balatonsound2017	4412
East Fest	Mezőtúr (Hungary)	#eastfest2017	126
SZIN	Szeged (Hungary)	#szin2017	645
Malomfesztivál	Orom (Serbia)	#malomfesztival	246
Kanizsa Feszt	Magyarkanizsa (Serbia)	#kanizsafeszt	182
Green Future	Ada (Serbia)	#greenfuturefestival	211
Exit	Újvidék (Serbia)	#exitfestival2017	1812

Table 1. The examined festivals, and their organizing settlements

On Instagram the searched keyword (hashtag) was simply the name of a festival (e.g. the #greenfuturefestival, #malomfeszt), but in the case of some major festivals we limited the search results for the year 2017 (e.g. #balatonsound2017, #volt2017). As the result of the search we analysed 19 299 public records in varying proportions from festival to festival (Table 1).

#### The main results of the research among young festival participants

It can be observed by the questionnaire survey which was filled out by festival participants in Vojvodina and Hungary, that the information gaining and the travel decision making is significantly affected by what the potential tourists saw from the social media sites. Looking at the information gaining process we can observe that interviewed festival visitors are mostly searching for information on the Internet. The online respondents used primarily Facebook, besides that, other media contents and websites of the festivals also play an important role before the trip. It is no coincidence, because the questionnaire was shared on Facebook, but also during the personal interviews participants identified community networks as a source of information, so the Internet plays a significant role in this process. Besides that, a part of visitors still prefer to get information from their friends, but as Facebook is primarily used by friends, it actually enhances the traditional informations by making visible the posts for strangers.

During our research, we have examined whether the respondents' travel decisions are influenced by their friends' social media posts and experiences. More than half of the respondents (62%) were interested in the published posts of others, related to festivals. However, when we

asked the participants of the research whether their decisions on travel and festival were influenced by social media posts, almost half of the respondents (44%) said that entries had a role in decision making, in this case most of the posts influenced them positively (85%). Even so it is important to emphasize that social media posts can not only play a motivating role, as a negative experience can also be very decisive, which may affect the realization of travel intentions. The survey also shows that, although someone is interested in others' shared information and experiences about their travels or festivals, it doesn't necessarily have an impact on their decision, as 56% of the respondents did not make their travel decisions based on this. Despite the fact that less than half of the respondents were influenced by the published posts of others' in the travel decisions, more than half of the respondents (66%) share their own experiences related to festivals on some social media interfaces, mostly on Facebook and Instagram. The interviewed Serbian festival visitors – who were the youngest among the respondents – use more Instagram and its hashtag function to share their experiences, which support the fact that nowadays this is the most popular image and video channel for young people. Among Hungarian festival participants using Facebook for searching information or sharing experiences has been more popular than Instagram, yet (Figure 1).

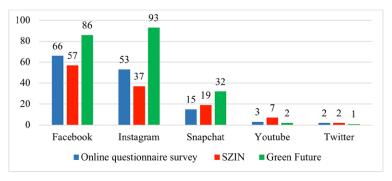


Figure 1. Distribution of experience sharing on different social media platforms Source: Own editing based on questionnaire survey (2017)

Respondents are not only sharing their experiences but they are also curious about what others have posted. Among the respondents Facebook was also dominant in searching for shared experiences, due to the fact that this social media site serves the best (most people-used) interface. It is true that during the sharing of experiences among the festival participants in Vojvodina – contrary to the Hungarian festival visitors –, Instagram has been already ahead of Facebook, but if they are searching for others' posts, then the Facebook is the most important community channel for them, too. Besides Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube community channels are also popular, but Google was also often used for searching recommendations among the respondents (Figure 2).

In the case of Instagram, which is an increasingly popular image sharing site, users assign tags to their images, which means that these pictures or videos are tagged with keywords, making it easier to search for entries. Searching for a particular hashtag, all posts with that labels will appear, and experiences can be viewed. For example, if potential tourists are browsing for a festival, the settlement that organizes it may also appear between the labels and vice versa. They can see any public shared experiences what also influences their travel related decisions. In addition, the festival and the settlement can strengthen each other's image and raise awareness/popularity. Thus, in the case of Instagram posts, we analyzed how close is this rela-

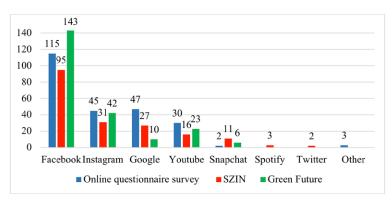


Figure 2. Distribution of searching for others' shared posts on social media Source: Own editing based on questionnaire survey (2017)

tionship between the festivals and host-settlements, and how much can the festival contribute to the promotion of the settlement (Figure 3).

Among the analyzed hashtags, in the case of SZIN festival, Szeged (the host-settlement) was mentioned in some form 252 times out of 645 posts (39%), while related to Green Future, we found from 211 posts only 29 references to Ada (the host-settlement) (13.7%) (Figure 3). In the case of SZIN, most of the posts were only tag #szeged (197), but the #szeged #iloveszeged (14) and the #szeged #suncity (10) keywords have occurred together. In the case of Green Future, the most common hashtag was also simply the name of the settlement: #ada (20), besides, there was also #adica (the festival) and #adatour (a created name from the city and tourism). For #sziget2017, we found 2 579 references to the settlement out of analyzed 6 386 posts, which is the highest mentioning rate (40,4%), so there is a strong connection between the Sziget Festival and Budapest (the host-city). The most common hashtag of the analyzed keywords was the name of the city (2 492), but #obuda (15), and also the #budapestgram (14) occurred several times. In the case of VOLT festival, we found 900 references out of 2828 public entries, which is the second-best mentioning rate of the analyzed Hungarian festivals (Figure 3). The VOLT festival has also produced a good result from previous research too, so there is a close relation-

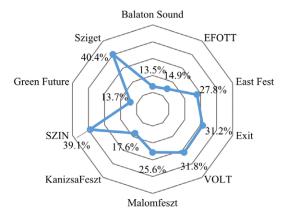


Figure 3. The proportion of the mention of the analyzed festival's host towns in all the posts relating to the festival Source: Own editing based on the research on Instagram (2017)

ship between the town and the festival, therefore they can mutually contribute to strengthen each other's image and attracting more visitors.

In the analysis of the 126 public posts of the #eastfest2017, we found references for the settlement in 35 entries, which is the third best rate of the analyzed Hungarian festivals (Figure 3). In the case of Exit, in the 1 812 public posts, we found connection to the host settlement 566 times, in which the most commonly used keywords were #novisad (the town) and #petrovaradin (the name of the place). This mentioning rate (31,2%) is the best of the analyzed festivals in Vojvodina. During the analysis of the Balaton Sound Festival (#balatonsound2017), between 4 412 posts we found only 595 links to Zamárdi (the host-settlement) in some form (13,5%), which is the worst mentioning rate among all the festivals involved in the survey (Figure 3). In the case of EFOTT festival, we have found 2 451 posts, where the host-settlement was only 366 times mention among the hashtags (14.9% mentioning rate). During the analysis of the Malomfesztivál we found 246 posts, where the settlement was mentioned 63 times, so it is still quite weak reference to the settlement, but compared to the fact that this is a new festival, we can observe the second best mentioning rate (25,6%) among the analyzed events in Vojvodina (Figure 3). Finally, in the case of the Kanizsa Feszt, from 182 posts we found only 32 references to Kanizsa, which seems very few taken in consideration that the name of the settlement appears in the name of the festival.

#### Conclusion

The use of social media for tourism purposes has brought about a significant change. Users trust the community's opinion and they feel that they can make more informed travel decisions because of others' opinions. Social networks are becoming more and more popular among young people in Vojvodina and Hungary, and this will cause a major change in pre-travel information gaining. Searching on the Internet becomes dominant, in the choice of destination and also in the search for attractions in the destination area. In our research a significant proportion of the young participants of festivals use the Internet for browsing. For searching information and sharing experiences they especially use some different social networking sites (about 55% of them use Facebook). The taken photo, video, or live sign-up is instantly uploaded to a social networking site (e.g. Facebook) or to an image- or video-sharing portal (e.g. Instagram), so the experience is not only enjoyed by the person who was living it, but friends and even unknown people may also be involved. More than half of respondents (66%) share their experiences on some social media sites (mostly on Facebook and on Instagram). Based on the survey searching for others' experiences is also popular among young people, 62% of them is interested in others' posts related to festivals. Among the respondents Facebook is the most significant interface for searching travel related posts, but also Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Google are popular. These entries may have an effect on the others travel decisions, because half of the respondents (44%) were influenced by other's experiences and mostly in positive way (85%). If the shared experience is positive, it can motivate others to travel, but some bad experience, negative shared content can completely eliminate travel motivation. In our research some people's decision was negatively affected (almost 15% of the respondents) by the public posts what they have seen before, so shared experiences also can have a bad effect for tourism. In contrast to Facebook, where shared posts can affect travel intentions mainly among friends, Instagram gives the opportunity for everyone to search for places and events by using headlines. This way, we can track the images and videos of different people without even knowing them, what may influence travel decisions even more widely.

The results of the research on the Instagram confirm that festivals can play a major role in knowing a destination, shaping the image of the settlement, and spreading it to a wider audience. The analyzed Instagram posts suggests that the closest connection between the festival and the settlement is likely to be in the case of the Sziget and the VOLT Festival. So, they can contribute to increasing each other's awareness and to strengthening a positive image. However, the size and reputation of a festival does not necessarily coincide with the fact that the respondents also know the host settlement, which can be seen in the case of Balaton Sound, where the organizing settlement is unknown to many people. It can be observed in the analysis of hashtags, that in the case of the Exit and the Malomfesztivál, the mention rate of the host settlement is high, so despite the novelty of a festival and the small number of posts on Instagram, the reference to the settlement can be high (e.g. Orom – Malomfesztivál).

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## CONNECTING WITH IGENERATION: IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR HOTEL PROMOTION

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#### Abstract

Emergence of Web 2.0 concept and social media changed the way of communication between organizations and consumers on a global scale. Although tourism and hospitality industry are not based on technology, they were among the first to adopt and implement innovations in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). These changes facilitate so far unprecedented possibilities for organizations to segment their target markets. Among these segments, younger generation labeled as Millennials is particularly thought provoking since they are the first who grew up with social media and are inclined towards technology use. This paper aims to explore the importance of social media for hotel promotion in two ways. First, by examining travelers' motives and ways for using it. Second, by exploring provided possibilities for hotels to gather consumer intelligence and carry out promotion on various platforms. Finally, this is put into perspective of Millennials, and possible further research of this generation in travel context.

Keywords: Social Media, Millennials, Hotels, Promotion, Tourism

#### Introduction

Social media is a product of technological development and consequently Web 2.0 concept and its applications. It affected methods companies used for promotion by changing communication standards typical for mass media, as well as amplified Word of Mouth (WoM) (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media is a broad term for platforms with varying purposes and designs, and include, among others, social networking sites, microblogs, social news, content sharing and review platforms. However, one of the main characteristics of Web 2.0 and social media is interactivity of all participants as well as content creation (DiNucci, 1999). Xiang and Gretzel (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010) consider social media a facilitator of user generated content (UGC), for other users to consume and share. Considering those, all social media platforms are designed to induce content creation and to profit from it (Burke, Marlow and Lento, 2009).

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Although, travel and hospitality industry are not based on technology in its core, they were among the first industries to adopt ICT and are in many ways impacted by it. In addition, since hotel services cannot be tested before use, the importance of providing adequate information online increased in the dynamic online environment (Stankov, Lazić and Dragićević, 2010). Online environment brought new challenges for marketers in terms of segmenting target markets, but also created a new type of consumer, for whom this phenomenon were not a novelty but a standard. There is no single definition of this generation and authors use different terms and age spans to define it. Some labels them as Millennial Generation, other use terms such as Generation Y or Millennials, for a generation born approximately between early 1980s and 2000 (Solarević, Stankov, Jovanović, Čikić and Pavluković, 2019). Prensky (Prensky, 2001) defines the term "Digital Natives" for a generation born during or after the introduction of digital technologies. They have been surrounded by technology throughout their upbringing, so they are more comfortable with using it, and adapt more easily to any technological changes compared to older generations. They are considered the first generation to use new media more compared to traditional ones, and to spend more time online, as well as access information using modern technology (Poindexter, 2012). Generational travel preferences and behaviors are research subjects of various studies. However, there is relative lack of research regarding generational use of social media in travel context (Solarević et al, 2019). This paper aims to explore the importance of social media use for hotel promotion, through perspective of connecting with Millennials, and suggest possible further research directions regarding this subject.

#### **Digital Marketing**

The development of the Internet, and consequently of social media, sparked the beginning of social change. It has forced organizations to change their attitude and activities in the communication mix and the methods they use for promotion. Although traditional media are still present, the use of digital channels of promotion is constantly increasing, in part due to the ubiquity of social media. There even are cases where certain companies exclusively use digital channels for communication with consumers and promotion. Of course, the most common case is the combination of traditional and digital media to achieve the best results. Some authors, such as Chaffey (2016), point out the main differences that digital media bring in their nature, to which organizations have to adapt. First, it is a change from "push" to "pull" environment. This implies that consumers are proactive, and visit organizations' websites when they need it, meaning that organizations have less control over to whom and how promotional message is delivered. Also, change from monologue to dialogue, that materializes in mediating role that digital channel achieve through software. This enables two-way communication between organizations and consumers is the main feature of digital media that distinguishes them from traditional ones (Peters, 1998). Moreover, change from "one to many" communication to "one to several/one". With digital media, there is the possibility of accessing market niches and micro segments, and creating and placing promotional messages to these segments, according to their needs. Similarly, change from "one to many" to "many to many" communication. Now consumers can communicate with one another, through both the organization's Internet presentations, and especially through social networks, and platforms specialized for this kind of communication. The use of digital media involves far more attention from users, so for example, on the organization's website or social media account, consumers have greater control as they move through the digital space and are mainly looking for information that is more detailed (Peters, 1998).

# Travelers' use of social media

The opportunities presented by social media have multiple implications for tourism and hospitality sector. This does not only how hotels use social network, but also the how and why consumers use them. It is the starting point for implementing the hotel's promotional activities on social media, considering the changing relationship in the digital environment, and shifting power from advertisers to consumers. The characteristic of tourism and hotel products and services, which reflects in the inability to test them before the use, adds to the importance of information that users search on social media platforms in order to make the best decision (Jeng and Fesenmaier, 2002).

Travelers use the social network Twitter in several ways. First of all, in order to obtain information about the destination from other users and organizations from that destination, then as a platform for forming a group of potential travelers, as well as for communication between passengers and hotels on the destination (Hay, 2010). How information is interpreted depends on several factors, which include reliability and credibility of sources, expertise and knowledge of resources, as well as the level of participation (Sotiriadis and van Zyl, 2013).

Social networks are also very popular when it comes to publishing travel photos as a part of sharing travel experiences (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung and Law, 2011). This can also influence travel plans of other users (White, 2010). In addition, research suggests that users could gather relevant information about destination attractions, while information on the quality of accommodation and transport was insufficient (Bulencea and Egger, 2013). In addition, users preferred Facebook during and after the trip, for sharing their experiences with friends (Lo et al., 2011). Particularly, sharing video posts by both the users and hotels has multiple functions; it can intensify the interest of consumers, affect the creation of the image of the destination and "transport" prospective travelers to the destination, thus aiding users in decision making (Reino and Hay, 2016; Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009).

Considering the abundance of information available on social networks, in various formats, which consists of collective knowledge of users around the world Yoo and Gretzel (Yoo and Gretzel, 2012), consider Social networks to be more effective in providing comprehensive information to travelers on hotel products, compared to any other source of information. In that regard, user-generated content (UGC) has the role of an additional source of information, adding importance of communication with users, making social networks ubiquitous for travelers when searching for information. Furthermore, how much will users trust other users' posts depends on the level of knowledge and reliability of the users who publish the content, which is influenced primarily by the age of the content creators, and how often they travel. When it comes to traveling to unknown destinations, social networks are better source of information than friends and family (Lee and Gretzel, 2014). Therefore, user-generated reviews are important for potential travelers in making decisions regarding travel plans, accommodation choices, and risk reduction (Gretzel and Yoo, 2008).

### Hotels' use of social media

Previous section examined travelers' use of social media that hotels have to take into account when planning promotion on these platforms. However, there are also certain aspects of social media use where hotels are more directly involved. In that regard, user-generated reviews, i.e., positive and negative comments on social media platforms are important because they increase consumer awareness about hotel, which is especially critical for less-known hotels. In addition, positively formulated reviews focused on interpersonal service can increase the level of trust, and therefore user ratings and intention to make a reservation (Sparks and Browning, 2011).

UGC is a means of providing feedback on hotel products and services. This creates an opportunity for hotels to understand how consumers value individual aspects of these products and services. For this purpose, content created by users in the review format exceeds the predefined questionnaires for users. It does not contain predetermined aspects of products and services, nor weight assigned to them, therefore not imposing limits to users in expressing their opinions (Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer, 2011).

Word of mouth (WoM) is one of the major external sources of information for consumers given the credibility it possesses. This is because consumers often recognize their own opinions and attitudes about hotel products and services in the opinions and attitudes of others. Given the lack of commercial interest in the recommendations, WoM is reliable and often influence consumers more than commercial sources (Belanche, Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2010). UGC is a form of electronic word of mouth (eWoM) (Kim and Hardin, 2010), which is defined as the extent to which the consumer informs his friends, relatives and colleagues about the event that caused a certain level of satisfaction, and which provides detailed and non-commercial information. From the perspective of hotel promotional activities on social media, the perceived reliability of UGC makes this content relevant to monitoring opinions, attitudes and preferences of consumers, communicating with current and potential consumers, but also as a source of information for tailoring products and services to consumers' needs and general promotional activities (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2013). However, there is also concern about the truthfulness of UGC, and therefore the validity of such data. Given that online frauds are not a side effect, misleading hotel reviews should not be overlooked (Yoo and Gretzel, 2010). Moreover, some hotel companies have encouraged consumers to create content on hotel's social media accounts, offering them discounts and coupons in return. This creates an ethical dilemma, because the credibility of this content is questionable.

Transformation in communication between organizations and consumers in the social media era, changed promotional activities and ways of communication (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). It is important for hotels to be aware of these changes, so that their promotional activities on social media do not only include direct messages of promotion and offer, but also incentives to build two-way communication with consumers through posts that encourage conversation (Kwok and Yu, 2013). Since user engagement is the key to communication between hotels and users, and the lack of it can negatively affect hotels promotional activities, it is considered that the emergence and development of social networks represents a unique opportunity to foster interaction between hotels and consumers (Chan and Guillet, 2011). This fact can be used to mine consumers' opinions about planned promotional activities and products as well as individual aspects of products and gauging hotel image. Similarly, by monitoring consumer communication on social networks, hotels can gain insight into the competitive advantage that consumers perceive, and use this as additional information in planning of promotional activities (L. Huang, Yung and Yang, 2011).

Social media can also influence the development of consumer hotels preferences, and that the likelihood of making a reservation, as well as positive and negative experiences, can be particularly impactful for lower category hotels. Similarly, the likelihood that customers will make a reservation is determined by formulating messages that encourage consumer and hotel conversations, as well as hotel ratings (Sparks and Browning, 2011). In addition, communication in storytelling can more accurately convey all aspects of the product or service to consumers (Tussyadiah, Park and Fesenmaier, 2011).

Social networks represent a significant promotional channel and are often used in hotel practice, since they allow the publication of information to users, as well as linking with other people of similar interests (Y. Huang, Basu and Hsu, 2010). Business potential of Facebook is recognized (Kasavana, Nusair and Teodosic, 2010), primarily as a digital marketing tool through which hotels can reach the international auditorium. In this regard, social networks are considered a platform for promotional activities as well as dissemination of information to consumers, rather than a distribution channel. Hotels can also stimulate demand, providing links to their websites and platforms for direct booking of accommodation, in order to increase the likelihood of consumers purchasing their products. Because the majority of reservations are made online, the hotel sector is particularly sensitive to online communication with consumers, and negative opinions or efforts to channel users to book accommodation can have a significant impact on the success of hotel promotions on social networks (Ye, Law, Gu and Chen, 2011).

#### **Discussion and conclusions**

In order to take advantage of all the benefits of social media, it is necessary to engage in a conversation with consumers. This can refer to diverse goals that hotels want to achieve. The new opportunities provided made promotion strategy on social media become an integral part of the digital strategies of organizations. However, creating such a strategy is complex and requires a change in the way organizations think.

There is a certain tendency in the development of the promotion strategy on social media to immediately start from choosing the tools to be used, i.e. choosing a social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). This is a wrong approach, since it is first necessary to analyze the demand and degree of use of different channels by consumers (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). This degree will also vary depending on market segments of consumers. In that regard, research so far showed that Millennials are more receptive to promotion and advertising compared to older generations (Gardiner, Grace and King, 2014). However, when it comes to type of promotion and advertising, research determined that Millennials prefer communication that is subtle and less intrusive, while competitive prices and incentives such as coupons and discounts are advised in order to generate their repeat visits and encourage them to write a review (Smith, 2012). In addition, companies' CSR initiatives can attract this generation if it aligns with their beliefs on this matter. Although, Millennials are considered less loyal than older generations, if the brand reinforces their personal image they tend to prefer them and show increased loyalty (Hoffmann, 2014; Taylor, 2018). In terms of usage patterns of social media for travel purposes, Millennials show certain differences compared to older generation. This primarily reflects in preference of rich media as a form of communication, and are more

inclined to including friends in their travel experience posts compared to destination, which is preferred by older generation (Solarević et al., 2019).

Characteristics of the digital environment brought new opportunities for communication with consumers, and thus made organizations re-think about their promotional activities, this time taking into account the potential opportunities and threats that come with acting in the new environment. Digital environment is dynamic and impacted by technological progress and changes, which are much more rapid compared to the traditional environment in which the promotion took place. Different aspects of social media and Millennials presented in this paper point out several possible directions for further research. It includes further researching social media usage patterns of Millennials in travel context, as well as exploring promotion strategies and tactics that hotels can use to best cater to Millennials' needs.

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# VISITORS' ATTITUDES REGARDING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'SREM FOLK FEST'

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## Abstract

Since its foundation in 2004, the 'Srem Folk Fest' is oriented towards promoting the local culture and tradition of the host city, Sremska Mitrovica, and its surroundings. It is organized in specific environment, or more precisely within the excavations of the ancient city of Sirmium. According to the venue and its content, this event might be characterized as multicultural outdoor spectacle, visited by 20,000 participants every year, throughout the four festival evenings. In 2015, the 'Srem Folk Fest' became a part of International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF), which imposes a top standards in organizing festivals. It is also important to note that this year, the 'Srem Folk Fest' will be supported by Serbian National Commission for UNESCO, on the basis of the fact that this event is oriented towards preserving the intangible cultural heritage, important for wider social community. Since its foundation in 2004, this event became the well-known brand of the city and it hosted a large number of young people, not only from Europe, but also from Asia, Africa, South America, Central America. The main task of this paper is to identify potentials for repeating the visits of those who already participated in this event, but also to find ways for improving the quality of the current offer, in order to provide adequate promotion of the city and surrounding rural area. The research was conducted on the basis of the survey regarding the visitors' attitudes on the current quality of this event, but also regarding their proposals for improving its content. Collected data were analyzed by using the SPSS statistical software. In addition to theoretical contribution, the research results might also serve as a basis for improving the event organization according to the visitors' needs and their expectations. Besides that, results might also find a practical implication in terms of providing the basic information necessary for expanding this event within the surrounding area of Sremska Mitrovica.

Keywords: Event tourism, Visitors' attitudes, 'Srem Folk Fest', Sirmium, Sremska Mitrovica

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# Introduction

In recent years, tourism became one of the most significant directions of development and important investment factor of the local and regional authorities, aimed at highlighting the specificities and uniqueness of the concrete area, and mainly oriented towards increasing the number of tourists. Nowadays, in the period of globalization and modern technologies, it is difficult to achieve the preservation of traditional and cultural values. However, history, tradition, culture and customs are important aspects of national identity and they represent an intangible cultural heritage (Kurdashvili and Meskhia, 2016).

According to UNESCO's definition, the elements of intangible cultural heritage are: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festival events; traditional craftsmanship (www.kultura.gov. rs, pp.3). Traditional dance performance on stage or folklore, as a model of intangible cultural heritage program, will be treated in this paper as a factor of development of cultural and event tourism, based on the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of Sremska Mitrovica and Serbia.

Importance of conservation is perhaps best described by the proverb "better to disappear a village than a custom". Since its foundation "Srem Folk Fest" International Folklore Festival, organized in Sremska Mitrovica, has been successfully responding to the challenge of preserving the cultural heritage, and it could be said that walls of ancient Sirmium, one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire, became the centre of multiculturalism, during the festival (Samardžić, 2013).

Therefore, cultural and event tourism might be considered as selective type of this sector, oriented towards representing the intangible cultural heritage to the wider social community (Bjeljac et al., 2015). In respect to that, "Srem Folk Fest" could be considered as a specific event, that attracts up to 20,000 of the local residents, as well as the other visitors from the surrounding area, in August, during the festival, in order to represent the local cultural heritage. However, it is important to identify further potential for repeating the visits of those who already participated in this event, but also to find ways for improving the quality of the current offer, in order to provide adequate promotion of the city and surrounding rural area. The research was conducted on the basis of the survey regarding the visitors' attitudes on the current quality of this event, but also regarding their proposals for improving its content. Another important aspect of this research is related to possibilities of expanding the current offer, by including the rural households, farms, different associations and small producers from the surrounding area.

Without knowledge of the consumers' behaviour, it is almost impossible to successfully plan the marketing activities of the festival (Milisavljević et al., 2005). Attitudes of the visitors, in this case, are important because it is necessary to change the offer and promotion of the festival in accordance with the needs of the visitors. Participants' motives for visiting the festival are direct, already determined by their participation in the festival, but their needs and wishes for tourist offer could be considered as a potential factor of further development of the researched festival.

#### **Recognition of 'Srem Folk Fest'**

"Srem Folk Fest" is an international folklore festival which is organized every year in the period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August by the City of Sremska Mitrovica, as the main sponsor of this event. The founder and organizer of the festival is the Center for Culture "SirmiumArt". The aim of the Festival is to nurture and promote folk songs, dances, music and costumes from different parts of the world. The festival also allows visitors to learn something new related to the local culture and traditions of the host city and its surroundings, as well as to Serbian people in general. Organizers are indicating that "Srem Folk Fest" could be considered as a "small world", due to the fact that it allows connection of different cultures, as well as the establishment of cooperation and friendly relations among the international ensembles that are participating in the festival (www.sremfolkfest.org.rs).

Combination of inherited cultural values and contemporary cultural creativity of the City of Sremska Mitrovica, recognized by the Ministry of Culture in the project "Light of the Imperial City", since 2018, contributed to general popularity of cultural programs, but it also facilitated organization of activities near the ruins of ancient Sirmium. It could be said that Sremska Mitrovica contains a unique "open stage" for almost 20,000 festival visitors. In respect to that, the main idea of the aforementioned project was related to protection and conservation of this specific area, but it also indicated the necessity of adapting the entire area to contemporary needs of the visitors. It resulted in organization of the "Summer Stage" and "Open Air Museum", with the main idea of integrating the cultural resources of the Sremska Mitrovica and providing the possibility for the citizens to spend their free time in specific ambience of this archeological site (Srem Folk Fest, 2019).

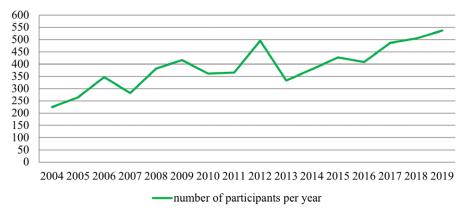


Figure 1. Number of participants of Srem Folk Fest for the period 2004-2019. Source: Material given by organizers

Since the foundation of this festival, the number of participants increased for 2.5 times (Figure 1). The trend of increasing the festival participants was occasionally disturbed by the number of participating countries and ensembles, thus the biggest decline in 2012/2013 is a consequence of such a situation, because the number of ensembles was 18 in 2012, while the next year there were 12 performing groups. It is important to note that the highest number of participants per group is 30. The largest number of participants and performing groups are currently recorded in 2019, with 20 ensembles from 16 countries and over 500 participants.

# Development and further progress of "Srem Folk Fest"

Since its foundation in 2004, the Festival has been one of the most significant and visited events in this part of the Balkan. All participants could learn something related to cultural and historical heritage of Sremska Mitrovica, as well as related to the local customs, by enjoy-

ing the performances of art groups from different countries, such as Croatian Cultural Center "Srijem" - Croatian House, Hungarian Cultural Society "Srem", Ukrainian Society "Kolomejka" and host of the festival - folk ensemble "Branko Radičević" (www.sremfolkfest.org.rs).

It is important to note that the quality of services in tourism might directly affect the reputation of concrete tourism organization/destination, which is indicating to the fact that providers of services in tourism are often faced with difficult task to embrace diversity and other people's cultural values in order to achieve the highest quality of services (Pavković, 2018). Intercultural interactions within a specific destination, as an integral part of contemporary tourism, raised the question of understanding the different cultures. From the same perspective, Hart and Montage (2016) emphasized the importance of "cultural competence", defined as "understanding and respecting the people of different cultures, interacting and effectively communicating, as well as establishing the positive and constructive relationships with them" (Pavković, 2018). Therefore, events, such as "Srem Folk Fest", could contribute to a better understanding between people with different cultural backgrounds.

All four festival nights are beginning with a ceremonial defile of participating ensembles through the central streets, when the locals join the performance, showing hospitality. Festival concerts are organized every night at the famous site of ancient Roman excavations, with significant visual changes in ambience and scenery. The first festival concert begins with the introduction of all participants with the sounds of Strauss's Radetzky March, followed by the official opening of the Festival with spectacular fireworks and magnificent Wagner's Zarathustra (Srem Folk Fest, 2019).

It is not a practice for professional ensembles to participate in amateur folk art festivals, but for the jubilee 10th "Srem Folk Fest", as the star of the evening, the Bulgarian national ensemble "Trakija" from Plovdiv performed. The members of the ensemble are musicians and dancers who graduated within prestigious music academies, and this is their lifelong commitment. The 11th "Srem Folk Fest" (2014) had a humanitarian character, as the organizer wanted to provide folk costumes, as a donation, to a guest ensemble from Bijeljina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), whose costumes were damaged in the floods that hit the region. For the first time, Russia had its representative in 2015, it was the ensemble of folk songs "Russian Beauty" of Moscow State Pedagogical University (Srem Folk Fest, 2019).

Each year, the organizers complete the program and content of the festival evenings, not only by selecting the quality folk groups but also in a technical and innovative sense. In 2016, one of the innovations was related to providing the ability of watching the entire program on the big screen near the stage.

In cooperation with Tourism Organization of the City of Sremska Mitrovica, visitors could go to historical sights of Sremska Mitrovica - the Imperial Palace, the settings in the Lapidarium of Museum of Srem, the Basilica of Saint Dimitri, beach on Sava river, but they could also see the valuable cultural, historical and artistic heritage of Sremska Mitrovica, Novi Sad and Belgrade, Fruška Gora, monasteries, as well as flora and fauna of unique natural phenomenon "Special nature reserve Zasavica" (Srem Folk Fest, 2019).

The most common forms of performing tourism events are festivals, which "involve a large number of different events, including sports, concerts, recreation, presentation of sponsor products and their sale, as well as educational content programs" (Bjeljac, 2006).

There are different potential elements and events that could complement the festival content, which is indicating to the fact that it is necessary to: prolong the duration of the festival, as well as the duration of the festival activities throughout the day or to provide the expansion throughout the seasonal activities; it is also important to provide diversity of festival program models; as well as the

involvement of the audience in the festival activities (through education, entertainment) and intensive presentation of traditional lifestyle (education lecture), in order to provide preserving traditional values of the intangible cultural heritage. In respect to that, this research is oriented towards the identification of different aspects that could complement the current content of "Srem Folk Fest".

# "Srem Folk Fest" as part of an international council of organizers of the festival of folklore and traditional culture

During 2015, the efforts and involvement of the organizers were deservedly raised to a higher level, which resulted in a fact that "Srem Folk Fest" became a member of CIOFF Serbia. CIOFF is the International Council of Organizers of the Festival of Folklore and Traditional Culture, founded in 1970 in Confolens, France. The aim of the organization is to promote folk festivals around the world, to improve the program of the festivals, and therefore the festival groups, to harmonize the conditions that the festivals should provide to participating groups (food, lodging, pocket money, health and life insurance for participants) (www.cioff-serbia.org). The ensembles participating in the festival are provided with coordination with other world sections, thus ensuring the quality ensembles and avoiding the possibility of canceling a group. At the end of the festival, each participant evaluates the organizer (accommodation, food, organization, accompanying activities, guides, production), but also the SirmiumArt evaluates each participant, so that they know at a world level about participant impressions.

The organization acts as a non-governmental organization based in Paris and it currently has about 90 member-states, as many regular and associate members, worldwide as a rule, one country, one organization (national section). It operates by geographical based sectors: North-European Sector, Central-European, South-European-African, Asian-Oceanic, Latin-American and North-American. The Organization enjoys the support of UNESCO in particular in the field of the protection of the intangible cultural heritage enshrined in the UNE-SCO Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. At the 2015 CIOFF Annual Meeting held in Peru, Serbia returns full member status in the international CIOFF organization. Today, the national section of Serbia consists of about 40 members, nine festivals and about 30 ensembles that work to preserve the intangible cultural heritage of Serbia by presenting our folklore tradition at festivals around the world and by presenting the other cultures at festivals organized in Serbia (www.cioff.org).

Festival name	The venue	Founding year
"Interetno" fest	Subotica	2002
International folklore fest "Srem Folk Fest"	Sremska Mitrovica	2004
International fest of the folklore	Pirot	2005
"Razigrana Mladost"	Nova Pazova	2006
International folklore fest "Vršački venac"	Vršac	2006
International folklore fest of students	Niš	2008
International fest for children "Licidersko srce"	Užice	2009
"ETNOFEST" Čačak	Čačak	2016
"Bečej folk fest"	Bečej	2017

Table 1. Festivals belonging to the CIOFF Serbia

Source: www.cioff-serbia.org

CIOFF considers Intangible Cultural Heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development, as underscored in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 and in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. CIOFF Serbia received the patronage of the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO for 9 international festivals in Serbia in the period 2019-2021, which could be seen in Table 1. This is a huge success for "Srem Folk Fest" as it is one of the few national sections that have been able to win this. This means that these 9 festivals, sponsored by CIOFF Serbia, are recognized as events of great importance, which aim to preserve the intangible cultural heritage (www.cioff.org).

# Methodology

The paper obtained the sample of festival participants in order to determine their experience of the whole organization, as well as the attitudes of the participants as tourists, and also their recommendations for improving the offer and getting to know the surroundings. The survey obtained 96 respondents, as participants from 10 countries. Standard survey research was conducted during August 2019 in Sremska Mitrovica, during the festival. The questionnaire consists of 12 closed questions, which the respondent completed, by using the standard pen and paper procedure. The first part of the questionnaire deals with basic information about the respondent, the second part is based on the participants' attitudes regarding the festival and their overall experiences, while the third group was focused on ideas about the potential for further development and expansion to rural areas. The survey was translated into English, French and Spanish language, while some participants also completed the survey in the Serbian language. The analysis of collected data was conducted by using the statistical package (software) SPSS 20.

# **Results and discussion**

Among the respondents, the largest share is made up of the female population (62.5%), compared to the male population (37.5%). More than half of the respondents belong to the young population, under the age of 20 and they represent 60.4% of the total sample, while almost twice less percentage of the respondents belongs to the population aged between 21 and 40 years. The largest number of participants who completed the survey is French (16.7%), followed by Mexicans, Bulgarians, Turks and Poles. Due to the lack of knowledge of English, the lowest percentage of the respondents were from Egypt, Russia and Georgia. Participants mostly came from the cities, with a slightly larger share of the respondents from the cities with up to 80,000 inhabitants (46,9%; 35,4%).

As already mentioned, the "Srem Folk Fest" was founded 16 years ago, so it is not surprising that some participants know about it, while some have already participated and repeated their participation in the festival, or more precisely 20% of respondents. This information is not surprising, although the organizers are always working hard to bring in performers who did not participate in their festival, while good and positive experiences of participants are certainly the best indicators of positive experiences.

Participants of the 16th "Srem Folk Fest" came from different parts of the world, they belong to different cultures, different lifestyles and 61.5% of participants do not know anything about the history of Sremska Mitrovica. This result was confirmed by the answer where over 60% of the respondents do not know that Sremska Mitrovica, formerly Sirmium, was one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire.

The accompanying contents during the festival evenings complete the whole picture, although most of the content is more accessible to the festival visitors, and less to the participants who had less time to enjoy souvenirs and different dishes. Even 52.1% of participants agree that they like it all.

During their stay in Sremska Mitrovica participants also visit Belgrade and Novi Sad and they participate in the festival nights in Bečej, Obrenovac or Šid. Certainly the best way to get to know a particular area is visiting the rural areas that still retained the spirit of old times. This research started from the assumption that if participants are already engaged in traditional dances and preserving the culture and traditions of their country, they will sympathize with traditional values in some way, so 72% of the respondents agree, partly and completely, that they would like to visit the surrounding area as well.

Not only that festivals attract the visitors to the venue, but they could also contribute to the "creation of a positive image of a destination and they could enhance the tourists' experience and shape the length of their staying" (Besermenji et al., 2010). According to that, when the visitors were asked if participation in the festival and visiting the city improved their perception of Serbia, 67.7% of them positively and highly rated this attitude, which is one of the main reasons and the goals of the organizers and all of the local residents. Participation in the festival, organization, quality of the program, expertise and dedication to the performers, top-notch equipment, all were highly rated by the participants and they agree that this is the real professional experience for them. This attitude might affect the future visits of foreign tourists to the festival in narrow and Serbia in broader terms, as well spreading the positive word-of-mouth, as the best marketing tool for creating the favourable image of this destination (Zakić et al., 2009).

The quality of interaction between the hosts and visitors contributes to their experience and perception of visited destination. Therefore, different elements of national culture (such as values, norms or rules) have a considerable impact on tourists' behaviour, their expectations, satisfaction and consequently on repeating their visits (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). The research results related to "easy communication" with the locals pointed to standard deviation 1.312, which reflects huge differences in responses. With the mean value 3.44 and median value 4, respondents partially agreed that it was easy to communicate even though they do not speak the Serbian language.

Visitors' attitudes are important for the evaluation of the life cycle of the event, since events, similarly to other tourism products, have their increased and decreased periods (Pivac et al., 2011). For this reason, visitors' recommendations and what they will bring after their participation and visit, are a good indicator of attractiveness and authenticity. Visitors could gain good memories, gifts, photos and souvenirs, something that they can bring with them. In respect to their personal experience, they could provide good recommendations for this city and the festival. The high marks did not lag behind the results of the surveyed participants, where 66% of the respondents agree that they will definitely recommend a visit to this city.

	Mean	Std. deviation
I know something about the history of Sremska Mitrovica	1.69	1.037
When I am traveling to specific country, it is important for me to know something in advance regarding the history and things I will see in that country	3.60	1.268
Did you know that Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium) was one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire?	1.65	.479

#### Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of some items from the questionnaire

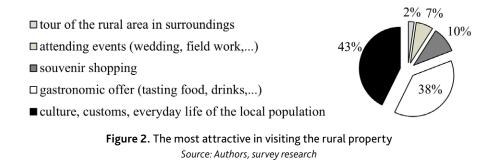
Source: Authors, SPSS

Respondents were asked (Table 2) if it was important for them to know something about the history and what they could see when visiting some place, they rated this comment positively, with 57% agreement, although a greater proportion of them in the next asked question, did not know anything about the history of Sremska Mitrovica, not even the existence of Sirmium. Bearing in mind that participants of the "Srem Folk Fest" are not classical tourists, they visit the festival and tours and all the tourist elements are made by the organization of the festival. It is not surprising that they are not interested in the history of the places they visit, nor that it matters to them that the place of destination is previously a topic for them to read and explore.

As Radović cites according to Brooks, heritage based on tourism is an integral part of a new economic strategy that focuses on the development and promotion of the cultural, historical, geographical and natural resources of communities or regions. There are significant links between agriculture and tourism. These economic activities are complementary and multiple because agriculture is a producer and tourism is a consumer of agricultural products. Tourism is a factor in the development tendencies of rural areas, an additional activity to the rural population, a market for agricultural products, a factor of agricultural development, and a "softener" of depopulation trends (Radović, 2015).

According to the research results, participants who are interested in visiting the rural properties in the form of gastronomic offer (food and drink tasting) and the culture and customs of everyday life of the local population also show that surrounding rural space is a potential for complementary tourist offer and higher commitment to tourism. Respondents pay big attention to the preservation of local tradition, 45.8% of respondents is interested in visiting forest areas, rivers, lakes, spas.

Visiting the rural properties (Figure 2) as a potential offer has caused great interest in responding to the customs and culture of the locals' everyday lifestyle. With a slightly smaller share, the respondents are also interested in the gastronomic offer in the form of tasting the local food and drinks. The area of Sremska Mitrovica owns a part of the National Park "Fruška Gora", it is precisely the area where some of the oldest vineyards in Serbia originated when the Aurelije Probus once brought the vine. In the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica, the tour-



ist offer will soon be richer for the "Wine Temple", and not far away from the Probus Winery. Only in this area, there are four monasteries for which respondents also expressed an interest in the survey (www.tosmomi.rs).

#### Conclusion

After 16 years, "Srem Folk Fest" became a true brand of the city and the region, which is confirmed by the international organizations that have supported its importance. The best indicator is the crowded city of audiences and festival participants who have rated the event as high. Importance of the festival is reflected primarily in the possibility of developing the contacts between the foreign visitors and the local population, as well as the possibility of learning the new facts regarding the local population and spreading the multiculturalism.

On the basis of the research results, it could be concluded that it is necessary to provide adequate information to visitors regarding the history of the city, especially related to the significance of Sirmium, site of high cultural and historical importance. Additional content of the festival should be planned in accordance with the sympathy of the visitors towards the local culture and tradition. This would justify the research results, due to the fact that respondents are interested in culture, customs and daily life of the local people within the rural properties in the vicinity of Sremska Mitrovica. Additional activities should also be planned in a manner that would support their interest in gastronomic offer of local food and drink. In this way, local government and rural households would be empowered, directing their one-way agricultural production to additional activities and creating the extra profit. Respondents' preference for visiting the rivers, lakes, spas and forests should not be neglected, given that respondents are mostly youths up to 20 years, which could be linked to water-based recreation and tourism or some unique offer that they will recommend to other visitors. Organization of the festival justified its high criteria and the respondents rated their participation as significant personal experience. In addition to a good evaluation of the festival, which is certainly one of the most important indicators of success, it is also important to note that respondents mainly improved their perception of Serbia, which is important aspect of the festival image, even after their participation.

Limitation of the study could be linked to the fact that only visitors of the festival were interviewed. This limiting element could also be considered as a proposal for further research of the wider audience and potential visitors of the festival, which could provide new ideas and suggestions for improvement of the festival offer, regarding their attitudes and suggestions. However, in respect to all aforementioned findings, this research could be useful for the organizers, in order to provide improvement of the offer, according to the visitors' needs.

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# ENHANCING DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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## Abstract

The way we live has undergone a radical transformation in the past decade or so. Similarly, the internet and the development of information and communication technologies have significantly affected the way companies operate and compete. Therefore, companies across all industries are using digital tools and undergoing digital transformation. As a never-ending process, digitisation puts pressure on companies to adapt to changes, and to anticipate new trends. But more importantly, it opens up new opportunities and solutions. This paper examines how digitisation is changing the core of the tourism industry. It focuses on different tourism stakeholders and explores what 'digital' means for tourism destinations. For example, as digital technologies are dramatically changing customers' experiences and behaviours, enabling them to regularly communicate and actively participate in the discussions about various destinations, companies are aware that these empowered groups could influence prospective customers' decisions about a destination. Furthermore, based on a literature review and an overview of recent researches and studies (desk research), the paper aims to examine the relationship between digital transformation and the competitiveness of destinations. It offers an overview of most popular management tools that companies are using nowadays, and discusses the increasing popularity of digital tools and their possible impact on competitiveness. It also describes how challenging it is for companies to undergo dramatic changes - while some findings show that companies and their leaders are well aware of the necessity to carry out the digital transformation, many find that getting ready for this new age, i.e., transforming business models, concepts and processes, and putting digital-related plans into action is not that easy. Nevertheless, leading companies are not just implementing digital tools and embracing digital transformation; they are customer-focused, well-known for delivering the best value, and ready for new challenges.

*Key Words:* Destination, Tourism, Digital transformation, Competitiveness, Customer, Management Tools

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# Introduction

Almost everything is happening at a rapid pace nowadays. New technologies have transformed our world, and our regular habits have changed in response to the effects of technological advancements. Smartphones have changed not only the way we work but also the way we live, communicate, make all sorts of decisions, learn, behave, socialise (and the list goes on).

Similarly, we are witnesses of radical, technology-led changes that take place across all business sectors. New technologies affect businesses in many ways. This has resulted in the creation of *new markets, new customers, new competitors, and new expectations* (KPMG, 2017, p. 1). Companies thus need to adapt and evolve as well. According to Rogers (2016), digital technologies are 'challenging the strategic assumptions' across the following five main domains: *customers, competition, data, innovation,* and *value.* Due to the rise of new digital technologies, companies have changed the way they (1) connect with their customers; (2) compete and cooperate with other companies, (3) produce, manage and utilise information and data; (4) approach innovation, and (5) create value for their customers (Rogers, 2016, pp. 4–6).

This paper focuses specifically on the tourism sector and destination management, to establish a relationship between digital, tourism, destination management, and competitiveness. It aims to explore the use and the effects of various digital tools and channels on tourism stakeholders in this increasingly competitive environment. The paper is focused on a systematic review of literature and surveys/studies, and the emphasis is placed on selected challenges and opportunities of inevitable digital transformation.

# The meaning of digital and digital transformation

Being a vital sector that drives significant growth, the *digital economy* is, as a term, used to describe markets that are focused on digital technologies (OECD, 2013, p. 5). However, in today's digital world, even the meaning of '*digital*' is changing. While the term was mostly associated with information technologies until recently, digital strategy established within a company is the driving force behind the 'roadmap and goals' of most departments nowadays (Puthiyamadam, 2017). Moving towards a *digital* 'has had effects on society that extend far beyond the digital technology context alone' (OECD, 2013, p. 5). The necessity and the importance of digital transformation are, however, widely accepted. Digital creates new opportunities and improves business processes and functions; it could be seen as a means to lead to competitive advantage.

Digital transformation means 'enterprise-wide change to evolve an organization's business and operating models, as well as the way its people work – across the front, middle and back offices' (KPMG, 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, it means that companies need to rethink their strategies and their relationship to customers. In view of that, Rogers (2016, pp. 21–29) has described several fundamental shifts in the relationship to customers: (1) customers are no more passive consumers, but 'nodes within dynamic networks'; five core behaviours drive customers in their digital experiences (access, engage, customise, connect, and collaborate), and companies should recognise them as opportunities for co-creating values with customers; (2) broadcasting information to customers has shifted towards actual two-way communication; (3) customers have become key influencers, instead of companies (and their broadcast marketing tools); (4) marketing activities are focused on inspiring a purchase, brand loyalty, and advocacy, not 'just' on persuading customers to purchase; similarly, customers are not just loyal nowadays - 'they advocate for the brand and connect the brand to people in their network'; (5) most involved customers are willing to co-create values - value flows have thus shifted from one-way to reciprocal; (6) economies of (company) scale have shifted towards the economies of (customer) value.

Companies use digital transformation to 'reinvent each link in the customer experience chain' (Bain and Company, 2018). Most recent Bain and Company's Management Tools & Trends Survey confirmed the 'persistence and power' of digital transformation, which is well underway (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018, p. 1). Usage of digital tools, e.g., Digital Transformation, Internet of Things and Advanced Analytics, has increased across many sectors, and respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with these tools. According to the Survey, there was a significant increase in the percentage of respondents using Digital Transformation – this tool was used by 32% of respondents in 2017, compared to 18% in 2014. Besides, the respondents showed a high level of satisfaction with this tool (4.07, compared to 3.94 in 2014). Likewise, Advanced Analytics (being No. 1 tool in Asia-Pacific and overall the fourth most used tool in 2017) and Internet of Things (which was added to the Survey in 2017) were used by 42% and 30% respondents, respectively (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

Furr and Shiplov (2019) have found, based on interviews with more than 60 companies and shared opinions of hundreds of senior leaders, that 'digital doesn't have to be disruptive', even though everything is changing rapidly. Authors have presented valuable insights to dispel some critical myths about digital transformation: (1) digital does not require dramatic disruption of the company values proposition but instead it means leveraging digital tools to better understand and serve customers' needs; (2) digital is not about replacing physical, it's the combination of both digital and physical worlds that is important, as hybrid models facilitate the development of emotional relationship with customers, while acknowledging their needs; (3) digital doesn't necessarily involve buying start-ups - successful companies find synergies with start-ups, and they don't destroy their culture; (4) digital is not primarily about the technology change – technology change is, clearly, inevitable, but digital is above all about the customer, and better serving customer needs; (5) regarding the update of legacy systems, digital is more often about incremental bridging, rather than overhauling legacy systems. In sum, incorporating digital elements in companies' business models doesn't have to be disruptive, as long as companies are: focused on customer needs, flexible, respectful of incremental change, and aware that '...new skills and technology must be not only acquired but also protected - something the best traditional companies have always been good at.'(Furr and Shipilov, 2019).

Digital transformation offers digital solutions, but it requires all sorts of changes in business models, culture, and skills and capabilities of people. Still, digital disruption does not have to be considered as a threat. Rather, it is more about leveraging new technologies to reach the goals the company has set.

# Tourism as a fast-growing industry

"The world's travel industry is alive, exciting and competitive" (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 27). Tourism has proved to be a growth area. It continues to boom, bringing prosperity to countries all over the world. According to a recent UNWTO report, tourism experiences a continual increase in business volume, which today 'equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles' (UNWTO, 2018b). Total international tourist arrivals rose by 7% in 2017 to 1.326 million, with most arrivals in Europe (51% of total international tourist arrivals), Asia and the Pacific (24%), and the Americas (16%); destinations across all regions saw this upward trend, with some 86 million arrivals more than in 2016 (UNWTO, 2018a, pp. 1–3). Europe has been on an upward trend for the past eight years, with 672 million international tourist arrivals in 2017 - the number of tourist arrivals has increased by 8% compared to the year before (UNWTO, 2018a, p. 9). Besides, international tourist arrivals are predicted to rise, and are likely to reach 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO, 2011), although the growth was higher than expected in 2018, reaching 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals - two years ahead of UNWTO's long term forecasts (UNWTO, 2019).

As noted earlier, new technologies and the Internet have profoundly transformed many sectors and industries. The tourism sector has undergone various changes as well, having enormous effects of 'digital' on *both tourism service providers and customers*. Today, more than 4.3 billion people around the world use the Internet (Clement, 2019), and, as Morrison (2013, p. 371) has explained, the Internet is 'more than a source of information, a partner for travellers and a tool for the travel trade; it has become an entertaining venue to gain knowledge and get hands-on experiences'.

Being both industry and the service sector, tourism is undergoing huge transformation initiated by new information and communication technologies and digitalisation (Dredge et al., 2018, p. 9). Xiang and Fesenmaier (2017, as cited in Dredge et al. 2018) have described three major phases of *technology development in tourism*: (1) the first phase, from 1990 to 2000, was characterised by the introduction of the Internet and the increasing importance of websites - destination organisations were mostly using technology as a marketing tool; (2) from 2000 to 2010, the Internet played a vital role in providing information for travellers; online reviews and ratings became available and important - visitors could influence the behaviour and decisions of potential visitors, and the focus was therefore shifted towards the visitor, i.e., visitor/customer experience; at the same time, traditional business models were being disrupted by new online intermediaries (e.g., Expedia); (3) (2010 onwards) new technological advances, along with collaborative social media platforms and Web 2.0 that enables *user-generated content* (mobile and wearable technologies, cloud computing, augmented and virtual reality, GPS,) have created new product development opportunities.

Travellers tend to rely heavily on the Internet and technology as their primary sources of information. They can search for and select their favourite destination online, discuss the information they have found before they make any decisions, make online reservations and payments, book flight/travel through a smartphone, a tablet, or a computer. Eventually, they post their experiences/reviews online, which may *influence* prospective travellers' behaviour and decisions. Consumers have become highly engaged, and user-generated content has become widespread and influential. Consequently, tourism service providers face new challenges as they strive to create value for customers.

#### What digital means for tourism

Being well aware of the impact new technologies have created, companies recognise the necessity of taking certain actions, as adapting to a changing environment is crucial for their business. But, in this era of changing business and technology environment, exactly what 'digital' means for tourism and tourist destinations?

The tourism industry is driven by technology to an increasing extent, with new challenges that those responsible for managing and marketing tourist destinations face (e.g., the role of online travel agencies in the process of travel search and booking, the digital tools and their widespread availability, P2P accommodation growth rate), as the power 'has shifted to travellers and the platforms that own the data' (Bakker and Twining-Ward, 2018, p. 7). Rapid technological advancements most certainly affect work environments, and DMO managers need to stay conversant with new technology, from both hardware and software perspective, to gain/ sustain competitive advantage (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 85).

That being so, destinations and tourism organisations constantly meet new challenges, because technology has empowered travellers, i.e., customers, and various digital platforms. As Morrison has noted, tourist organisations should *always consider global trends* in their long-term tourism planning. Correspondingly, external trends that affect tourism destinations should be analysed within the environmental scanning, using various techniques. In this context, analysing *technological trends* (as one of eight external trend areas, aside from social and cultural, political and legal; economic; natural environment; competitive; tourism market, and tourism sector), encompasses 'the increasing use of mobile phones for travel information and bookings; growing influence of social media on tourism; innovations in transportation modes, etc.' (Morrison, 2013, pp. 55–56)

Travellers prefer user-generated content to the content that has been created by companies. Once they visit a destination, travellers are eager to share their impressions online and post ratings. It is worth mentioning that there are more than 795 million reviews and opinions of 8.4 million accommodations, restaurants, experiences, airlines and cruises within the TripAdvisor website (TripAdvisor, 2019). Reviews and ratings are important: about 90% of the customers that rate a hotel or a restaurant as being 'excellent' will return, compared to only 40% of those who give a rating of 'good' (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 111). Because tourists trust online reviews, destinations and tourism businesses should acknowledge that customer reviews and ratings could attract new customers as much as they could drive them away. The power has shifted indeed.

To sum up, traditional approaches to tourism are constantly being reshaped and redefined. That is especially important for destination management organisations. These organisations are, along with other stakeholders in tourism, facing a series of challenges. It is not easy to stand out in this highly competitive market.

#### Destination management organisations – leveraging new technologies

Destinations are typically regarded as geographical areas; Kotler et al. (2016, p. 658) refer to them as 'places with some form of actual or perceived boundary, such as the physical boundary of an island, political boundaries, or even market-created boundaries'. It is, however, important to identify various tourist destinations based on consumer preferences and interpretations, and the functions of the tourism industry (Buhalis, 2000, p. 97).

Destination management, which 'involves coordinated and integrated management of the destination mix (attractions and events, facilities, transportation, infrastructure and hospitality resources)', is achieved through destination management organisations (DMOs) (Morrison, 2013, pp. 5–7). DMOs lead and coordinate the efforts of all tourism stakeholders for planning, developing and marketing tourism destinations; their roles, besides leadership and coordination, including: tourism planning and research, destination product development, marketing and promotion, partnership and team-building (collaboration with other organisations and individuals), and community relations (Morrison, 2013, pp. 5–18). Morrison (2013, p. 373) has also emphasised that websites have multiple roles, as they often serve as destination information sources, discussion generators, promotion tools, relationship/ partnership builders, integrators and enhancers of marketing communications, database and research sources, e-commerce channels. Therefore, apart from putting in a great deal of effort to reach (and listen to) their customers through social media, blogging, email, mobile ads and apps, DMOs should continually work on their websites.

The rapidly changing 'technological force' has shifted the 'power structure within tourism-related marketing systems' (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 85), and information and communication technologies are without a doubt having a very positive impact on destination management and marketing (Morrison, 2013, p. 530). For that reason, destination management organisations should adapt to a new digital environment and take advantage of the many opportunities offered by new technologies.

As the focus has shifted towards the customer experience, *user-generated content* (UGC) has become a valuable source of destination competitiveness. According to a WBG report, user-generated content refers to information that individual users create and share through Web 2.0 applications. It includes content posted on social media, as well as product reviews, videos, personal blogs, etc., (Salem and Twining-Ward, 2018, p. 16). Today, more than 100 million websites have user-generated content (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 52); over 3.5 billion people were active social media users, and over 3.4 billion people were active mobile social media users as of July 2019 (Clement, 2019). Therefore, DMOs should acknowledge the importance of two-way communication, and consider incorporating customer reviews into their websites.

What is more, leveraging user-generated content could (Salem and Twining-Ward, 2018, pp. 5–6): (1) drive revenue; (2) increase access to market; (3) leverage consumer content to market businesses; (4) build competence; (5) monitor performance and have insight into the travel interests of users/travellers; (6) improve quality, by listening to customers and their feedback; (7) predict performance, as review ratings could anticipate hotel performance; (8) benchmark competitors; (9) have impact on tourist destination image (measure marketing return on investment). These are all valuable effects of UGC for destinations and tourism businesses.

Consumers, the owners of various platforms, and even ordinary residents have become a part of today's tourist value chain (Bakker and Twining-Ward, 2018, p. 7). Given that digital and social media marketing is an ongoing process, the new marketing is customer-engagement marketing, which aims to enter consumers' conversations with relevant messages, so that the brand becomes a *meaningful part of their conversations and lives* (Kotler et al., 2016, pp. 40–41).

Still, as Salem and Twining-Ward (2018, pp. 28–39) have emphasised, DMOs should be aware that managing platforms takes a *commitment of time, money*, (e.g., when acquiring new software/tools, like Social Listening, Content Curation, Social Media Management, Reputation Management, DATA&Analytics), as much as it requires *specialised skill sets* (including writing, digital marketing, public relations). Furthermore, authors have noted that DMOs and other tourism companies are aware that UGC could be their *key brand marketing tool*, but they don't always know how to use it effectively. For best results, they need to get familiar with the *benefits and risks related to user-generated content*, as much as they need to learn how to leverage this tool for competitive advantage (Salem and Twining-Ward, 2018, p. 20).

As much as digital transformation seems to be a necessity, many companies find the process to be very demanding. Many digital investments do turn out to have a low return. However, there are numerous examples of good practices. According to Bain and Company's Digital Insights annual survey of more than 1,200 senior executives, companies that are managing their digital transformations well are (Anderson et al., 2019) fast in decision making and execution, which enables them to stay ahead of the market, and they: identify the role of digital for their industry; define digital at the right level and consider a limited number of relevant trends; and excel in orchestration.

Moreover, companies should consider all relevant aspects of digital transformation, and make sure that the process takes place across all departments. They need to be flexible and willing to use data-driven insights for better decision-making while paying attention to the consumers' engagement, online reputation management, talent management, etc.

#### Digital challenges and competitiveness in tourism sector

Gaining the destination competitiveness is related to a combination of its resources or assets, those naturally occurring, as well as those created, all of which could be exploited for the process of developing a tourism product, and the destination the ability to mobilise these resources (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 30).

According to Richie and Crouch (2003, pp. 80–81), global forces affecting destination performance and success, and eventually its competitiveness, could be (1) *economic, political* and *technological* - unstable and not so easy predictable, influencing most directly destination competitiveness; (2) *demographic and sociocultural* - somewhat more stable and easier to predict, and (3) *climatic, geographical* and *environmental* - normally very stable and most predictable. It is evident that technological forces could have a great impact on destination competitiveness, i.e., destination ability to compete.

That being so, apart from using established models, frameworks and techniques, DMOs should become more comfortable and willing to *leverage digital technologies*. The Internet and social media have empowered today's customers, making them well-informed and well-connected; hence companies should engage customers in order to build a leading brand (Kotler et al., 2016, pp. 40–41). As Rogers has noted, there is a growing number of new business models that view *customers' participation, data and collective knowledge* as a business asset and crucial competitive advantage. In addition to new business models, the digital era offers new revenue streams and new sources of competitive advantage, and many of them are 'cheaper, faster, and more customer-centric than ever before' (Rogers, 2016, p. 28).

As presented in the World Bank Group report on leveraging user-generated content for tourism development, many destinations have already successfully leveraged UGC (Salem and Twining-Ward, 2018, pp. 53–55): Jordan used user-generated content to decrease consumer anxiety related to travelling to the Middle East, and communicate its story of a secure, exciting destination; similarly, Puerto Rico used UGC to manage crisis communications by updating the TripAdvisor presence and communicating that the island was open and ready for tourism after natural disasters (a series of hurricanes in 2017); Hamilton Island Australia, on the other hand, redesigned the website with incorporated user-generated content, which resulted in the *increase of effectiveness, website visits and social engagement*.

Similarly, the importance of engaged consumers has shaped the marketing activities of Hertz (a rental company), as this company has found that consumers who engage in conversations about the brand through digital and social media are 30% more likely to *make a purchase* than those who don't (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 41).

Still, as Buhalis has emphasised, creating a marketing strategy and mix for a destination is a complex process, due to numerous independent tourism stakeholders. So, destination market-

ing should 'recognise the unique needs and limitations of each destination as well as their particular geographical, environmental and socio-cultural characteristics' (Buhalis, 2000, p. 98).

The tourism sector itself has become very competitive, and destinations face numerous challenges. Although the internet marketing has become 'the most important form of marketing and the major information communications tool for DMOs around the world' (Morrison, 2013, p. 371), numerous factors affect destinations success and their sustainable competitiveness. This paper has focused on the importance of digital and digital transformation, customer-centred approach, and user-generated content. But, marketing and management of destinations are complex processes. Digital technologies do create many opportunities, but DMOs need to rethink their strategies and their relationship to customers.

# Conclusion

The tourism sector has undergone a sea change over the past few decades. An ever-increasing rate of change puts pressure on companies to adapt to this new digital environment. But, the digital age offers a myriad of opportunities. Destination management organisations and other tourism stakeholders should embrace information and communication technologies, and choose a set of communication methods/channels and marketing techniques to communicate a destination's brand.

It could be concluded that information and communication technologies have become an integrated part of the long-term planning processes within tourism organisations. Although a majority of organisations are aware of the importance of digital transformation, many organisations still find it difficult, due to changes in business models, processes, employees' skills. But, 'digital' actually means that there are huge opportunities for companies to perform better. Being aware that this is an unending process, most successful companies are flexible and willing to embrace change rapidly in order to grow and create more value for their customers. At the same time, they pay attention to various aspects of digital transformation and communicate and implement new strategies across a whole organisation.

While information and communication technologies have 'revolutionised how DMOs share destination information and communicate with people' (Morrison, 2013, p. 394), tourists, as Internet users, have become more empowered. So, to achieve long-term success, today's companies should bring customer satisfaction into focus, rather than profits per se - running a business well, and fulfilling customer needs and wants will result in profits (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 28).

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# MOTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF TOURISTS COMING TO SERBIA VIA COUCHSURFING SITE

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# Abstract

CouchSurfing.com is a cultural exchange community and one of the most successful online hospitality communities, promoting free lodging and friendships around the world. Community development based on the concept of a sharing economy was relatively new in 2004, when Couchsurfing became available to the public, but the number of users increased rapidly, reaching 14 million users in 2019 in over 200,000 cities. Serbian citizens have joined this community both as hosts and as guests in other countries. The aim of the research is to determine whether the CouchSurfing.com site visitors visited Serbia as a tourist destination and what motivated them to visit it. The survey was conducted online in the Couchsurfers Facebook group on a sample of 180 respondents. Survey results show that tourists come to Serbia (especially Belgrade) with the help of the CouchSurfing.com site and that the main motives for their arrival are visits to events and visits to friends and family. The experiences that tourists have brought from Serbia are positive, which will certainly influence the spread of a positive image about Serbia and increase the number of users of the site who will come or will return to Serbia.

Keywords: Couchsurfing, Visit motives, Experiences, Hospitality, Serbia

# Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have enabled faster, greater exchange of information, data and ideas between people around the world. Modern business to its full extent has become dependent on IC technology, which opens up new opportunities and encourages the creation of completely new content and services. ICTs are the vehicle for the transformation of modern society and the initiator of the third industrial revolution. Therefore, the application of ICTs in all forms of business is a feature of highly developed countries, but also an opportunity for developing countries to make faster progress through the application of knowledge and innovation.

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The application of ICTs in tourism has contributed to the faster development of tourism and the creation of new tourism products. Consumers can explore destinations themselves and discover new and unknown places no matter where they are. Consumers themselves can create their own travel and save the cost of the commission charged by the travel agency, as a few clicks on the Internet and a payment card make it possible. With the help of ICTs, many tourism jobs are carried out, such as communication, booking, sales, distribution, promotion and more. The beginning of the application of ICTs in tourism dates back to the 60s of the 20th century, when the implementation of information systems, databases and computer networks began, with the introduction of reservation systems first in airlines and later in the hotel and travel agencies (Zekanovic-Korona and Klarin, 2012). Today, tourism offers numerous opportunities to apply ICTs in B2C (business to consumer) business, and increasingly through C2C (consumer to consumer). Specifically, internet sites and numerous social networks are becoming major tools in C<sub>2</sub>C communication, where new options are created for organizing tourist trips and meeting new people and cultures (Airbnb, Zipcar, JustRide, Uber, eBay). There are more and more sites that allow you to search for cheap or free accommodation (Couchsurfing, Trusted Housesitters, Nomador, HouseSit Match, Mind My House) (Fisher, 2019). It can be concluded that tourists are turning to direct forms of interaction with each other in search of more authentic tourist experiences and connections. In this way, the cost of travel and accommodation becomes lower and many more distant destinations are available to more travelers.

Some forms of C<sub>2</sub>C communication (Couchsurfing, Airbnb, Car:Go) are present in Serbia, which makes it easier for foreign tourists to stay at affordable prices. The aim of the research is to determine whether members of the CouchSurfing community have visited Serbia as a tourist destination, where they most often come from and what their reason for visiting is.

# **Couchsurfing - free accommodation service**

Community development based on the concept of sharing economics was relatively new in 2004, when the Couchsurfing site became available to the public. Couchsurfing is a service that connects members to a global community of travelers. The basic motto of the website is: "You have friends all over the world, you just haven't met them yet" (https://www.couchsurfing. com/). CouchSurfing.com differs from similar sites in that it comes with free hosting between CouchSurfing members. Everyone who is a member of the Couchsurfing.com site can host (provide accommodation for other members) and guests (when traveling, use the free accommodation services of other Couchsurfers). Also, there is a "meet up" option, which means that a Couchsurfer guest in the city only wants to meet with local members and make social contacts, without the need for accommodation. This concept, although not entirely original, was rapidly expanding and its number of users was increasing and reaching 14 million users in 2019 in over 200,000 cities worldwide (https://www.couchsurfing.com/). Today, Couchsurfing is the largest hospitality exchange network in terms of geographical distribution and number of members (Liu, 2012). Before, this approach was taken by the Hospitality Club, which is less and less used today with fewer members. In addition, there are other sites (BeWelcome, Trustroots, WarmShower, PlacestoStay) that can be used for similar travel experiences. Couchesurfing in relation to traditional tourism involves the creation of emotional consumption, and now forming a new category of tourism - Intimate Tourism or Emotional Tourism. People view their couchesurfing journey as an opportunity to learn and as an experience that leads to personal development (Bialski, 2011). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of couchsurfers are

more often in the role of host than surfer. As many as 11% of couch surfers state that they have only ceded accommodation to other surfers without actually surfing at all (Lipp, 2012).

# The positive and negative sides of traveling through the Couchsurfing site

The experiences of travelers who have found free accommodation through the Couchsurfing.com site are generally positive and are happy to recommend this type of travel to others. Such travelers are not picky and do not seek the high comfort of accommodation, but expect more from communication and socializing with the hosts in the form of cultural exchange. Emphasis is placed on getting to know the local culture and people, that is, visiting a place through local eyes (Chen, 2018). Thus, one experienced traveler emphasizes his positive attitude as follows: *"I would recommend to anyone. To me, the journey is not so much to look at cities, but to feel cities, and you can only feel them through people. I travel business, but I like that closer approach."* (Galić, 2017, p. 16).

Hosts of Couchsurfers who welcome guests to their home also have positive experiences and point out that their benefits are reflected through: meeting and interacting with host people, exchanging cultures, connecting through socializing and creating a sense of community, practicing a foreign language, reducing personal loneliness, learning through the personal experiences of travelers.

On the other hand, the hosts point out some of the negative sides of Couchsurfing, which they see as a lack of communication when contacting the hosts on the site (future guests send typing requests, do not get acquainted with the host's profile in detail). Host resentments apply to guests who are messy, to annoying guests who communicate little, to guests who seek only free accommodation without having to hang out with their host, to guests who get drunk, use drugs, or otherwise disrespecting the house that received them.

Travelers who use the free lodging services are most concerned with their safety and are important to the reviews left by travelers who have already stayed with the same host. There are also recommendations on how to travel safely, especially for women traveling alone. One traveler points out that women stay with host women to protect themselves against sexual harassment: *"There are plenty of girls who host girls only, they don't want to host men. She lives alone, how to trust whom, I understand, but if a man is like me, then... if someone has references like me, I see no reason not to receive me."* (Galić, 2017, p.16). Sometimes the site contacts themselves can be embarrassing, which is why a 38-year-old girl put a message on her profile: *"And guys, this is not a dating site so please spare your time ..."* 

There is a Trust and Safety team, which can be contacted when inappropriate behavior is noticed or when inappropriate messages are sent by other members. It is good that couchsurfers always have a back-up plan or possibly other couch-surfing contacts in the city they travel to for greater security (Pietila, 2011). Nevertheless, Couchsurfing culture fosters trust, which includes trust and conviction that others' motives for participation are positive and sincere (Mijatov and Pivac, 2016).

# **Couchsurfers Community in Serbia**

CouchSurfing.com has a group called CouchSurfing Serbia, which has over 39,800 members who host travelers from all over the world. Bearing in mind that in 2015 there were only 1 868 hosts in Serbia (Mijatov and Pivac, 2016), we can see that the number has increased sharply and

that more and more people are getting involved in the concept of travel with free accommodation. In this concept, young people from Serbia see this as a great opportunity to travel abroad and get to know the world, because they do not have a high standard and cannot pay expensive travel arrangements. Also, socializing with foreigners and cultural exchange in your home is a challenge for others who cannot travel to foreign countries. In the future we can expect further growth of members of the Couchsurfing community in Serbia, as well as more activity of these members in the form of surfing, as well as providing accommodation, tourist guidance, organizing events and more.

#### Research methodology and sample structure

The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire in the Couchsurfers Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/2204420210) in May 2018. The target group is the users of the said site, who use the site CouchSurfing.com to book accommodation, and are members of the specified Facebook group, regardless of age, gender, occupation, social back-ground ... The survey was compiled in English (the target group is foreigners coming to Serbia), because most of the English language communication takes place both on the Couchsurfing site and in the destination itself between the host and the guest. Respondents completed a 17-questionnaire survey consisting of closed, semi-open, and open-ended questions. Two questions were designed to be evaluated using the Likert scale. Due to the limitations of the scope of this paper, only some of the answers received in the survey will be presented.

The sample is intentional and aimed only at Couchsurfers, especially those who have visited Serbia. The survey was conducted on a sample of 180 respondents, 80 of whom did not visit Serbia. These 80 subjects were eliminated from further processing and the remaining valid sample was 100 subjects.

The starting hypotheses in the research were:

- H1 CouchSurfing.com site users visit Serbia as a tourist destination.
- H2 CouchSurfing.com site users are motivated by cultural exchange when choosing Serbia as a tourist destination.
- H<sub>3</sub> CouchSurfing.com site users find hospitality in Serbia.

#### **Research results**

The sample included 48.3% of male respondents and 51.7% of female respondents, ensuring equal representation of both sexes. Respondents are from different age groups as well as from different countries of origin (Table 1). Persons from the youngest age group of 18 to 29 years are the most represented (53.9%), while the number from each of the following groups is significantly reduced. There were no respondents in the two oldest age groups who completed the survey, which can be attributed to the fact that older tourists do not use free accommodation through Couchsurfing (they do not have enough information about this site, they are less susceptible to adventure and uncertainty, their personal income allows them to accommodate more comfort) or just less willing to complete electronic surveys. The countries most commonly visited by Couchsurfers in Serbia are: Croatia, Germany, the USA and the United Kingdom. Fewer respondents were from China, Russia and Austria (out of every 7 respondents). In addition to neighboring countries and other European countries, tourists from other conti-

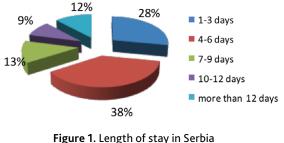
nents (North America, Asia) are frequent, which is a good indicator of Serbia's already wellknown presence on the world market, the introduction of low cost airlines in air travel and the abolition of visas for Chinese citizens.

Ge	nder	Age		Country of origin	
Male	48.3%	18-29	53.9%	Croatia	30
Female	51.7%	30-39	32.2%	Germany	15
		40-49	13.9%	USA	13
		50-59	0%	United Kingdom	11
		60+	0%	Bosnia and Hercegovina	8
				Others	23

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Source: The authors

Most Couchsurfers stayed in Serbia for 4-6 days (38%), which can be related to EXIT music festival (which is one of the most common motives for the visit), which lasts 4-5 days (Figure 1). In second position is a stay of 1-3 days (28%), which is an option for city break trips that are increasingly present to tourists during the year as a weekend trip. Serbia as a city break destination has been intensively promoted in recent years by the Tourist Organization of Serbia in its campaigns ("My Serbia"), as well as bloggers from around the world and other influencers who share their information about Serbia. Tourists who are staying from 7-9 days (13%) can get acquainted not only with the place of their stay, but they can also visit other places in Serbia and create a more detailed picture of the natural, cultural, gastronomic or sociological elements of the tourist offer. Longer stay is more often practiced by tourists from far off countries, from other continents.



Source: The authors

The motives for visiting Serbia are very different, but the answer dominates that visiting the EXIT music festival is a very common reason for coming to Serbia, especially in the youngest population of respondents (18-29 years). Friends (9 replies) and family (7 replies) are cited as a frequent reason for visiting Serbia, which indicates a strong connection of the host with people abroad and a willingness to host them (open mind, hospitality, gaining experience about the world in their home). Among the motives for visiting Serbia are the preserved nature (5 responses) and airport transit (4 responses) (Table 2).

The motive for coming	Number of arrivals	
EXIT festival	12	
Friends	9	
Family	7	
Nature	5	
Airport transit	4	
Culture	3	
Food	3	
People	3	
Work	3	
History, monuments, beautiful nature	3	
Belgrade	3	
Tourism	2	
Guča	2	

 Table 2. Motives for visiting Serbia as a destination (most frequent answers)

Source: The authors

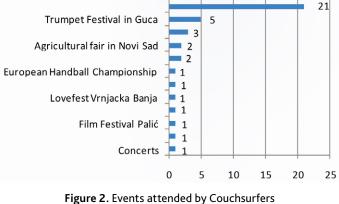
Couchsurfers in Serbia most often visit Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis (Table 3). These are the largest cities offering many cultural facilities and entertainment, especially festivals that are very attractive to young travelers. Smaller cities are less visited (Subotica, Loznica, Sabac, Cacak, Kragujevac, etc.), mostly as part of visits to Belgrade or Novi Sad. Mountain resorts (Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Fruska Gora, etc.) are very few visited by Couchsurfers, as there are not enough organized tours or not enough promoted to foreign tourists. Given that the Couchsurfers are known as adventurers, they should be offered mountain spots and special day-stay facilities with organized transport from Belgrade. They could also include trained locals to guide them and introduce them to a variety of beauties and natural rarities.

The place that was visited	Number of visits
Beograd	28
Novi Sad	17
Beograd, Novi Sad	13
Beograd, Novi Sad, Niš	3
Niš	9
Zlatibor	6
Subotica, Palić	4

Table 3. The most visited places in Serbia

Source: The authors

Couchsurfers who come to Serbia practice visiting one of the many events, because over 800 tourist-attractive events of different character are organized in Serbia every year (Bjeljac and Ćurčić, 2010). Thus, 41 respondents (out of 100 surveyed) attended one of the events, the most visited being the EXIT music festival in Novi Sad (21 respondents or 51%) (Figure 2). EXIT festival is the most famous music festival in Serbia, which in 2018 won the title The Best Major European Festival (https://www.exitfest.org/). The Trumpet Festival in Guca ranks second in number of visits (12.2%) and Beer Fest in Belgrade (7.3%). From the analysis we can see that manifestations are a frequent motive for tourists to come to Serbia, and it is not so unusual when we know that most of the manifestations are free and offer food and drink at low prices, as well as good music, fun and atmosphere. This allows surfers to get to know the local people and their traditions.



**igure 2.** Events attended by Couchsurfer Source: The authors

Out of the total number of respondents, 77 fully agree with the statement that people in Serbia are hospitable, 21 respondents agree, and only two respondents do not agree on disagree (Figure 3). None of the respondents had a negative attitude towards the hospitality of people in Serbia. The issue of hospitality in Serbia has been researched numerous times and the results have always shown that foreign tourists are delighted with the locals and the hospitality they provide to tourists. Moreover, the element of hospitality is also recognized as an important trump card that stands out in the promotional campaigns of the Serbian Tourist Organization.

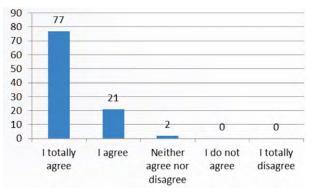


Figure 3. Is Serbia a country with hospitable people? Source: The authors

# Conclusion

The hospitality networks are a new form of travel creation at significantly lower prices. The Couchsurfing website is especially worthwhile to find a place to stay or share a host home and hometown with travelers. The practice of traveling through Couchsurfing is increasingly present in Serbia, as the number of members of this community is almost 40,000.

Survey results show that tourists come to Serbia (especially Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis) with the help of the CouchSurfing.com site, both from Europe and from Noth America and Asia. Most Couchsurfers are young people (18 to 29 year olds), who have low income and where finding free accommodation makes traveling much easier. The main motives for coming to Serbia are visits to events and visits to friends and family. Couchsurfers most often come to big cities where they see the opportunity to have fun, visit cultural sites and meet more people. Natural beauties are much less visited (mountains, picnics, rivers, lakes), while none of the respondents indicated that they had visited a farm ("salaš") or some place of rural tourism. Such results indicate the need for enhanced promotion of various forms of selective tourism in Serbia on the foreign market, with a more intensive use of ICTs in all forms.

Great importance in attracting new Couchsurfers would be achieved through the opening of new low cost airlines, both from Belgrade (Nikola Tesla Airport) and Niš (Constantine the Great Airport) and Kraljevo (Morava Airport), which would make it easier for some places in western and eastern Serbia. Couchsurfers are tourists with a small travel budget, who try to keep the cost of accommodation and transportation as low as possible, so that low-cost companies offer the benefits of cheap air travel and allow travel to all communities.

The growing use of information and communication technology in tourism needs to take the growth of network hospitality seriously. Connecting passengers in this way can significantly reduce their interest in offering travel agencies and some expensive transportation. Networking hospitality is changing the way travel is organized, connecting people who are unfamiliar with each other and eliminating cultural barriers between nations in the long run.

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# ADAPTING TO DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS WHILE TRAVELLING WITH CALM TECHNOLOGY

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# Abstract

The proliferation of ICTs in everyday life has also penetrated the tourism industry where ICTs have become paramount for the effective supply of many tourism products and services. Due to the omnipresent availability of mobile devices and ubiquitous access to online information and services, there is no break in the continuity of use in everyday life and during travel. However, there is a piece of growing evidence in the recent years that excessive and problematic ICT use and practice in tourism could influence the satisfaction of tourism experience, acting as an inhibitor and destroying its value. The problem in many cases lies in consumers' digital-led lives that are overwhelmed with various devices and services constantly creating a digital distraction and triggering issues. Paradoxically, there are approaches within human-computer interaction research discourse that seek for a solution to this problem within technology itself. One of the most prominent ideas is related to calm technology research agenda. Calm technology is the context when technology recedes into the background of our lives. Long before the problem escalated, Mark Weiser and John Seely Brown introduced the idea of calm technology in reaction to the foreseen, computer-imposed information overload and subsequent consumer stress. They proposed that technology interaction should only engage with the user's central and/or peripheral attention when relevant, thus not conflicting to tourism experience if not needed. Starting from the same idea, this paper examines principles of the calm design and discusses offers implications for all travel phases.

Keywords: Digital distractions, calm technology, travel phases

# Introduction

We are now in the blooming era of ICT solutions for the tourism industry (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008). From small restaurants to chained-brand hotels, local retail travel agents to worldwide travel operators, rural and peripheral areas to world class destinations the use of ICT is an important precondition to create and deliver travel experience to majority of modern tourists (Peña and Jamilena 2009; Stankov, Lazić, and Dragićević 2010; Kwok and Yu 2013;

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Sirirak, Islam, and Ba Khang 2011; Suarez Alvarez, Diaz Martin, and Casielles 2007; Werthner and Klein 1999). On the tourism demand side, consumers were strongly empowered with possibilities that Internet technologies brought (Buhalis & Law, 2008). These benefits are evident in all travel phases such as, information seeking, travel planning, decision-making, communication, navigation, trip re-collection and story-telling (Pan and Fesenmaier 2006; Xiang and Gretzel 2010; Gretzel and Yoo 2008; Beirne and Curry 1999; O'Leary, Gretzel, and Fesenmaier 2006; Black and Kelley 2009). In joint collaboration of Internet and mobile technologies tourists gain access to unique computing that effectively changed the nature of travel experience (Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2014; Tussyadiah, 2015; Wang & Xiang, 2012).

At this juncture, the logical question imposes itself: whether tourism industry is overwhelmed by the technological innovations? Can this be asked separately for tourism supply and demand side? Indeed, the on-going technological development in tourism is sometimes voluntary, but sometimes the demand and supply sides must accept changes without leaving any choice, like in the case of the 2008 aviation industry change from paper to electronic ticketing (Belobaba, Swelbar, and Barnhart 2009). In term of the current preoccupation with mobile connectivity, Dickinson and collegues (2016) state that there is often an assumption that consumers welcome and embrace connectivity, but there is still relatively little research on tourist experience of purposeful or imposed disconnection.

Tourism providers should consider leaving enough space for tourists to adapt to dizzy technological growth and voluntarily chose the level of technology or preferable user interface (UI) which they want to use, thus supporting digital well-being of consumers. The term digital wellbeing describes the framework that "looks after personal health, safety, relationships and worklife balance in digital settings; enables acting safely and responsibly in digital environments; manage digital stress, workload and distraction; uses digital media to participate in political and community actions; uses personal digital data for well-being benefits; acts with concern for the human and natural environment when using digital tools; balances digital with realworld interactions appropriately in relationships; etc." (Beetham, 2016). Digital well-being cannot be created solely relying on individual capabilities (mindfulness or other) and therefore is not exclusively individual responsibility (Beetham, 2016; Nansen, Chakraborty, Gibbs, Mac-Dougall, & Vetere, 2012).

A solution to technological overload may rest within technology itself (Case 2015; Weiser and Brown 1995; Stankov and Filimonau 2019; Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). This paper strives to therefore discuss a perspective on adaptable design of ICT for delivering tourism experience. This idea largely relies on the concept of calm technology that has been repeatedly discussed in the ubiquitous computing domain (Weiser and Brown 1995; Hohl 2009; Rogers 2006; Case 2015; Elwood 2010). Calm technology is the context when "technology recedes into the background of our lives" (Weiser and Brown 1995). In the core of this concept is the idea that technology has no purpose by itself, but it should serve in delivering desired experience (Case 2015) i.e. if applied in the tourism context, a satisfactory tourism experience. According to Case (2015), the term "calm interaction" or simply "calm design" might be more accurate than calm technology, as it is used for a smooth capture of a user's attention only when necessary while calmly remaining in the background most of the time. We adopt the calm design concepts as a compromise between technology depended tourism supply side and demand side that is heterogeneous in terms of technology affection levels (Stankov and Filimonau 2019). In that context, this paper examines the possibilities of design and adoption of ICT in the different aspects of travel phrases.

#### The calm design solution

Today's modern societies have long passed the era of exclusivity with computers being overly expensive and owned by small groups of people along with the era of personal computers owned by everyone. With the phase of internet technologies, modern societies have entered the phase of ubiquitous computing (Weiser and Brown 1997) that is, pervasive computing. Ubiquitous computing can be interpreted as "computers everywhere" (Mühlhäuser & Gurevych, 2008, 8), as it represents the era of embedded computer processors in everyday objects that communicate with one another.

In their seminal work that envisioned the future importance of calm technology, Weiser and Brown (1995) term this concept and put its foundations. They were concerned with anticipated computer-mediated information overload and stress caused by that unwieldy interaction modalities in ubiquitous computing era (Byrne, O'Grady, & O'Hare, 2009; Greenfield,2006). Weiser and Brown (1995) discuss that there are different sorts of technologies, some of which are pleasant and calming, while other disturb their users. According to these authors, reason for sense of technologies rests in the way how technologies engage with people's central and peripheral attention. Calm technology should engage both with the central and the peripheral attention (Weiser and Brown, 1995). While focused on central attention, peripheral attention is naturally attuned. Logically, peripheral attention can suddenly become central and curtail, usually demanding some action. Secondly, calm technology could bring more details into the edge of an interface (the periphery), which could increase the ability to act when needed without an increasing information overload. (Weiser and Brown 1997).

The idea of calm technology has been accepted in computer sciences while it is still not haven't thought enough what "calmness" is (Pang 2011). Stanford University's Calming Technology Lab (2011) differs term "calm" from "calming" technology. "Calm" technology is an attention and focus-based approach to designing tools that can be more easily used in a calm manner, while "calming" technologies are computing systems designed to actively calm people physiologically, emotionally, or cognitively and, thus, increase the user's capacity to maintain optimal resting state even while performing work (i.e., breathing and heart rate tracking application) (Moraveji, Oshidary, Pea, & Fogg, 2011; Stanford University's Calming Technology Lab, 2011). According to the dictionaries "calm" represent state or condition that is free from agitation, excitement, or disturbance (Riekki, Isomursu, & Isomursu, 2004; 105). While it might be a fuzzy concept in philosophical sense, in the computational and device context, calmness that should be accomplished with calm design can be seen "as a user-centric measure that describes how a system appears to the user; it is a user experience that occurs when technology is used in a specific usage context" (Riekki, Isomursu, & Isomursu, 2004; 105).

Calm design may have a number of benefits when applied in the context of various tourism products and services. The basis of this concept is the design of technologies that work in the background, that are an integral part of the travel experience, not a distraction from it, that do not pull attention from precious travel experience, etc (Stankov and Filimonau 2019; Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). This is technology that we could colloquially call "calm friendly". In the era of omnipresent computing, tourism industry could "harvest" the benefits of ICT when applying calm design principles, instead of just adding more technology to different phases of tourism experience.

# Examining calm design throughout travel phases

Calm design may have a number of benefits when applied in the context of various tourism products and services. The basis of this concept is the design of technologies that work in the background, that are an integral part of the travel experience, not a distraction from it, that do not pull attention from precious travel experience. ICT does not a priori create a value for travel types and experiences (Neuhofer 2016). As tourists exhibit different user profiles depending on specific situations (Manes 2003) calm design could have various implications for the different stages of travel (Stankov and Filimonau 2019). Based on characteristics of travel phases and a review of major existing and forthcoming ICTs, Table 1 summarizes some of the possible implications of "calm friendly" technologies in pre-travel, on-travel and post-travel phases. It is important to note that presented implications are not conclusive, but are offered to spark consideration and add to the open debate. Most of implications and examples are not exclusive for one travel phase but can be considered in other phases as well.

Travel phase	Pre-travel	On-travel	Post-travel
Implication	<ul> <li>less stressful travel preparation</li> <li>easier travel search</li> <li>influence decision making</li> <li>product personalization</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>overall context awareness to facilitate guidance</li> <li>on-demand information retrieval</li> <li>more fluent human-to-human communication</li> <li>geoloation services</li> <li>proximity and location marketing</li> <li>adding extra value</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>long term memory associations</li> <li>hyper-personalized CRM</li> <li>easy documenting and storytelling</li> </ul>
Example	<ul> <li>intelligent online searches</li> <li>virtual globes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>mobile applications working in the background</li> <li>wearable gadgets</li> <li>GPS enabled online maps</li> <li>social media geotagging</li> <li>beacons</li> <li>smart posters</li> <li>biometric identification</li> <li>tourists and vehicles tracking systems</li> <li>crowd handling</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>social media notifications based on previous experiences</li> <li>disclosure of private information from communication</li> <li>"one click" unsubscribe</li> </ul>

Table 1. The demonstration of possible implications of "calm friendly" technologies in basic travel phases.

The pre-travel phase generally receives a large portion of interest among market professionals and academics, as it is an element of everyday life, that is, as we have seen, largely impacted by the use of various kinds of ICT technologies. Travel marketing has to find its place in everyday consumers' attention that is generally overloaded with information. In many cases, travel marketing accomplice in overloading customers with information. During travel information search users are "under attack" of different kind of offers, sale promotions and discounts. However, information is acknowledged to be the "lifeblood" of tourism, because without information, the customer motivation and ability to travel would be severely limited (O'Connor and Frew 2002). Therefore, the existing technologies are trying to overcome this issue, and there are more and more examples that have, purposefully or not, adopted calm design using information editing.

There are examples of search engines and recommendation systems are designed in accordance with the calm design principles. The use of location services and other contexts in interaction with users during information search was made possible with the advances in intelligent systems in tourism (Gretzel 2011). User interfaces of online travel agencies are becoming more intuitive and more invisible, as in the case of *Google search* engine design, that practically does not exist for users (Case 2015). In many cases, the main search results are enhanced with additional information that can influence decisions, such as consumer reviews, ranking, user comments, weather condition, etc (Angskun and Angskun 2008). For example, *Routhappy*, flight-search engine, included a "flight happiness" factor into search results that is based on flight rating system and amenities by flight.

As a result of significant progress in geospatial technologies virtual globes represents a good example of technology that could "calm" the process of travel information search (Stankov et al. 2019). Virtual globes join information from various sources, including maps, textbooks and the Internet together in one application that is designed in such a way that the users can start using the features intuitively without any effort or training (Rakshit and Ogneva-Himmelberger 2008). Virtual globe applications can be integrated into industry websites and can become practically invisible to users, although still been a separate application. Beside cartographic symbols, virtual globe are enhanced with a type of data that users can communicate with in a more natural way, such as photos, live camera videos, or even audio. An excellent example of this is the reality street view applications enabled by some online map providers. For example, *Google Street View* allows users to watch the scenery in the streets and various places as if they are present there. This way of presenting map information is as natural as it can be for human comprehension. Peng and colleagues (2010) even suggested a new approach that connects *Google Maps with Street View* to create scenery videos to achieve easier route planning.

**On-travel phase** concerns situations where information is needed in real time and specifically provided to the user, "on demand," or most often determined by the changing context (Manes 2003; Dimitrios Buhalis and Sinarta 2019). The general rise of in-destination services is driven by the growth of the mobile usage, personalisation trend and peer-to-peer trend (Euromonitor 2014). In that context, before calm design could take place, significant prerequisite should have to take place in a number of disciplines. According to Byrne, O'Grady and O'Hare (2010) areas of a special interest are smart environments that seek to deliver a practical realisation of the ubiquitous computing vision in everyday scenarios. Furthermore, the different approaches in on-travel phase must be considered when dealing with organized or individual tours. For instance, frictionless services of organized travel are easier to provide, as technology behind organised travel is hidden behind tour agents, travel agency representatives and other "real world' actors interacting with tourists. However, this "no-tech" idealistic experience can easily be broken down with users' obligation to use hotel room pass codes that need to be remembered by tourists, or simply by obligation to deal with hotel room automation control systems, radio-frequency identification (RFID) key cards, etc. On the other side, individual travel requires more travellers' attention and more dependence on technology resulting in more challenges for calm design.

Currently, tour operators, service providers and online travel agencies put high hopes on mobile *applications* during the on-travel phase. Smartphones have become ubiquitous that is a base for the extension of tourism ICT application during on-travel phase. Technology trends, such as seamless user interfaces on various devices, cloud-based services or semantic approaches could significantly facilitate implementation of calm design for travel experience. Dickinson and colleagues (2014) list mobile application functions suitable for tourism domain that reveal their suitability for calm design such as personalized information provided about destination, two-way sharing capabilities, context awareness based on smartphone's sensors, communications with other machines (IoT) and tagging. However, when mobile phone appli-

cations are integrated in travel experience, there is a list of possible distracting technical factors for calmness, such as network connectivity, bundle of chargers, high consumption of battery power, limited device processing capabilities, change of mobile carriers, lighting conditions, time constraints, roaming charges, etc (Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). Furthermore, more sophisticated travel products require involving various separate service and product providers that opens a question of application interconnectivity (Chiu and Leung 2005). Making compact tourism products based on interconnected mobile technologies is still not easily possible to achieve as it needs powerful intelligent support. In case of a system failure, human backup is still necessary (Case, 2016). For example, to ensure total calm of individual tours, a human two-way communication system, similar to the emergency roadside assistance, would be needed. From the supply side, human interventions can be seen as a limiting factor as they imply cost rise. Finally, tourism is a service industry where the quality of experience largely depends on human interaction (Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). However, many practitioners still develop mobile applications aimed to deliver more self-directed experience to customers. For example, hotel chains invest in mobile application solutions for streamlining the check-in process by eliminating the need for front desk check-ins and developing keyless room entrance using mobile keys (Ting 2016).

According Elwood (2010), the concept of embedding ubiquitous computing extends beyond hand-held devices. In that sense, the different forms of body mounted technology (Atembe 2015) or *wearable technologies* represent an emerging trend that finds purpose during travel. Wearable technologies provide various opportunities for creating tailored experience based on users location, past preferences, or even user current moods (Dibble 2015). Intuitive inclusion of those technologies into tourism products should be accepted by travellers. Some wearable technologies that are currently used in their essence represent real examples of calm design - they are almost invisible as they are usually represented in the form of accessories; they are small-sized, unobtrusive, easy to use, personalized to the user's characteristic, with automated connectivity with servers (Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). According to Tussyadiah (2013) tourist usage patterns of wearable technologies even suggests a potential transformation of their behaviour due to the new ways of interacting with technology and the surroundings. One could generally think of smart-watches when talking about wearable technology, but some major hotel brands and travel agencies have already started looking beyond smart-watches to other wearable technology, such as the *Bluetooth* bracelets, wrist bands, or smart glasses, as a way to personalize guest experiences (Atembe 2015).

One of the basic principles of calm design is that machines should not try to act like humans and humans should not try to act like machines in order to complete some task (Case 2015). Although human-to-machine communication is still a major problem to overcome, in the realm of designing calm technologies, human-to-human communication is the field that can significantly be improved in the future (Stankov and Filimonau 2019). Due to the existence of various communication platforms people opt to express themselves in visual forms. Emojis, the mini images or characters used to express feelings and thinking, have been referred as new international technological language (Clark 2014). Based on that development, an interesting breakthrough of analogue calm design attempts are happening. For example, there are new useful clothes designed for travellers covered in different symbols to help overcome language barriers by allowing the wearer to point to a series of pictures in order to communicate with locals (Butler 2016). Still, Samsung's (2016) study found that many people are struggling to get to grips with what these new characters really are. However, some other recent advances in audio wearable are very promising for the travel industry. For example, despite many chal-

lenges (Nakamura 2009), viable automatic speech translation technology are emerging (Cunningham 2016). Functioning smart earpiece to translate foreign languages instantly for travellers will represent an example of calm technology.

Human-computer interaction models are increasingly accepting geographic approaches (Hecht et al. 2011). Geolocation services in the digital era represent an excellent example of using maps to facilitate location awareness and calm the process of interacting with computers and with other humans. While on traditional maps user had first to locate them on the map and then to locate the point of interest, geolocation enables mobile maps to put the user in its centre. Samsungs' (2016) research revealed that Europeans feel that map applications have had the biggest impact on them in terms of making their lives easier. The integration of geotagging brought important quality to social media that now can incorporate travel related information more easily. Many users share their geographical location, travel plans, geotagged images and video clips with friends and followers. Social media sites allow a compact overview of all these data conflating the physical world with the Internet (Hohl 2009). From the user point of view, geotagging represents an enjoyable way to identify the user's location in relation to other people in order to show off their tourist experience and provide others with tourist information (Chung and Lee 2016).

A currently operating global navigation systems, NAVSTAR GPS and GLONASS (and forthcoming European GALILEO and Chinese COMPAS), mobile triangulation, Bluetooth and RFID location systems revealed opportunities for proximity and location marketing, that is of great importance for "in situ" marketing (Yamamoto 2009). Proximity marketing and location-based marketing have a great potential to be "calm", as it represents wireless distribution of advertising content to equipped users that is localized to a certain place that bordered by invisible edges of transmitters signal ranges (Yovcheva, Buhalis, and Gatzidis 2012). However, besides the necessity to have access to the mobile equipment in order to be part of proximity marketing, users must further satisfy preconditions that discomfort them. Some of such "vexatious" actions are giving permission for push notifications, accepting increased battery consumption, mobile data transfer, roaming charges, etc. Among these, pushed-based personalized messages can be the most possible obstacle among tourists as marketer could try to overwhelm the customer with offers and messages (Balasubramanian 2009). Still, a recent study by Wozniak and colleagues (2016) suggests that mostly younger tourists are prone to receive push-based personalized messages. Proximity marketing also offers "calmer" strategies including pull marketing techniques used in near field communication (NFC) and QR code enabled objects (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). According to Pesonen and Horster (2012) NFC could potentially have significant application possibilities both within tourism practitioners and tourists and for tourism research needs. Some of these applications include; smart posters, paperless travel, wireless check-in and check-out, NFC payment options, visitor tracking (especially indoor tracking), secure and private virtual coupons, tag authentication, etc.

The possible resource for making technology calm during travel is the use of biometric identification technology (Stankov and Filimonau 2019; Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018). Biometrics have been around for a number of years and recently the tourism and travel industry have started considering its use to regulate internal processes and to improve services, such as access to control systems, payment systems, time and attendance systems (Kang, Brewer, and Bai 2007). Still, biometric identification has to overcome issues such as a lack of legislation, user privacy concerns, misunderstanding of the system functioning, relatively high cost of the system, etc. (Kang, Brewer, and Bai 2007; Neo et al. 2014). According to Bilgihan and colleagues (2013), although being a promising technology, neither guests nor hoteliers are fully

ready for biometrics. In that context, Neo and colleagues (2014) point out that designers should carefully address the issue of security and privacy when managing airport fingerprint scanners in realm of tourist satisfaction.

In the information driven industry most ICTs used during travel will want to continue to communicate with tourists in *post-travel phase* (Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides 2012). Most booking applications will remember visited destination and try to continue to send notifications and e-mails about the same, nearby or similar destinations. The envisioned place of calm technology in the post-travel phase is not to create additional "noise" but to ease-up transition to everyday life, offer convenient methods to catalogue memories effortlessly, enable easy storytelling, provide companies to continue personalized communication, prolonged promotion and engagement.

Documenting travel and storytelling is much easier, mostly due to situations where social media take over the lead from previous web technologies. Travellers have always been engaged in storytelling to communicate tourism experiences, but social media became regular mean of telling travel stories supported by digital images or streaming videos (Stankov, Jovanović, and Dragićević 2014). Unlike websites and blogs, social media enable users to easily share information about travelling, not just in post-travel, but in all travel phases.

As stated before, new smart wearable technologies are even capable of capturing user's emotional states (Glaros and Fotiadis 2005). Smart recommendations based on the recognition of emotional states and matching contextual promotional messages would be an effective way of reaching users' long term memories. This practice certainly raises some privacy concerns as having various personal information stored in service providers databases creates an additional challenge for designers for creating products that are not intimidated in any way. An important ability of calm technology would be a respect of traveller's wishes to simply stop all the communication related to specific travel using an easy "one click" method, without posting additional questions and continuing dialogue (Stankov, Filimonau, and Slivar 2018).

#### **Concluding remark**

This paper does not aim to go against the growing technology over-reliance in tourism. Instead, it strives to discuss the applicability of calm technology in designing more effective tourist experience. It outlines examples of existing and prospective applications of calm technology in tourism, thus indicating how the tourism industry can benefit from calm design.

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# CONSTRAINTS FOR DOMESTIC TOURISM DEMAND IN SERBIA

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# Abstract

Domestic tourism contributes to spatial redistribution of spending power within a country and has a particular role in the country's preparation for participation in international tourism. Total of 5.15 million domestic overnight stays were registered in Serbia in 2017, representing 62% of the overall tourist turnover. However, Serbian tourism demand is primarily directed towards international destinations, while the demand for domestic tourism is still mainly directed towards only a few established tourist centres. The aim of this research is to explore the importance of various constraints for choosing diverse domestic destinations. Three generally accepted categories of constraints were taken into consideration (structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal), while one new category (preference for international travel) was proposed based on observations of the domestic tourism demand and additional theoretical considerations. Total of 125 participants took part in the survey. They were asked to choose a domestic destination they would like to visit and then to rate their agreement with statements related to different constraints for visiting that destination. Results indicate that intrapersonal constraints are the least significant for the participants, while the newly proposed group composed of constraints related to preferences for international travel received the highest ratings. Great importance of time constraints has also been confirmed, while financial constraints were among the least significant. Results were futher analysed in relation to the chosen destination's type (eco, urban and mountain), whereby several differences in constraint perception were established.

Keywords: Constraints, Domestic tourism, Consumer behaviour, Serbia

#### Introduction

Domestic tourism is mostly linked to geographically close and familiar places, representing the opposite to the traditional understanding of tourism as a journey to distant and exotic destinations (Jeuring, 2017). Domestic tourism contributes to the intranational spatial redistribution of economic development and spending power to underdeveloped regions (Archer, 1978)

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and it has a distinct role in the infrastructural, economic and socio-cultural preparation of the receptive region for participation in international tourism flows (Jafari, 1986). Strengthening of the national unity and overcoming cultural barriers within a country stand out among the non-economic effects.

Affordable air travel has allowed people to travel to more distant places, which increased the number of available destinations and competitiveness among them (Jeuring, 2017). Subjective evaluations of destination distance and proximity influence tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness, whereby places near home may be seen as too ordinary to fulfil the need for novelty and escape from everyday surroundings (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2016). For example, Larsen and Guiver (2013) established that distance may represent a direct source of value of a holiday experience. Based on the dichotomy of home and away, images of near and far destinations have been polarised in favour of the latter, causing domestic tourism to be seen by some as "the less attractive little brother of international tourism" (Jeuring, 2017, p. 71).

Serbian tourism demand is mainly oriented towards international destinations. Official data on the destination structure of Serbian tourists who traveled via domestic tourist agency in 2017 show that only 20.91% of the trips were made in the country (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2018). The fact that Serbia is a landlocked country is one of the most obvious explanations. It is supported by the official statistics, which indicate that 76.90% of Serbian tourists who traveled abroad via tourist agency traveled to one of the four traditional seaside tourism destination countries (Greece, Montenegro, Turkey and Bulgaria).

Domestic tourism accounted for 51.48% of visitors and 61.86% of overnight stays in Serbia in 2017 (SORS, 2018a). Although Serbian domestic tourism is characterised by a less distinctive spatial concentration than its international tourism (Belij and Todorović, 2018), the share of the five most popular destinations (Vrnjačka Banja, Zlatibor, Belgrade, Kopaonik and Sokobanja) in the total number of domestic overnight stays still amounted to 44.19% in 2017 (SORS, 2018a). More disperse domestic tourist flows would most certainly provide a larger impact for the country's balanced regional development.

According to Backman and Crompton (1989), travel constraints are those barriers which inhibit consumption of a tourist service. It is generally accepted that there are three constraint dimensions (e.g. Crawford and Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991; Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter, 2002) – intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. Intrapersonal constraints are defined as psychological states and personality traits which influence preferences and could negatively impact an individual's decision to go on a specific trip (Crawford and Godbey, 1987). For example, this group comprises stress, depression, anxiety, individual's skills and activity preferences. Interpersonal constraints are related to individual's inability to find company for a specific trip (lack of family members or friends who are willing to participate) (Nyaupane et al., 2004; Zheng et al., 2016). Structural constraints are considered the most important, most studied and most challenging for the researchers (Jackson, 2000). They are usually divided into three groups – financial, time and constraints related to the attributes of the place (accessibility, lack of information, lack of transport, overcrowding).

The role of diverse travel constraints in destination choice has been acknowledged in the literature – destination distance (McKercher, 2004), climate and seasonality (Baum and Hagen, 1999; Hinch and Jackson, 2000), lack of transport and accommodation and safety (George 2003; Thapa, 2003). Theoretical concepts regarding constraints were tested in different tourism contexts – skiing tourism (Gilbert and Hudson, 2000), senior tourism (Fleischer and Pizam, 2000), cruise tourism (Hung and Petrick, 2012), domestic tourism (Nyaupane et al., 2004; Nyaupane and Andereck, 2008; Zheng et al., 2016) and others. The aim of this research is to explore the importance of various constraints of Serbian tourism demand for choosing diverse domestic destinations. Based on theoretical considerations of the dichotomy between familiar and exotic and the characteristics of the domestic tourism market, a new category of constraints (preference for international travel) was incorporated in the model, along with the hypothesis that this category is also the most important.

## Methodology

The questionnaire used in the research consisted of items related to domestic travel constraints. Development of the list of items included in the questionnaire was based on a review of relevant literature about tourism constraints (Hudson and Gilbert, 2000; Nyaupane et al., 2004; Nyaupane and Andereck, 2008; Hung and Petrick, 2012; Zheng et al., 2016).

Survey was conducted among the students of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography from November 2018 to March 2019. Total of 125 viable questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. Participants were asked to choose a specific domestic destination they would like to visit within a year and then to rate their agreement with 13 statements related to different constraints for visiting that destination on a 5-point Likert scale (1 indicating very low and 5 indicating very high agreement). Average ratings for the whole sample and for three of its sub-samples were taken into consideration for the analysis.

# **Results and discussion**

Main results of the survey are presented in Table 1. Constraint items have been arranged into four categories based on the theoretical considerations discussed above – structural, interpersonal, intrapersonal and preferences for international travel. The last category represents a combination of structural and intrapersonal constraints, grouped together based on their connection to preference for international destinations.

Results indicate great significance of structural constraints, particularly those related to free time and destination's availability. Personal commitments are recognised as most important constraints, while, somewhat surprisingly, financial constraints received lower ratings. This contradicts previous findings in this field (e.g. Gilbert and Hudson, 2000), particularly when it comes to younger tourists (Jackson, 2000). One possible explanation for such perceptions is that domestic tourism is generally considered more affordable.

When it comes to interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints, the latter are recognised as less important, which indicates that participants are generally confident in their decision making regarding domestic destination choice. Constraints related to travel companions are rated with higher scores, indicating that these factors do not have a negligible role when it comes to destination choice. Although willing to visit domestic destinations, participants expressed uncertainty regarding the possibility to find a travel company.

The final category of constraints is comprised of statements related to preferences for international travel. Results indicate strong preference to travel abroad, both in general and when it comes to available resources (time and money). General preference to travel abroad is the highest rated constraint in the study, which together with the two related constraints confirms the hypothesis that awareness of quality international destinations acts as the most important constraint in decision making process when it comes to choosing domestic destinations.

Table 1. Constraints for visiting the chosen destination
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Statement	Mean
I don't have enough free time for the visit.	3.16
Commitments are preventing me from traveling.	3.40
I can't financially afford a trip to the given destination.	1.97
Destination is too far away for me to visit it.	2.05
Lack of adequate travel packages prevents me from visiting the destination.	2.14
I have no one to travel to the destination.	2.24
Family and friends are not interested in the destination.	2.30
I'm afraid that the destination won't meet my expectations.	1.66
Organisation of the trip is too stressful.	1.58
I'm afraid that the trip won't be good value for money.	1.61
I would rather use available time to travel abroad.	3.67
I would rather use the available money to travel abroad.	3.34
I would rather travel abroad.	3.97

For further analysis, the sample was split into three groups, based on the types of chosen destinations. The largest group (63 participants) consists of ecotourism destinations, whereby the most frequently chosen destinations were Đerdap National Park (12), Tara National Park (10) and Stara Planina Nature Park (9). The second group (41 participants) consists of urban destinations, with Novi Sad being the most frequent one (10). The smallest group (21 participants) consists of prominent mountain centers of Kopaonik (15) and Zlatibor (6), traditional and most visited mountain destinations in Serbia.

Table 2. Constraints for visiting different destination types

Statement		Mean				
Statement	Eco	Urban	Mountain			
I don't have enough free time for the visit.	3.33	2.83	3.28			
Commitments are preventing me from traveling.	3.46	3.22	3.57			
I can't financially afford a trip to the given destination.	2.19	1.39	2.43			
Destination is too far away for me to visit it.	2.41	1.66	1.71			
Lack of adequate travel packages prevents me from visiting the destination.	2.43	1.80	1.95			
I have no one to travel to the destination.	2.30	2.19	2.05			
Family and friends are not interested in the destination.	2.35	2.17	2.38			
I'm afraid that the destination won't meet my expectations.	1.54	1.83	1.71			
Organisation of the trip is too stressful.	1.59	1.56	1.57			
I'm afraid that the trip won't be good value for money.	1.48	1.71	1.81			
I would rather use available time to travel abroad.	3.67	3.85	3.33			
I would rather use the available money to travel abroad.	3.34	3.54	3.28			
I would rather travel abroad.	3.89	4.22	3.71			

Regarding differences among the three destination types, structural constraints for visiting urban destinations received lower ratings than the other two types, particularly when it comes to time and financial constraints. Participants perceive ecotourism destinations as farther and

with less adequate travel packages than urban and mountain destinations. There were no obvious differences within the sample regarding the interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints. For all three destination types, intrapersonal constraints are less important than interpersonal. Preferences for international travel act as bigger constraints for urban destinations, than they do for the eco and mountain ones.

#### Conclusion

This study offers an insight into a neglected theme in Serbian domestic tourism. Unlike other approaches, which focus on individual destinations, this approach allows researchers to identify constraints for participation in domestic tourism both in general and regarding particular destination types.

The main theoretical contribution is the proposal of a new category of constraints (preference for international travel), whose existence is strongly supported by the results, although additional testing is required. Results also indicate that the role of this category of constraints varies in relation to the destination type, meaning that some destinations are more competitive against the international ones. The discussed differences in constraint perceptions regarding different destination types offer numerous managerial implications, which could be used to improve the tourist offer and make it more desirable and accessible for the visitors.

One of the limitations is related to the research sample, both regarding its size and structure. In addition to the fact that it consists only of students, participants from Novi Sad and Niš are absent from the sample. A bigger and more diverse sample could lead to more reliable results. Future research should look more closely into this newly established category of constraints by including additional items in the survey and performing more complex statistical analysis. Constraint negotiation strategies should also be taken into consideration, which would provide basis for meaningful marketing efforts.

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3. Motivation, behaviour and human resources in tourism

# RURAL FOOD FESTIVALS IN THE PERCEPTION OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS IN THE SOUTHERN GREAT HUNGARIAN PLAIN REGION

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# Abstract

Nowadays, the organization of rural food festivals is becoming more popular in villages and towns all over the world. The reason of this is that the local communities can reach many advantages from the development of settlements. Food festivals help with the marketing of the community, selling local food, increasing the income of local producers, as well as the tourism supply; and these festivals offer entertainment opportunity to local residents and visitors alike. The last two advantages have a particular role in this study. That is why festivals, especially food festivals are one of the main entertainment possibilities for the inhabitants of many smaller communities. Based on these, it is an important issue how satisfied the inhabitants and visitors from other villages are with the offer of food festivals, why they visit rural food festivals, moreover, how the organisers of the festivals could improve the offer of the festivals. We are trying to give an answer based on the research of a Hungarian rural food festival. In order to achieve this, we have conducted structured interviews between the participants of the rural food festival. Based on our results, participants of the festival took part in the festival in order to taste food, meet with their acquaintances and to have fun. Many interviewees emphasized that rural food festivals are very important because these events offer an opportunity for relaxation and the atmosphere of the festivals is also very pleasant. Most of the interviewees like visiting rural food festivals because they are familiar and cheap. However, some visitors were not satisfied with the programmes of the festivals and they did not experience improvement over the previous years. According to our results, organising the festival as well as ensuring its sustainability is of great challenge for the organizers of the food festival. There are fewer resources for the organization in many cases, and the organizers have to take the demand of local residents and visitors into consideration. Furthermore, the organizers have to be innovative year after year to sustain the interest of visitors and reach other advantages of urban and regional planning.

*Keywords:* Food tourism, Rural development, Rural food festival, Hungary, Southern Great Hungarian Plain Region, Derekegyház

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# Introduction

Nowadays eating and drinking as additional services are becoming more and more important in the travel experience; they may even be the main motivation for travelling. As a result, gastronomic tourism has been established as an independent branch of tourism industry, which is growing in importance worldwide, including in Hungary. There are several forms of gastronomic tourism, of which our study deals with gastronomic festivals. Gastro festivals have many urban development benefits for the organizing municipality. More and more settlements would like to take advantage of these benefits; therefore, they organise festivals based on a traditional local product or some novel product that is not made or grown locally. Based on all these factors, it may be interesting to explore for what reasons festival visitors attend the event and what they think about it. In this article, we are studying the ideas of locals as well as visitors about the festival in the context of a selected village gastronomy festival.

#### General characteristics of gastronomic tourism

The tourism product type resulting from the relationship between food and tourism can be defined as follows: 'the main motivation factor for travel is to visit primary and secondary producers, food festivals, restaurants and special places where you can taste food or learn about the special food production characteristics of the region." Hall and Gössling (2016: 6). Thus, during a gastronomically focused trip, the tourist is interested in the gastronomic traditions of a particular region, area or community; aims to taste the local foods and drinks, and might even master their cooking techniques (Bujdosó et al. 2012). The action of eating and drinking can be experienced in many ways, including in restaurants, gastronomic thematic trips, fairs, gastronomic museums, gastronomic festivals as well as other gastronomic events (Bujdosó et al. 2012; Vargáné Csobán et al. 2015). Of these, gastro festivals are one of the most popular forms of gastronomic tourism, which usually give special attention to the organizing community once a year. An important issue with regard to gastronomy and gastronomic festivals - an issue that is interpreted diversely by the literature - is, for example, how the concepts of locality and authenticity can be interpreted and applied (Pratt, 2007; Pusztai, 2013). Nowadays there are many festivals with similar themes, still the organizers of these festivals are trying to be more innovative, unique and product-oriented according to the changing needs of the demand (Pusztai, 2003;Fehér et al. 2010; Kulcsár, 2016; Kóródi and Bakos, 2017). Places wishing to become part of the gastronomic tourism scene usually map out their gastronomic traditions and resources on the basis of which they can organize a festival (Csurgó, 2014). Also, there are places that do not rely on their own traditions, but choose a product instead which they attribute to themselves without any particular local origin or uniqueness (Pusztai, 2007). By using this method, communities that have limited resources of their own for tourism and are located in less touristy areas can be included in tourism (Fehér and Kóródi, 2008; Pusztai, 2011).

The number of gastronomic festivals in Hungary started to increase in the 1990s. Many of these have since been transformed or discontinued, in addition, many new events have been created over the past few years. The main reason for the growing number of gastronomic festivals is that they provide a number of settlement and tourism development benefits for the organizing municipality, which more and more places wish to achieve. Gastro festivals help to promote the gastronomic traditions or new trends of the community, to increase the income of food producers, to create tourist attraction, to shape the image of the place and to expand the supply of tourism (Kalkstein-Silkes et al. 2008; Kulcsár, 2016; Timothy and Pena, 2016; Süli and Martyin, 2017). In addition, gastronomic festivals provide a meeting place for consumers and producers, as well as provide visitors with an opportunity to discover new specialties and flavours (Kalkstein-Silkes et al. 2008). Accompanying music and cultural programs provide entertainment for visitors. The tourist aspect of the gastronomy festivals and the community building influence should also be emphasized as eating and cooking together can strengthen community relations (Hall and Sharples, 2008; Horváth et al. 2016). On this basis, gastro festivals fulfil an important social and cultural function, but their economic aspects also come to the forefront (Hall and Gössling, 2016; Kulcsár, 2016).

Gastro festivals can exist in both rural and urban settings. Of these, our research pays special attention to the study of gastro festivals in villages, as these occasions are often the largest events in the area, and in many cases are the only tourist attractions. Because of this, the organizers of a village festival often see the event as a take-off point which can make the name of the village known, and might result in additional indirect benefits (Quinn, 2018); and volunteer helpers play a bigger role than at city festivals (Holmes et al., 2018). It is also an important goal to bring local residents together and provide entertainment. These goals should be of top priority, as many small villages have limited access to recreation opportunities for local residents. In addition, at village events, food and beverages are available to visitors at a low cost and the programs are usually free of charge. This way, this form of tourism is also available to families living in more modest conditions.

The organizers of village gastro festivals this face many challenges both in Hungary and in other countries. They must reconcile the interests of the various interest groups (local residents, tourists, NGOs, entrepreneurs, municipalities) and strive for continuous quality renewal, thereby maintaining the interest of visitors (Cavicchi and Santini, 2014). They need to remain in competition with other gastronomic festivals even though in the case of villages, compared to cities, the range of attractions offered at the festival is much smaller and more similar to that of other villages. They need to strike a balance between the needs of local residents and tourists, as well as provide programs for as many age groups as possible.

# Methodology

It is particularly important that festival visitors, locals and tourists alike, are satisfied with the quality of the events they visit, as well as with the food and programs that are offered, according to the purpose of their visit. For this, we consider it necessary to reveal the views of the visitors. Therefore, we looked at why festival-goers attend the selected event, what factors they are satisfied or dissatisfied with, and in what ways they believe that the quality of the events could be improved. In order to answer these questions, we conducted a qualitative research at a selected Hungarian village gastro festival, the Derekegyház Pancake Festival. We conducted brief structured interviews with visitors - tourists and local residents - at the event. A total of 60 interviews were conducted with groups of 2-4 people as well as those arriving alone on the two main days of the event in 2019. The majority of our interviewees include middle-aged or elderly couples, many of those with children; and, to a lesser extent, students and young adults, which reflects the age distribution of all festival participants. It is important to note that only 17 of the respondents were local residents. 97 were tourists, most of them the rest of the participants were mostly from the neighbouring villages. Based on the distribution of the study participants' place of residence, we can conclude that tourists dominate among visitors.

#### Features of the Derekegyház Pancake Festival

Derekegyház with 1537 inhabitants (2018) is located in Csongrád county, Hungary, 50 km northeast of Szeged. A high-priority event of the village is the five-day Pancake Festival, which has been held every summer since 2007, and has evolved from a local celebration event of the village. In order to go beyond a family cooking competition, the local government tried to give the event a gastronomic theme with the aim of bringing people together through a joint activity and meal. The festival focused on a food that is popular in Hungary, cost-effective and because of its simplicity anyone can prepare it. This is how pancakes were chosen, so the theme of the festival was based on a novel and innovative non-local tradition, as is sometimes the case with other newly created festivals (Pusztai, 2007). There are already several pancake festivals in Hungary, but the one in Derekegyház is among the first ones. The structured interviews revealed that all of the interviewees considered this initiative a good and creative idea, and it was important for them that the event offers a good opportunity for recreation, which is especially important for the villagers, who have only few chances for entertainment. The locals involved in the research also liked the idea of pancakes, they accepted the choice even though the food has no connection to the village, and they are proud that the Pancake Festival and the name of Derekegyház are now intertwined with each other. There were some criticisms of the pancakes, that is to say, the recipe could be innovated or a specialty for Derekegyház should be created. The biggest specialty of the pancake range is the sole jam pancake, which is prepared from locally available wild sloe by the kitchen of the local government. Based on the interviews and our personal participation in the festival, we found that making or eating pancakes at the event was a way to bring people closer to each other and to make the town more popular through a joint movement.

The original purpose of the festival's organizers did not include the attraction of tourists. On the contrary, it was much more about furthering the good reputation of the village and community building, as is the case with many gastronomic festivals that evolved from local events. (Kalkstein-Silkes et al., 2008). However, the number of people interested in the festival has been increasing. Among other things it is due to the record breaking of frying pancakes in the national and regional media in recent years, as well as the positive feedback resulting from the good atmosphere. That is why the needs of tourists have also become into the focus. The previous pancake making method could no longer effectively serve the large number of people queuing for free pancakes, so some years ago it had to be redesigned. Currently, pancake making is organized by the local government, the pancake dough is prepared by the kitchen of the local government, and frying is done by frying teams.

The frying process requires a great deal of teamwork and workforce, as during the festival pancakes are being fried continuously for four days, 24 hours a day. Local residents and NGOs play a key role in the frying process (volunteers), but local governments, NGOs and volunteers from the surrounding communities also come to make pancakes, thus strengthening regional relations.

The social and community function of the festival is strengthened by the fact that the pancakes are not priced; consumers can put their donations for the pancakes in the honesty box. Thus, those who have limited financial means to consume expensive meals can also try the pancakes. The proceeds are used to organize camps for local children. Many people consider the honesty box a good idea. However, based on our research findings, it is also a major source of conflict for consumers and organizers, pancake makers. One interviewee who had previously participated in making pancakes highlighted that in the past the consumers needed to be reminded that donations were collected in the honesty box, so after asking for several pancakes they should not leave without donating or giving only a symbolic amount. In his opinion, this has changed in recent years, most are now donating enough. According to one of the local visitors - a couple with young children, who seemed to be in a more modest financial situation - it is inconvenient for them that people at the pancake tent look at how much each person puts into the honesty box. They have also heard of harsh comments made to parents whose children have repeatedly been eating pancakes for free. In addition, a seemingly affluent middle-aged couple pointed out that one great advantage of the festival is that the pancakes are free. In their opinion, the honesty box is a great initiative, however, as outlined above, it has a limited social function, so it might be more favourable for both sides to ask for a fixed, symbolic sum for the pancakes. This opinion is supported by another respondent who would rather pay for pancakes than having to queue.

Cultural programmes play a prominent role at the festival, as is usually the case at rural and urban gastronomic festivals. The music programmes of the Hungarian stars performing at the Pancake Festival attract visitors from the area, while amateur performers from local and neighbouring villages also have the opportunity to perform. Due to the long duration of the festival, a large number of performers are needed, which is also partly solved by the recruitment of volunteers. Performers from other cities entertain the audience every day, mainly with folk dance, modern dance and folk songs, and some of them make pancakes. Several visitors mentioned that they came to the festival to see the performers from their own town. Most of them were satisfied with the programmes offered, they thought that these kinds of shows suited to such a village event, however, there were those who found such programmes boring. According to some, although the programmes change from year to year, their quality is generally similar; and according to one interviewee, the quality of the programmes is not matched with the quality of the festival, so the programmes should be improved: 'This event is not organized for the first time, and an event with such a great history should be better matched with the programmes offered' (Visitor 18). On the main days, the more famous performers give concerts at the festival, however, this year, most people complained that the main performers were less know Hungarian stars. In previous years, the organizers of the festival have invited prominent celebrities to perform, which attracted huge audiences according to many returning visitors. Presumably this year, the financial resources available to the organizers were more modest, which allowed them to invite performers only with a lesser reputation.

According to the interviewees, the organizers of the festival strive to ensure that people of all ages find the right activity in the programme range, and they also arrange for the entertainment of smaller children with handicraft programmes and a jumping castle. Children's programmes are free, which many parents have considered an advantage. So parents and grandparents with small children are happy to come to the festival because children can have a fun time at the event without the parents being financially burdened, and they can also let the kids play in the festival area. However, the jumping castle was set up only on Saturday, so families arriving on Friday complained that there was no play area for children. There was a smaller presence of older children, teenagers, and young adults at the festival, but we did not even notice any programmes that would have attracted people around the ages of 12-20. It was clear that the majority of visitors from this age group were bored and were tapping on their phones, which is typical of this generation anyway.

Each year, the festival features a pancake dance which was created by one of the organizers. It can be danced together, which strengthens community participation. The pancake dance was highlighted by many visitors. The pancake dance song is played from time to time and anyone can come to dance to the choreography, which is considered a very entertaining and special community activity. In addition, those who take part in the dance participate in a prize draw where they can win products from the exhibitors and nearby producers, or even a trip to Greece. However, there has been a slight change in the dance compared to recent years that does not appeal to all visitors. In rural gastronomic festivals, one can observe that they tend to create rituals and symbols after a while. These are usually unique prizes and tributes, chants and anthems or community activities. Their role is to make the event unique and enhance its celebration vibes (Pusztai, 2003, 2007).

So, the festival offers a variety of programme options to our visitors, that is why we explored the reasons why visitors come to the festival. Most people came to the event to eat pancakes, and they argued that the pancakes were better there than at home; and they were free, which is also an advantage. Other interviewees came to the festival to participate in the frying process, and there were high school students who came with their entire class for the same purpose. Meeting and relaxing with friends and acquaintances as well as entertaining children were also important motivations. While others, especially those attending the festival for the first time this year, attended the event because they had heard about it and were curious about it. In addition, the fact that the event has been held for the 13th year is viewed by visitors as a guarantee of good quality. However, there were also some who had not heard of the festival, they were in travelling through the town and wondered what was going on. Some of them came from further afield. Others simply attended the event because they considered it a pastime, and most of them also attended the programmes on offer. Most of the tourists received what they had expected from the event, their goals were met and they were expecting a standard similar to what this village event gave them. Parents and grandparents coming with their small children mainly from the city particularly enjoyed the peaceful village atmosphere. A young couple from the city was a little more dissatisfied, expecting the Pancake Festival to have more pancake stalls and more special pancakes on offer. In comparison, they said they could only consume at a pancake tent, where they did not even want to queue because of the long line. Indeed, the long line at the pancake tent is a problem every year, which shows that the festival has capacity problems. This was criticized by several visitors and it was noted that the festival had already outgrown itself.

Based on our interview results, we found that the vast majority of tourists were satisfied with the event, with only a few negatives comments. Nevertheless, they are eager to attend the event because of its friendly atmosphere. Most of the problems were identified by local residents through interviews both during and after the festival. Some local residents have objected to the change in the pancake making routine, which essentially involves local residents, because 'the atmosphere was a little different in the past. I think we have lost a lot of little points where we could have better contact with people' (Locals 1). Based on this, the communal pancake making activity of families and friends is in the process of being transformed into a specialized process to serve the needs of visitors. However, the desire of local residents to get involved in the frying and stuffing process is diminishing. Still, there is a need for more manpower during the festival, which is why the organizers are inviting and recruiting pancake making teams from the surrounding towns. This further diminishes the desire of locals to participate, as some disagree with the fact that the number of non-local people involved in the pancake making process is larger than that of the locals. The length of the event may also be a source of concern, as some locals say the five-day festival is too long for them. Locals who take part in the process feel burdened, while others find the five-day event to be disturbing. In addition, according to some visitors, the length of the event has a negative impact on the programmes offered as well as the frying. A further problem is that the former community event for locals has been transformed into a larger-scale event that attracts visitors from the surrounding area. Many people have the feeling that the festival is no longer about them, local people. In addition, some locals are already burdened by the event because of the number of things to do, as well as the length. Nevertheless, most of our interviewees believe that the sense of pride of the locals has been improved. Because most people are proud that strangers know their place of residence, their festival, and it is a sensation for them that tourists are curious about them. In addition, social responsibility should be emphasized because, for example, some local residents often join the pancake making process just to help their peers.

#### Findings

Most of these problems are not seen by the tourists, and the vast majority of them think that villagers need an event like this to be able to relax in their own village once a year, after a lot of work. Only a few tourists think that this event can be very stressful for the locals. We suggest that local residents be offered discounts as opposed to tourists - for example, making some paid services free- to stop them from losing interest in the event.

Based on the opinion of the interviewees, shortening the event can be put forward as a suggestion. If the resources were used for fewer days, performers of higher-quality could be invited; having more pancake stalls at the same time would reduce waiting time for the pancakes; and the organizers would be less tired by the end of the festival.

Based on the range of possibilities the festival offered, we recommend that more food sellers that sell something other than pancakes participate in the event, as the available snack bar supply in this respect was rather limited and was criticized by some visitors. There were some handicraft vendors in the festival area, however, not all the stalls available were occupied, which was not aesthetically pleasing; and the visitors would also have needed more. According to some visitors, a carousel or a dodgem would be nice at the event. In our opinion, despite increasing the range of the festival's programme offers, this is inadvisable because the space available for this is scarce; also, these activities are more expensive, which would undermine the social function of the event to provide more free or cheap programmes for poorer visitors. The programmes of the event should be extended to young people, as, according to our experience, visitors between the ages of 12 and 20 were bored at the festival. In our opinion, this could be achieved by extending the range of interactive games and activities, for which we have seen the initiative, however, it is not yet satisfactory.

Some visitors have come up with a proposal for better marketing, but we disagree with that, because our experience is that the festival is already pushing its capacity limits, therefore it cannot effectively serve more visitors. In addition, we recommend that pancakes be priced, a fixed, symbolic sum to avoid the resulting conflicts, Thus, even queuing could be shortened, which is detrimental to the festival experience. We also recommend reforming the range of pancake offer and introducing some new specialties.

According to our results, festival organizers face great challenges as they have to meet the changing needs of visitors despite their limited capacity. Most of the visitors said there would be a need for further development of the festival, and not only settle for the fact that the organizers have achieved a high standard over the years even though it is only a village gastro festival; something new would be needed for the event. However, it is a common experience that visitors, despite demanding change, are often reluctant to the change; which further complicates the work of festival organizers.

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3. Motivation, behaviour and human resources in tourism

# THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY CITY OF NOVI SAD

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### Abstract

Due to its complexity and diversity, it is difficult to compare the tourism sector with other economic activities, as well as many other service activities. It consists of producing and selling products in hotels and restaurants on the one hand, tourist agencies and tour operators on the other, and from public activities such as providing the necessary conditions and infrastructure for many leisure activities (municipal services, museums, cultural or historical buildings, theme parks, etc.). Catering industry, due to numerous factors (conditions of work, promotion, communication skills, user relations and service provision - treatment towards the service, nice manner, etc.) are characterized by frequent employee changes. Human resources are the most important, and their specificity is reflected in the long-term impact on the company's business, development capability and related to all business functions. Human resource management is defined as a strategic and coherent approach to managing the most valuable assets of an organization, ie without people and their potential, there is no successful business. One of the important factors in the service sector from the perspective of employees is job satisfaction. Regardless of the size of the organization, a number of factors influence the job satisfaction. This study examines the connection between selected demographic characteristics in the hospitality sector of Novi Sad and five dimensions of job satisfaction (job satisfaction, salary, promotion, superiors and associates). The sample analysis included 200 respondents who are employed in hotels, restaurants, cafes, private accommodation and travel agencies. Demographic characteristics for the analysis are taken from the gender, age of life, working experience with the current employer, total work experience and the level of education.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Hospitality, Employees, Demography

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## Introduction

Job satisfaction is the most widely studied and the most significant variable in industrial psychology (Staw, 1984; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Judge and Church, 2000). It occupies a central role in many theories and models of particular attitudes and behaviors, and job satisfaction research has practical applications for improving human lives and organizational effectiveness (Judge and Klinger, 2008). Although there is no unity in defining the concept of job satisfaction, the prevailing interpretation is that these are job-related attitudes. This interpretation is the product of decades of study of human behavior in different life and work circumstances. In the analysis of this construct, researchers most often cite definitions given in books such are: Job satisfaction (Hoppock, 1935), Theory of Human Motivation (Maslow, 1943), Two Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959), Equity Theory (Adams, 1963, 1965). Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), The ERG Theory (Alderfer, 1969) and Goal Setting Theory (Locke, 1969; Locke, 2009). Although an organization cannot directly influence the personality of employees, characteristics of job have a significant impact. There are a number of factors that affect job satisfaction, such as security, management (work organization), salary, support from a superior, work environment (working conditions), relationship with colleagues, obligations etc.

In the tourism sector, the hospitality sector plays an important role, consisting of diverse business entities (hotel, motel, campsite, private accommodation, restaurants, cafes, bars, clubs, etc.) with a wide range of jobs requiring diverse human capital (Szivas et al., 2003). Measuring size in the hospitality industry is the quality of the service provided, which depends on the organization of work and the qualifications of the employees. Tourism is characterized by high staff turnover and a pronounced seasonality in certain geographical areas, ie. two types of jobs: a large number of low-skilled jobs, with low salaries, and a small number of high-skilled, high-income jobs, and with several jobs in the middle of these two extremes (Nickson, 2007).

Another aspect of the tourism sector is the need to understand the dynamic and changing environment in which tourism and hospitality function organizationally. Political, economic, social and technological changes also significantly affect tourism organizations as well as the experience for people working in this type of service sector. Organizations and managers in the tourism and hospitality industry face real challenges in recruiting staff, developing and maintaining commitment, competencies, good leadership and well-motivated staff who are focused on delivering the desired results. In the hospitality industry, job satisfaction is critical for staying in the organization.

#### Literature review

Tourism sector employees are generally young, ambitious, highly connected, technologically aware, while senior employees are valuable associates (Baum, 2015). Also according to Baum (2015), the volume and form of employment of women in tourism is increasing at higher levels of management and leadership. However, the long and "asocial" hours, low salaries and often low status of many tourism jobs, especially in the hospitality industry, have caused that new staff cannot be easily recruited or existing staff retained (Deery and Jago, 2008). According to Heskett et al. (1997), there is a link between job satisfaction and the quality of services provided, leading to higher results. Work outcomes, employee encouragement, freedom to make decisions, and only job satisfaction are all influenced by the nature of the relationship between the supervisor and the employee (Liden et al., 2000).

The aforementioned theory that is applied in organizational practice is Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, that is, motivational-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1993). Herzberg measured job attitudes through demographic variables (gender, age, education level, social affiliation, and occupational types), employee morale, and their attitudes about work and observing employee behaviour in the workplace. The development of these factors revealed that one group of factors had a positive effect on job satisfaction (motivators) and the other group responded to job dissatisfaction (hygiene factors) (Herzberg et al., 1993). Motivators are drivers of work (achievements, recognition, work itself, responsibilities, promotions), and is termed as intrinsic motivation, while extrinsic motivation refers to external factors (physical working conditions, interpersonal relationships, pay, leadership, work safety).

In the hospitality sector, understanding the diversity of the workforce is necessary to build positive interpersonal relationships between employees and employers, and between employees and their associates. To the extent that an employee is satisfied with certain aspects of his job, he is so willing to respond positively to the organization's achievements (Scott and Swortzel, 2005). This is very significant in tourism in general, many studies have shown, because a satisfied employee does not intend to change work (turnover intent), absenteeism, and his work performance is high. Also, employers need to retain their employees, since longer-working employees tend to be more efficient, and thus reduce costs around new hiring (Lee and Lee, 2012).

According to Bernstein and Nash (2008) job satisfaction has emotional, cognitive and behavioural components. The emotional component refers to feelings related to the job (boredom, anxiety, acknowledgments and dynamism). The cognitive component refers to beliefs about work (respectful, challenging and rewarding), and the behavioural component includes people and their activities related to work (delays, overtime, absenteeism). Mueller and Kim (2008) presented two types of job satisfaction based on the job feelings that employees have, namely, general job satisfaction and feelings about certain aspects of jobs (pay, benefits, hierarchy-structure, promotion, work environment, and quality of relations with colleagues and management). Also, factors that affect job satisfaction can be divided into two groups, organizational and personal, which are, the job itself, the reward system (the amount of effort equals rewards), expectations of certain aspects of the job (working conditions, relationship with colleagues and job, length of service and status at work) and overall life satisfaction.

The study of variables that affect job satisfaction, i.e. satisfaction with certain aspects of work, is the subject of intensive study of scientists from the perspective of predictors of job satisfaction, as well as the consequences that job satisfaction has on organizational behaviour (Hadžić et al., 2009). In Serbia, the economic situation is not satisfactory, the standard of living is low, and organizational changes are frequent. Poor economic conditions and high unemployment rates, job security (wages) and salary have a significant impact on overall job satisfaction.

Demographic characteristics of employees, ie gender, years of life, years of work experience with the current employer, total year of early service, new education, marital status and children are also influenced to a certain extent by job satisfaction. Research on the impact of demographic factors on job satisfaction has yielded different outcomes. The influence of gender structure was analysed most. By focusing on gender differences and job satisfaction in Spain, Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2009) found that young women, highly educated, had low satisfaction for certain aspects of work (two out of five dimensions).

Frye and Mount (2008), on the other hand, did not find a significant influence of demographic factors on job satisfaction in the sample of different sizes of hotel facilities, the type of services they provide, and their general managers in the US. In the Nordic countries, both men and women showed equal job satisfaction according to the findings of Eskildsen et al. (2004). Research done in other countries also shows different outcomes. Upscale hotels in Turkey have shown statistically significant differences in gender structure and five dimensions of job satisfaction (Kara et al., 2012). Similar results were obtained for years of age, seniority and level of education.

Job satisfaction can be verified by individuals' participation in the measurement process, by observing an employee or by interviewing and interviewing based on appropriate questionnaires. The questionnaires are different and depend on whether job satisfaction or certain aspects of job satisfaction are measured. Also, some of the questionnaires are addressed to specific sectors and some to the total population of employees. Among the many questionnaires on aspects of job satisfaction in use, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) produced by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) is the most widely used. A revised version of the same questionnaire was developed by Balzer et al. (1997, 2000), and the reliability and validity of the instrument was confirmed by Stanton et al. (2001) and introduced a shortened version. In addition to those mentioned above, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire by Weiss et al. (1967) and the Overall Job Satisfaction Questionnaire by Cammann et al. (1983), Spector's (1986) - Job Satisfaction Survey and Bacarach's et al. (1991) - Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectation. A valid measure, the so-called Job satisfaction results are the most important piece of information that an organization can gather, not only as a measure of management effectiveness, but because job satisfaction results predict a wide range of job behaviors.

# Methodology

A summary of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) questionnaire by Stanton et al. (2001) was used in the design of this study. The questionnaire measures employee's job satisfaction in five important factors 1-work; 2-pay; 3-promotion; 4-supervision and 5–co-workers, and each factors contains five statements (25 in total). Respondents gave their ratings: 1-disagreed, 2-undecided and 3-agree.

The reliability of all five dimensions of job satisfaction was calculated by Cronbach's alpha. Testing has shown that the alpha coefficient is in the range of .75 to .84, that is, it is the most reliable for the promotion dimension.

The questionnaire for this study was distributed to 270 employees in the hospitality sector of Novi Sad, Serbia. The hospitality sector contains employees in hotels (FOM, front desk Clerk, PR, housekeeping), restaurants (waiter/waitress, kitchen staff), cafes (waiter/waitress), private accommodation (front desk clerk, housekeeping) and travel agencies (travel agent). The survey was conducted during 2016 and the questionnaires were filled in by all employees of the organization except the owners (employers). Of the total number of distributed questionnaires, 200 returned (74%).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences(SPSS) was used to analyze the data obtained. Descriptive statistics provide a general overview of the sample. The T-test was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups (gender). The analysis of variance (On-way ANOVA) was used to identify if there were significant differences between the job satisfaction factors and selected demographic characteristics (gender, years of life, years of service with the current employer, total years of service and education level).

# Results

The surveyed population (N = 200) includes 36% of men and 64% of women, the average age of life is 38.2 years, that is, the highest number of respondents is 34.5% from the group of years "31-40". There are 111 graduates (55.5%), followed by high school graduates (15.5%). The average year of work experience with the current employer is 7.8 years, which is the most represented group of years of work experience with the current employer "up to 10" with 75.5%. The most represented group of the total length of service is "up to 10" with 52.0%, followed by group "11-20" with 28.5%. The demographic characteristics of the sample are given in Table 1.

	N	%
Gender		
Male	72	36.0
Female	128	64.0
Age		1
20-30	54	27.0
31-40	69	34.5
41-50	41	20.5
51-60	24	12.0
61+	4	2.0
Missing	8	4.0
Education		
Primary school	1	0.5
Secondary school	31	15.5
College	28	14.0
University	111	55.5
MSci	21	10.5
PhD	8	4.0
Length of services with c	urrent employee	
Up to 10	151	75.5
11-20	37	18.5
21-30	6	3.0
31+	5	2.5
Missing	1	0.5
Length of services overal	ll	
Up to 10	104	52.0
11-20	57	28.5
21-30	26	13.0
31+	13	6.5

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for all five dimensions of job satisfaction. Employees in the hospitality sector, based on the results obtained, can be concluded that they are satisfied at work. Mean values indicate that the relationship with co-workers has higher scores than the

other dimensions (M = 2.54, SD = .46). That is, the quality of the relationship with associates is the most important in the hospitality sector. The lowest scores were obtained for pay (salary) (M = 1.81, SD = .53) indicating that it was irregular and did not cover standard living costs. Analysis of the results for promotion shows that there are some opportunities for advancement, but with many concessions such as overtime, bringing in more service users and making a significant contribution to the organization's profits. High scores were also obtained for the relationship for the assumed, ie. individual responses are unusually high, as indicated by the asymmetry coefficient, which is negative. Such a result can be commented on that employee attitudes and their relationship with their bosses are compromised.

	М	SD
Work	2.38	.53
Pay	1.81	.53
Promotion	2.05	.62
Supervision	2.33	.58
Coworker	2.54	.46

Analysis of differences for gender structure indicates that there is a slight difference for individual dimensions of job satisfaction. The T-test showed that the results obtained for the male group (M = 1.91, SD = .55) were higher than the female group (M = 1.75, SD = .51), t (200) = 1.97, ie. the size effect was very small (.02) for salary satisfaction.

	Group statistics			Levene's test		t-test			
	Group	N	м	SD	F	ρ	t	df	ρ
Work	male	72	2.36	.53	.00	.95	40	198	.69
WOIK	famale	128	2.40	.53	.00	.95	40	196	.09
Pay	male	72	1.91	.55	1.77	.18	1.97	198	.05**
	famale	128	1.75	.51	1.77	.10			
Promotion	male	72	2.15	.61	01	.94	1.79	198	.08
Promotion	famale	128	1.99	.62	.01	.94			.00
	male	72	2.40	.50	7.36	01	.01 1.30	10.0	20
Supervision	famale	128	2.29	.62	7.30	.01	1.30	198	.20
	male	72	2.52	.46	25	62	50	100	61
Coworker	famale	128	2.55	.46	.25	.62	52	198	.61

 Table 3. T-test for gender

N-sample size; M-mean; SD-standard deviation; F-statistic (ratio); ρ-significant; t-value of t-test; df-different of freedom; \*\*p<0.05.

The analysis of variance between years of life, level of education, years of service with the current employer and total years of service and dimensions of job satisfaction shows the following results.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	ρ
	Between Group	4.13	4	1.03	3.86	.00
Work	Within Group	50.07	187	.27		
	Total	54.20	191			
	Between Group	3.35	4	.83	3.07	.02
Рау	Within Group	51.10	187	.27		
	Total	54.45	191			
	Between Group	6.15	4	1.54	4.29	.00
Promotion	Within Group	67.07	187	.36		
	Total	73.22	191			

Table 4. One-way ANOVA – The effect of age on dimension on Job Satisfaction

Analysis of variance between groups was conducted to investigate the impact of years of life and dimensions of job satisfaction. Respondents were divided into 5 groups according to their age. Statistically significant differences were found for the job dimension F (4, 187) = 3.86,  $\rho$  <.01. Although statistically significant, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups is large. The size effect, calculated by eta squared, is .08. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test showed that the mean scores for the age group "31-40" (M = 2.50, SD = .52) are significantly different from the age group "51-60" (M = 2.06, SD = .52). Other, significant differences between the groups of year of life and job dimension were not found (Table 5).

Dependent	(1)	(1)	Mean		<b>C</b> 1-	95% Confide	ence Interval
Variable	(I) age	(J) age	Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		20-30	.16	.09	.74	14	.37
	31-40	41-50	.12	.10	.77	16	.40
Work	31-40	51-60	.46	.12	.00*	.11	.78
		61+	.50	.27	.32	23	1.24
	20-30	31-40	.24	.09	.09	02	.50
Devi		41-50	.34	.11	.02**	.04	.64
Pay		51-60	.29	.13	.15	06	.65
		61+	.11	.27	.99	64	.86
		20-30	.10	.11	.89	20	.40
Promotion	31-40	41-50	.33	.12	.04**	.01	.66
		51-60	.50	.14	.00*	.11	.89
		61+	.41	.31	.68	44	1.25

 Table 5. Multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD test)

\*ρ<0.01; \*\*ρ<0.05.

With the same analysis, statistically significant differences were found for the wage dimension F (4, 187) = 3.07,  $\rho$  <.05. This is between the group of years "20-30" (M = 2.01, SD = .54) and the group of years "41-50" (M = 1.67, SD = .46). The size effect is medium (.06).For the dimension of promotion F (4, 187) = 4.29,  $\rho$  <.01, the analysis of variance shows significant differences between the group of years "31-40" (M = 2.21, SD = .55) and the two groups "41-50" (M = 1.87, SD = .64) and "51-60" (M = 1.71, SD = .51), while the effect is large .08.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	ρ
	Between Group	2.48	3	.83	3.03	.03
Work	Within Group	53.30	195	.27		
	Total	55.78	198			
	Between Group	3.90	3	1.30	3.51	.02
Promotion	Within Group	72.16	195	.37		
	Total	76.06	198			

 Table 6. One-way ANOVA – The effect of years of service with the current employer on Job Satisfaction

#### Table 7. Multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD test)

Dependent	(1)	(1)	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
Variable	years	(J) years	Difference (I-J)		Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
		11-20	.15	.09	.40	10	40	
Work	Up to 10	21-30	.13	.22	.93	43	.70	
		31+	.63	.24	.04**	.02	1.25	
		11-20	.30	.11	.04**	.01	.59	
Promotion	Up to 10	21-30	01	.25	1.00	67	.64	
		31+	.56	.28	.18	16	1.28	

\*\*p<0.05.

Analysis of variance (Tables 6 and 7) shows that the main effect of job satisfaction and group of years of service with the current employer is the job itself F (3, 195) = 3.03,  $\rho$  <.05 and promotion F (3, 195) = 3.51.  $\rho$  <.05. Post hoc analysis The Tukey HSD test shows differences in the group of years of service with the current employer "up to 10" (M = 2.43, SD = .49) and the group of years "31+" (M = 1.80, SD = .55). for the dimension of work, while for the dimension of promotion, the more significant difference was observed between the group "up to 10" (M = 2.12, SD = .58) and the group "11-20" (M = 1.82, SD = .68). The size effect for groups in both dimensions is small (.04 for the job itself and .05 for the promotion). Other differences between the dimensions of job satisfaction - salary, relationship with superior and relationship with co-workers and years of work experience with the current employer are not statistically significant.

#### Table 8. One-way ANOVA – The effect of total years of service on Job Satisfaction

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	ρ
Work	Between Group	4.82	3	1.61	6.18	.00
	Within Group	50.97	196	.26		
	Total	55.79	199			
Рау	Between Group	2.95	3	.98	3.66	.01
	Within Group	52.72	196	.27		
	Total	55.67	199			
Promotion	Between Group	3.80	3	1.26	3.40	.02
	Within Group	72.98	196	.37		
	Total	76.78	199			
Supervision	Between Group	2.54	3	.85	2.57	.05
	Within Group	64.73	196	.33		
	Total	67.27	199			

Analysis of variance for job dimension F (3, 196) = 6.18,  $\rho <.05$ , salary F (3, 196) = 3.66,  $\rho <.05$ , promotion F (3, 196) = 3.40,  $\rho <.05$ , and the ratio with superiors F (3, 196) = 2.57,  $\rho <.05$  and groups of years of total seniority show significant differences (Tables 8 and 9). Post hoc analysis Tukey's HSD dimension test shows differences between the up to 10 years group (M = 2.48, SD = .48) and the 31+ group (M = 1.85, SD = .54). significant difference between group "11-20" (M = 2.37, SD = .57) and group "31+". The size effect is large .08.

The dimension of job satisfaction - pay shows significant differences between the group of years "up to 10" (M = 1.92, SD = .54) and the group "11-20" (M = 1.66, SD = .48), and the real difference between the groups in the results are small .05.

Satisfaction with the promotion dimension showed a statistically significant difference between the "up to 10" group (M = 2.15, SD = .60) and the " $_{31+}$ " group (M = 1.68, SD = .67), but the size effect was small .05.

Also, Post hoc shows (Table 9) the difference between the group of years of total work experience "about to 10" (M = 2.41, SD = .55) and the group of years "31+" (M = 1.97, SD = .67) for the dimension of relationship with superior and the size effect is small .04. The differences between the dimensions of job satisfaction - the relationship with coworkers and the total years of work experience are not statistically significant.

The level of education, as an important factor in the performance of tasks, ie the application of acquired knowledge in real conditions, did not show significance for the dimensions of job satisfaction.

Dependent	(I) ttlyears	(J) ttlyears [	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
Variable						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Work	Up to 10	11-20	.10	.08	.60	11	.32	
		21-30	.17	.11	.43	12	.46	
		31+	.63	.15	.00*	.24	1.02	
	11-20	Up to 10	10	.08	.60	46	.12	
		21-30	.06	.12	.95	38	.25	
		31+	.53	.16	.00*	.01	.91	
Pay	Up to 10	11-20	.26	.08	.01*	.04	.48	
		21-30	.20	.11	.30	09	.49	
		31+	.22	.15	.49	18	.61	
Promotion	Up to 10	11-20	.14	.10	.48	12	.40	
		21-30	.28	.13	.17	07	.62	
		31+	.48	.18	.04**	.01	.94	
Supervision	Up to 10	11-20	.12	.09	.62	13	.36	
		21-30	.15	.13	.64	18	.47	
		31+	.44	.17	.05**	.00	.88	

Table 9. Multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD test)

\*ρ<0.01; \*\*ρ<0.05.

# Conclusion

For the success of an organization, one of the most influential elements is job satisfaction. Working in the hospitality sector involves different types of jobs that require human capital. Also, the hospitality sector, and thus tourism in general, provides a unique work environment that allows people to get a job but also to leave the organization. Identifying the factors of job satisfaction creates conditions for improving organizational efficiency. There are numerous factors that influence job satisfaction, such as job characteristics and work organization, employee demographic characteristics, employee behavior, personal value system, etc.

Although women make up a much larger population in the sample surveyed, differences in gender structure were only shown by the male population's pay dimension. Although the pay attitudes in the hospitality sector are small, the population is satisfied with their monthly earnings.

Years of life have a significant impact on the dimensions of job satisfaction and job itself, pay and promotion. From the mentioned groups of years of age, employees from 20-30 and 31-40 years of age, assess job satisfaction on the basis of the job itself (creativity, dynamism), salary (which in Serbian conditions of economy is defective and often irregular) and promotions, ie creation chances to command.

Due to frequent changes in the hospitality industry for analysis, both variants were taken, current work experience with the current employer and total work experience. Job satisfaction and years of service with a current employer are measured by the job itself and promotion. The job change was due to the work environment and the opportunity to move forward, which was confirmed by the up to 10 year group. The first decade of his professional career is marked by the search for "ideal" working environment conditions with the chances of advancement. Considering the total length of service and all five dimensions of job satisfaction, significant factors are the job itself, salary, promotion and relationship with superiors, where the most represented group of years is "up to 10". The job itself has an impact on job satisfaction in the group of 11-20 years of service. Other groups did not show statistically significant results.

Relationships with associates are crucial in the hospitality sector. Good working relationship with colleagues makes the work team, which plays a significant role for the operational functioning of the organization, which leads to high overall results both for the organization and for individuals.

The promotion is related to hotel facilities and tour operators, employing more people and establishing a hierarchy. In such organizations, the quality of relationships with superiors plays a significant role in the further development. In this research, the relationship with colleagues has no effect on job satisfaction, as does the level of education. A number of studies showed that with increasing levels of education, increasing job satisfaction, while in other studies the results are negative (Herzberg et al., 1959; Ozturk and Hancer, 2011; Scott et al, 2005).

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# UNDERSTANDING THE ENROLLMENT MOTIVATIONS OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN SERBIA

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# Abstract

Although many scholars tried to reveal why students choose different studies, those motivations for enrollment in a hospitality degree in Serbia are insufficiently researched topic. Regular students are primary users of higher education services so they should be placed in the center of the educational program creation and further development. A feedback from students is crucial for survival, growth and development of higher education institutions. The Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad (Serbia) recognized the need for having highly educated personnel in the field of tourism and hotel industry. When enrolling in the study program of tourism, students have the opportunity to choose between four different modules: tourism, hotel management, gastronomy and hunting tourism. The aim of the paper was to determine motives for enrollment in hotel management degree at the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad. The survey was conducted among former and current students of hotel management in 2016. An online questionnaire was created in Google Docs, and distributed to respondents via social network Facebook. The study involved 105 students. For the purpose of this research, a self-administered questionnaire was created based on interviews with students and professors of hotel management, and available scientific papers. The main goal of higher education institutions, as well as all institutions and companies that operate commercially, is to have satisfied users, because each business system depends on its users. This paper can help both Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad, and other institutions that offer similar tourism and hospitality degrees to better understand students' expectations in order to meet their needs, and even to provide more than students expect.

Keywords: Education, Motivation, Hospitality students, Tourism, Novi Sad

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# Introduction

The students are the primary users of higher education institutions, and accordingly they should be placed in the center of the education process. There can be found some research about student satisfaction, but enrollment motivation of students on faculties in the Republic of Serbia is not so explored topic.

There is a great offer of higher education, offered by state and private faculties, higher professional schools, as well as foreign institutions of higher education and on the other hand there is a decrease in the number of students caused by different factors (changes in demographic factors, reduced purchasing power, etc.). For this reason, feedback from students is crucial to the survival, growth, and development of higher education institutions (Nastasić, 2016).

Higher education institutions in our region did not respected the requirements of students, but they relied solely on their own perception of the quality of services they provide and their own interpretation of students' needs, requests and expectations in the process of education services. This is completely contrary to the theory of quality management and thus has created rigid business systems (Živaljević et al., 2003).

Mainly, students are seen as a source of data that eventually neither analyzed nor initiate concrete actions which would be directed towards improvements in the whole process of ensuring quality education. A big problem represents the fact that the relationship between universities and students is short-term, lasting between three and five years. That is the result of poorly designed strategies by universities and also by students, their inactivity and the absence of a desire to create a quality education for the future generation and long-term relationship to their mutual satisfaction (Vujović and Krivokapić, 2009).

Research about students' satisfaction with educational services from the 60s and 70s show that they were focused on the degree of satisfaction of students to different parameters, while the causes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction were not questioned. In addition, satisfaction is mainly linked to the results achieved by students (Bean and Breadley, 1986). To the satisfaction of students are affecting network-related experiences that overlap each other and which represent student life (Elliott and Healy, 2001).

Factors such as the quality of study programs, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, administrative procedures, efficient and effective organization and implementation of the educational process, facilities and equipment, the social environment, consulting, successful completion of the study on time and etc., effect on academic experience (adapted by DeShields et al., 2005; LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997; Sohail and Shaikh, 2004; Thomas and Galambos, 2004; Gibson, 2010). However, some non-academic factors that significantly affect the overall satisfaction of students, such as the perception that higher education institutions reliable, that the employees care about them as well as a sense of belonging (Gibson, 2010).

In the modern economy, the main source of competitive advantage is knowledge (Krstić and Džunić, 2013). In the Republic of Serbia, there are several faculties and higher education institutions that organize the teaching process in the field of the hospitality industry. That is a country that is in transition, but it should try to provide adequate education, to follow the innovations in the world and adjust to them. Competitiveness based on knowledge is a major prerequisite for economic prosperity in the global economy. Students are a very important group of the society and the country, given that they represent future leaders, implying that their knowledge and they represent a potential competitive advantage in the market (Šimon, 2016).

Students are increasingly gaining in importance from the point of evaluating the quality of teaching, to its development, progress, improvement, and adaptation to the needs of the tourism industry and tourism demand (Kosar, 2008). Fields of tourism and hospitality are characterized by high dynamics and representation of service, and the quality of employees is a major prerequisite for quality service (Green et al.,1994). Tourism encourages a large number of companies, mostly SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprise), through whose activity can provide an increase in the number of employees in this sector. Following market trends, higher education institutions are intended to provide professionals, educated and professional staff, who will be in charge of future trends in tourism (Sekulić et al., 2015).

Quality education in tourism and hotel management is achieved by teaching follows the industry. This should be a priority to educational institutions that offer studies from the field of tourism because only in this way can achieve sustainability (Connolly and McGing, 2006).

# Methodology and research description

The survey was conducted among former and current students of hotel management of the Faculty of Science in Novi Sad, Republic of Serbia, in the period from June to August 2016. An online questionnaire was created in Google Docs, which was distributed via social networks (*Facebook*). The study sample consists of 105 respondents.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire relates to the data about participants that are considered to be of importance for this study. The second part relates to motives for enrollment of hotel management studies and consists of 12 statements. Each of the statements had five possible answers from which respondents could choose the one that best suits their attitude or feeling at the given moment. It is offered a response in the form of a five-point Likert scale, with the help of which the respondent assesses whether it agrees with the above statement: (1)-strongly disagree, (2)-disagree, (3)-neither agree or disagree, (4)-agree, (5)-strongly agree.

For the purpose of this research, a self-administered questionnaire was created based on interviews with students and professors of hotel management, and available scientific papers.

#### Sample description

In the study participated nearly three times more female than male respondents as can be seen in Table 1.

Most of the participants, as expected, responded to previously completed high school of tourism (including hospitality and gastronomy) and gymnasium. Respondents were given the option to specify the direction of secondary school they have finished, so on the list could be find high school of economic and medical high school.

Earlier it was noted that the survey included current and former students of hotel management of Faculty of Science in Novi Sad. Most current students participated in the study as they are the most accessible group because they can be found and contacted you via different groups associated with faculty on social networks.

Gender	Number	Percent	
Male	29	27.6%	
Female	76	72.4%	
Level of education acquired	Number	Percent	
Current student	67	63.8%	
Bachelor's degree	24	22.87%	
Master's degree	14	13.33%	
Completed secondary education	Number	Percent	
High school of tourism	44	41.9%	
Gymnasium	41	39.05%	
Hospitality	6	5.71%	
Gastronomy	3	2.86%	
High school of economics	9	8.58%	
Medical high school	2	1.9%	

 Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (N=105)

# **Results and discussion**

The second part of the questionnaire aimed to examine what were the motives of the respondents to enroll in hotel management studies, what expectations they had when enrolling and do they believe that there should be some different kinds of selection during the entrance exam. This part consists of 12 statements. Each of the statements had five possible answers from which respondents could choose the one that best suits their attitude or feeling at the given moment. It is offered a response in the form of a five-point Likert scale, with the help of which the respondent assesses whether it agrees with the above statement: (1)-strongly disagree, (2)-disagree, (3)-neither agree or disagree, (4)-agree, (5)-strongly agree.

Statement "I enrolled in hotel management studies because I am interested in this industry" had the highest average ratings, while the statement "I enrolled in hotel management studies because I heard that it is not difficult to complete these studies" had the lowest (Table 2).

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that they enrolled hotel management studies because they are interested in this industry 47 of them (45%) and 40 of them (38%) agree with the above statement. This result should rejoice because it means that 78% of respondents have the desire to study about this industry and that there is a small percentage of those who are disinterested or those who "accidentally" happen to be hotel management students.

Also, the majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement *"I enrolled in hotel management studies because I did not know what else to enroll"* almost half of respondents (49.5% or 52 of them) while 25 participants (23.8%) disagreed with the above.

The statement that had the most of the same answers is *"I enrolled in hotel management studies because I heard that it is not difficult to complete these studies"*, where 60% of respondents disagree with that.

Respondents generally did not neither agree or disagree with the statement that they were aware of the psycho-physical effort that requires work in this field, when enrolling hotel management studies but also they mostly agree that there should exist some other types of selection in the entrance examination. Half of the students who enroll in tourism, enroll without prior knowledge of the work conditions and employment in this sector (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). These misconceptions and misperceptions about the work in the tourism and hotel industry exist because there is often a lack of awareness about the specifics of what work in this sector requires, such as a variety of complex multidisciplinary knowledge and working conditions that require mental and physical efforts (Šimon, 2016).

Respondents mostly agreed that they were thinking when enrolling hotel management studies that it will give them the opportunity to travel. Also, answers that incline towards the opinion that they agree are for the statements about expectations to do internships in luxurious hotels and restaurants and in attractive locations abroad. Young people are very interested in the study of tourism and hospitality, primarily due to certain a picture they have about travel-related work. Those who wish to stay in attractive locations and luxurious hotels and want to learn about other cultures are mainly directed to the study tourism and hotel management thinking that work in these sectors fulfill their desires. That is exactly one of the fallacies about studying tourism and hotel management. Research shows that 75% of employees in the tourism does not travel (https:// www.turizamiputovanja.com/da-li-se-studiranje-turizma-isplati-kako-odabrati-fakultet/).

Internship is one of the most important indicators of the quality of educational programs in the field of hospitality (Kim and Park, 2013). According to Harkison (2004) managers believe that internship is the most important part of the education of students. Through internship, they have the opportunity to work in the real business environment and insight into career opportunities (Kapoor, 2000). Studies have shown that 74.1% of students in the tourism and hospitality industry who performed internship claim that it enabled real insight into real working conditions in the industry, while half of the students expressed doubt that they will remain in these sectors (Zopiatis and Constanti, 2007).

Statement *"I enrolled in hotel management studies because I was thinking that work in this industry is well paid"* has arithmetic mean respond in the middle of neither agree or disagree and agree. However, respondents were probably thinking about wages they will have when get employed in this industry. What perhaps they did not know is that on the list of average earnings in 15 industries in the Republic of Serbia, earnings of employees in the hospitality industry are in 14th place, according to data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia from 2008. That shows how workers in this industry are underpaid against that it is expected from them to have a variety of complex multidisciplinary knowledge. The fact that working in hospitality industry fall into low-paid jobs can cause unattractiveness of interest of working in this industry, lack of motivation, high turnover of staff, etc. (Blagojević and Redžić, 2009).

Statement	Arithmetic mean response
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I am interested in this industry.	4.19
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I did not know what else to enroll.	2.05
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I heard that it is not difficult to complete these studies.	1.77
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I expected it will give me the opportunity to travel (internships, field trips, study trips, visits to fairs, exchanges of students)	4.02
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I expected to learn foreign languages.	3.86
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I expected to do internship in luxurious hotels and restaurants.	3.64
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I expected to do internships in attractive locations abroad.	3.91

Table 2. The list of statements from the second part of the questionnaire with arithmetic means of responses

Statement	Arithmetic mean response
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I expected that there are great opportunities to spend part of studies abroad.	3.68
When I was enrolling hotel management studies, I was aware of the psycho-physical effort that requires work in this field.	3.11
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I thought that after graduation I can immediately get a job.	3.71
I enrolled in hotel management studies because I was thinking that work in this industry is well paid.	3.56
I think that there should exist some other types of selection in the entrance examination (e.g., psychological and physical abilities test, interview, etc.) so those who studying hotel management are able and willing to work in this industry.	3.62

# Conclusion

Faculties should do research about enrollment motivation of students so they could know what are students' needs, requests and expectations in the process of education services. Faculty periodically conduct surveys to review courses that students have been passed as well as to review professors and teaching assistants. Students should be placed in the center of the education process.

There is a wide range of state and private faculties and higher education schools in the Republic of Serbia and abroad that offer education in the field of tourism and hotel management. Like any other type of commercial enterprises, education institutions must make every effort to provide the best service, to be the most competitive in the market and make their customers satisfied so that future students have the desire to attend their classes.

Promotion of "word of mouth" has the strongest impact and the information obtained in this way is accepted as the truth that it is not checked. For this reason, faculties and higher education schools should try to be the best, to make their students happy and satisfied so those students could be their most powerful marketing tool. Education institutions are dependent on students and accordingly it is necessary to understand students current and future needs, requirements and expectations, to fulfill them and even to provide more than what students expect.

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4. Education in tourism and teaching (Tourism training and education)

# COLLABORATIVE AND CO-CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL MODELS – THE EXAMPLE OF ACADEMY FOR LEISURE AND EVENTS AT BUas THE NETHERLANDS

Liliya Terzieva<sup>A</sup>

# Abstract

Creativity today differs a lot from the model embraced in the last century which was characterized as a profit-oriented and nationally-targeted one. Currently the logic is being driven towards "the social" sense of the change within the reality of complexity and continuous necessity of designing and redesigning entrepreneurial values. Co-creation is more than a 21st century phenomenon, by means of which innovative solutions are being provided. Co-creative collaborators are by nature multidimensional insofar as a variety of issues are addressed in terms of interaction, organizational development, family culture, traditions and customs, leadership style, etc., which entails a significant degree of diversity in terms of knowledge basis in science and technology. The objective of the paper is to study how by means of one of the AfL programmes, namely the Imagineering master, there is provided space for multidisciplinary and cross sectoral collaborations, which become more than essential in responding to today's complex social challenges, facing individual disciplines as finding a complete answer on them.

The data has been gathered by means of a qualitative methodology, consisting of semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers and a co-creation session based on the World Café and the Appreciative inquiry. Within the framework of the paper there are explored the specific elements of the Programme, whereby the findings lead to a very concrete model of the AfL proactive attitude to innovation and expectations regarding the contribution to economic and social development on regional, national and international level. With the choice to organize education in concrete societal contexts, to investigate the possibilities of innovative and creative concepts, to cooperate in new ways together with other stakeholders, even within an increasingly restrictive legislative environment, AfL has already been able to create a manifold of cases to support the collaboration and co-creation not only from educational but also from socio-economic perspective.

Keywords: Co-creation, Collaboration, Educational practices, Cross- and trans-disciplinarity

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# Introduction

Growing connectivity in society comes with a developing amount of socially complex issues for managers and politicians. There is a growing amount of issues in which many actors are involved that interact with one another in a non-predictable manner. Issues such as organizational innovation, public innovation, social innovation or whole system innovation. Coping with these socially intricate issues asks for a generative operating logic of inspiration and orchestration. This should complement the conventional mechanistic operating logic that is perfectly effective in coping with technically complex issues. All the above goes beyond just one or more sectors and actually encompasses the entire business and societal arena. The 21st century has brought within a new vision on how the world interacts due to globalization, internet-based and communication technologies, making us more interconnected and inter-dependent (Kovbasyuk & Blessinger, 2013). This hyper-connected era was named by Karakas (2009) as World 2.0. It refers to the interactive and hyper-connected ecosystem used to create and share knowledge. As a consequence of World 2.0 our society is having an acceleration of complexity, especially in the way we communicate and relate in the world (Kovbasyuk & Blessinger, 2013), creating global possibilities of interaction and mass collaboration (Tapscott and Williams, 2006) in value creation and innovation processes (Karakas, 2009) going beyond tourism, leisure and hospitality, being traditionally related to the above. Based on this shift, the access to information and peer collaboration is making an impact, not just in businesses but in education as well.

Therefore, education influenced by complexity has realized the sense of urgency to change, resulting in new formats, new functions in society and new facilitators that are not necessarily universities (Barnett, 2000), as well as new taught skills (Dunne & Martin, 2006; Merritt and Lavelle 2005) that are also impacting the labor market. Talking about these new facilitators of knowledge, Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands as an educational and learning community carrier; is one of the several organizations interested in developing new ways of education more coherent to complex times experimenting and applying the above in the domains of Leisure and Tourism and beyond. There is a need of graduates able to (re-)frame value creation from the experience perspective and guide whole system innovation as an emerging, co-creative processes.

The Master Imagineering programme focuses on the specifics of designing in the narrative mode, specifically coming up with strategic narratives and engaging people in a subjective, future-orientated and creative manner. It is built upon the concept of designing for organizational/business or society emergence, employing the imagination to involve other stakeholders as co-designers of the future. Thus, the master introduces students to the complementary scientific framework of complexity science (the science of the living systems). It educates students in a very practical way using design approaches to intervene in social systems, such as appreciative inquiry and Imagineering to enable them to become effective system innovators. Within this paper the co-creative and collaborative methodology behind the Master Imagineering programme shall be explored, starting with a Literature review on the meaning of c-creation and collaboration and where they stand onto the current arena of educational reality and then revealing the essence of what the core of the Master's programme entails, voicing the key player out of the spectrum of stakeholders – students and alumni.

# Literature review

The literature concerning collaborative and co-creative educational models tends to be organized around a number of themes, not all of which are directly appropriate to this study. It often describes a range of effects on learners in general, rather than business/social innovation oriented students per se, infrequently examining such models from a teacher's perspective or in relation to the teaching-learning outcomes. The notion of participation or involvement in education is not new. When Dewey (1963) wrote about "progressive education" he noted that participatory, active learning was essential for individuals to gain knowledge and develop as citizens. Here, there is an orientation toward "change-agency," that is "learning and acting for the democratic transformation of self and society". Borzak (1981) described experiential educators as "ministers of the light of understanding" who have experienced a higher truth and is actively liberating and guiding learners to a new level of awareness through questioning. This sees educators highly involved in the different stages of planning and organizing the programme. Literature over the last several decades has demonstrated that educational models in general can be designed to effectively support student learning experiences. Through this research, specific elements have been discovered to support students' success and engagement.

#### **Collaborative learning**

Collaborative learning is clearly a shift from the typical teacher-centered or lecture- centered setting to a collaborative state in which other processes, such as students' discussion and active work with the course material, take place (Laal, Naseri, Laal & Khattami-Kermanshahi, 2012). When talking in an educational setting collaborative learning is an instruction method in which students work in groups towards a common academic goal (Gokhale, 1995).

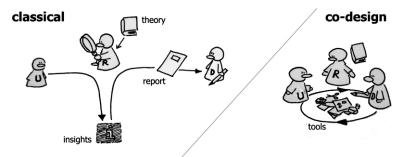
There is a lot of literature that supports collaborative learning and explains the benefits. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is a persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. Therefore, the shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby & Russ, 1991). When working in groups, students need to be able to think creatively, solve problems, and make decisions as a team (Stahl, Koschmann & Suthers, 2006). On the other hand, there is also research being done with a critical note on collaborative learning. The research performed by Gokhale (1995) proves that collaborative learning and individual learning are equally effective in gaining factual knowledge. Diving into different aspects, it was found that students who participated in collaborative learning had performed significantly better on the critical thinking aspects than students who studied individually. Therefore, the development and enhancement of critical thinking skills through collaborative learning is one of the primary goals of modern education (Gokhale, 1995). In addition, Ritzen (2018) explains that the average student in higher education is more interested in surfing the web than actually learn in students' groups. They demand knowledge-based teaching instead of working independently. 'We pay considerably high fees and we want to be educated properly'.

Collaborative learning is beneficial because it will foster critical thinking, students will retain information longer, and they reach a higher level of thought. In spite of these advantages where collaborative learning enhances 21st-century skills like critical thinking and problem solving, most of the research studies on collaborative learning have been done on student-student collaboration. As yet, there is little empirical evidence on its effectiveness when teachers take part in the collaborative setting as equivalent group members. How do students experience collaboration when teachers take part? A whole other group dynamic will arise and a bigger understanding is needed of the complex and multidimensional aspects of engagement as a result of student-teacher collaboration.

#### Co-creation and collective creativity

Sanders & Stappers (2008) refer to co-creation as any act of collective creativity which is shared by two people or more. Looking at the definition in the business dictionary is co- creation a strategy focusing on customer experience and interactive relationships.

Co-creation allows and encourage a more active involvement from the customer to create a value rich experience. Frank Piller (2003) also writes extensively about the co-creation of value between companies and customers and websites such as www.NIKEiD.com already co-create with their customers, allowing people to customize their own shoes. For many co-creation is the latest trend in marketing and brand development but according to Fisher & Baird (2006) the landscape of education changes through the use of technology which causes a shift from student-centered learning towards collaborative learning where co-creative approach is having an impact on the roles of all participants in the system (Piller, 2003). When co-creating the roles get mixed up and everybody can be an expert in his or her expertise. The focus of collective creativity in the interaction moves to the collective level when participants make new sense of what they already know (Perjanen, 2012).



**Figure 1.** Classical versus co-designed educational activities Source: Herrewijn, J. Educational engagement at Avans Academie Associate degrees

However, Diaz-Mendez & Gummesson (2012) researched the complexity of applying cocreation in higher education and found that the challenge lies within the mindset of lecturers who need to develop an interactive approach.

#### The essence of the collaborative educational expedition – Master Imagineering

Breda University of Applied Sciences is the name of the home of the Master Imagineering, where the programme has been taught for more than 13 years. Breda University of Applied Sciences is a government-funded institute located in the Netherlands and has a strong international focus. It serves some 7,700 students in total. Currently, it is the largest specialized institute in the field of tourism, leisure and hospitality in the world.

As a didactic concept, Breda University of Applied Sciences applies 'action learning', 'learning communities', 'personalization' and 'ambitious study climate' as key elements. Rather than 'receiving' education in the traditional manner, the student designs and directs his or her own plan of study within the domains of leisure, tourism and hospitality.

Building upon conventional approaches, which are solution adapted, Imagineering is evolution orientated (it does not come to an end result which would remain static). Imagineering strategically ignites and frames the facilitation of interpretation, variation, collective creativity and sense making (having started with the domains of leisure and tourism and further developed onto basically any business or social field). Direct links are made to research and business application domains such as Transformative leadership, Strategic design, Business Innovation and Creative Entrepreneurship.

The master Imagineering focuses on three essential issues. Firstly, designing for evolution rather than designing solutions. In social, open and dynamic systems designing for evolution can be the solution to complex problems society is dealing with both now and in the future. Secondly, it focuses on complexity. As Mohrman and Shani (2011) advocate; it is evident that top-down and/or governmental control mechanisms won't generate the kind of changes in behavior, patterns of economic and social activity and socially and environmentally responsible goals and outcomes that are needed. There is not one best approach to this kind of fundamental change in society towards business and societal innovation, there will be many and Imagineering is one of those approaches.

Finally, there is a focus on the design approach. Historically, we are used to working in the 'emerging mode' and from there we developed the design method of Imagineering: engineering for imagination. Recognizing that human systems, as complex adaptive systems, have the unique properties of language and imagination and identifying that the strategic narrative mode has a 'magic' potential. We developed this method into a design method for the coherent, enthusiastic action of all stakeholders. The 4 principles of co-creation, which have been adopted within the Master IMA education, following Venkat Ramaswamy and Francis Gouillart (2010) can be summarized as follows: 1) stakeholders won't wholeheartedly participate in customer co-creation unless it produces value for them, too. 2) The best way to co-create value is to focus on the experiences of all stakeholders. 3) Stakeholder must be able to interact directly with one another. And 4) Companies should provide platforms that allow stakeholders to interact and share their experiences.

As the understanding of our programme entails, co-creation can take place within co-design processes but focuses much more on the collective creativity of involved users and stakeholders. Co-creation seems to open up into two interpretations: the first one is a creative moment, atmosphere in a co-design event. The second is a method in the co-design process or during an event where the users create solutions. Co-design is about as facilitation of exchange between people who experience products, interfaces, systems and spaces and people who design for experiencing".

The Master programme actually goes several steps further by looking at the concept of co-creation as coming up with new ways to combine old and existing ideas, procedures, and processes to arrive at creative solutions to problems. Nijs (2014) argues that seeing creativity as a systematic process or a collective process can bring into play an artifact (or infrastructure) that enables and inspires such processes.

Collaborative methodology refers to learning environments in which students engage in a common task where each individual depends on and is accountable to each other by sharing their experiences and taking on different roles. It aims to create a working space that invites the students to get involved with the learning topic in different ways, and to have different roles throughout the Master's. It is also about engaging with others, collaboratively participating,

generating new ways of tackling issues and sharing their learning. The collaborative methodology is inspired by the social constructionist approach, a theory concerned with the relational processes in the construction of meanings and possibilities for new action. Social constructionism regards individuals as integral with cultural, political and historical surroundings, in specific times and places, and therefore re-situated learning processes, understanding them in social and temporal contexts.

The collaborative methodology is translated into methods and working spaces provided by the Master in Imagineering to help students learn a more relational, collaborative, and interactive approach in order to develop their individual competencies and skills. By creating and working together, students become more active and responsible for what is created, since they become part of it (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). The collaborative approach invites working and planning together, requiring interaction, engagement, and commitment among all involved.

The collaborative methodology described above can be adapted to the context of the Master in Imagineering in three spectra of the learning process - theory, practice, and practicing - and this methodology is spread throughout the year in every activity provided (see Figure 3). The three spectra have the objective of integrating theory and practice as well as content and methods in order to provide a coherent learning experience to the students and to prepare them to become Imagineers.

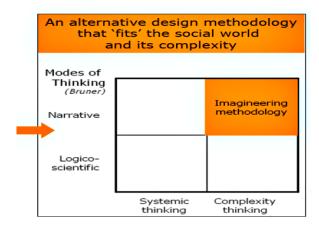
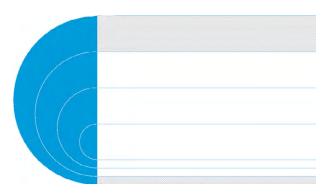


Figure 2. Imagineering narrative design mode Source: Nijs, 2014 Imagineering. The Butterfly Effect



**Figure 3.** Master Imagineering programme design essence Source: Breda University of Applied Sciences, Accreditation documentation 2018

# Data and Methodology

The methodology used in this study was an interpretivist inquiry modified by the collaborative design thinking of the Imagineering education, in which there are two phases of data collection through survey and interview: (1) An open-ended and closed inquiry questionnaire was constructed around four simple questions relating to positive, negative and other aspects of each of the learning activities throughout the Master's as a programme. It was then distributed to a group of 22 students (from the cohort of year 2017-2018). (2) The second phase was to engage in open-ended, face-to-face interviews, held with 10 students of the group. Out of the respondents six were female and four males. The interviews were all conducted by the researcher.

In general, it can be stated that this is a descriptive research in which deductive and inductive methods are used by the researcher. The researcher has selected one academic-year cohort population, consisting of 22 students for the collection of data by using semi-quantitative questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.

### **Results and discussion**

The educational model of the Master Imagineering reinforced how fostering positive relationships between the university classroom and wider community empowers students with the professional and personal competencies and confidence necessary to advocate for social innovation and business modelling. Within the learning cycle of the academic year 2017-2018 there has been celebrated the active learning that had occurred on a daily basis in the community, the pedagogy of experience that had enhanced the knowledge and understanding of issues related to difference, privilege, development, identity building and respect for intercultural diversity.

The results of questions related to statement No. 1 (Co-creation and collaboration as helpful educational tools in effective learning) show that majority of students consider that co-creation and collaboration in education provide practical approach to the curriculum, as well as self-experience and observation to increase knowledge. They also promote interaction between lecturers and students, overcome difficulties and provide them with opportunity to show individualities and also give awareness of professional skills.

As for the statement of The educational model of Master Imagineering as enhancing the development and improvement of professional and personal competencies (No 2) here the ideas of students in terms of learning activities, enhancing the development and improvement of professional and personal competencies (based on the TRIAL competencies: transparent, reflecting, inspiring, appreciating, leading) are being revealed. The results of questions related to statement No. 2 show that majority of students consider that the learning activities intentionally designed within the programme are helpful to develop leadership qualities, promote cooperation, sense of discipline, increase confidence and helpful in the social training.

The results of questions related to the statement No. 3 (Co-creation as beneficial for society and individuals) show that majority of the students think that co-creation with all actors involved in each and every of the real-life working projects are helpful for achieving better results and performance, selecting a specific field of study and become one of the source to meet the need of higher education.

To confirm how the learning experience contributed to specific learning gains, within the framework of the interviews the students have been asked to describe the extent to which they made specific learning gains in specific knowledge domains. Students rated their learning on

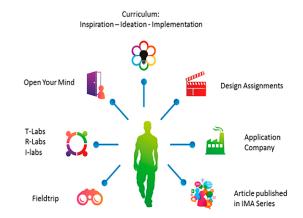
a five-point scale (1 = not at all; 5 = a great deal). The domains and the student ratings refer to the following: Design theory; Imagineering methodology in practice; Collaborative techniques in an international environment; Social constructionism theory in practical implications and Complexity theory in practical implications.

The ratings suggest that students perceived making strong gains in each of the areas. Student comments accent the value of the educational design in contributing to knowledge gains as reported by one student: "Wow! I have never learned so much in such a short amount of time, or remembered so much of it! The stuff learned is still in my head, every day, unlike other learning activities I had so far (before starting the Master's), we experienced what we were learning, and that made all the difference." Another student wrote, "The purpose of this Master's was to explore about identity diversity. It did just that. My favorite part of the whole programme was the continuous discussion on how humans impact identity through education, business and societal impacts. I gained a great deal from that discussion."

Students were also asked to report the extent to which they made gains in conceptual knowledge as a result of the programme. The value of these learning experiences was expressed clearly by a student who wrote: *"I think anytime that you talk about the organization and solving its issues you are going to have people who are extremely opposed to any kind of change. If it comes to the organizational development and big business, the organization often loses in favour of the chaos. It is very complex trying to let people continue to make a living in the emerging 2.0 world, while still trying to protect the linear behavior. The Master's really made me realize how such complexity could be tackled in diverse contexts and designing from us new integral beings." (see Figure 4)* 

Majority of the responses show that there is lot of importance of educational programmes as Master Imagineering at higher level. It is not only helpful in effective learning but they could promote the qualities of leadership, discipline and self-confidence among the students. Maximum respondents cleared that these type of learning activities are beneficial for society and individuals and also promote the importance of organizational transformation on a practical level together with applying the theoretical models of complexity and social constructionism.

Last but not least, a key theme that emerged from the questionnaire was positive learning attitude. Most students stated that learning experientially in authentic contexts has been a



**Figure 4.** Educational model towards professional and personal integrity Source: Nijs, D. et al. 2019 Advanced Imagineering: Designing Innovation as Collective Creation

foundational model of the Imagineering programme they took part in: *"Learning experiential-ly in authentic contexts made it unbelievable seeing whole organizations transform".* 

# Conclusion. The co-creative and collaborative essence of Master Imagineering as a socio-economic driver

The master Imagineering is structured to educate the professional of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which means a professional prepared to deal with the fast-changing society. People will be trained to become capable of translating those changes into new forms of organization, in devising innovative approaches to problems and opportunities and in carrying out plans in dynamic ways. To encompass this, the curriculum adopts the "collaborative and co-creative" methodology, which, refers to learning environments where students engage in a common task and each individual depends on and is accountable to each other by sharing their experiences and taking on different roles.

It aims to create a working space that invites the students to get involved with the learning topic in different ways. Furthermore, to have different roles throughout the master's together with lecturers, industry representatives, alumni and researchers. It also engages with others, collaboratively participating, generating new ways of tackling issues and sharing their learning. Learning communities convene regularly and frequently during the workday to engage in collaborative professional learning to strengthen their practice and increase student results. Learning community members are accountable to one another, to achieve the shared goals of the school and school system and to work in transparent, authentic settings that support their improvement.

The collaborative and co-creative (learning community) methodology, described above, is adapted to the context of the master Imagineering. It strives to achieve the objective of integrating theory and practice, as well as content and methods, in order to provide a coherent learning experience to the students and to prepare them to become Imagineers. It also allows the involvement and engagement of diverse stakeholders and the formation of a collaborative networking ecosystem.

The Master Imagineering as stated by all stakeholders involved directly and indirectly with the Programme offers students a deep perspective on this transition era where collaboration and co-creation are key:

Iteration from simplicity to complexity and beyond	Learning outcome essence
Macro-integrity	it enables studying and understanding (up to a certain level) the transition where we are going through today;
Meso-design	it teaches them perspectives of strategic reframing of processes of value creation in society from the exchange mode to the participative co-creative mode;
Micro-application and implementation	it gives them the opportunity to experiment in practice in design assignments in a small group in reality for discovering and exploring business (or social) innovation from the experience perspective;
Continuous collaboration and co-creation	it allows them to develop themselves as transformational leaders/designers for business innovation or social innovation and social change, a process of self-creation (Montuori, 2010).

 Table 1. Master Imagineering guiding perspectives

Source: Breda University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Documentation, 2018

The Imagineering learning theory holds that "learning consists less in recording information than in interpreting it" (Nijs, D. et.al, 2019). This perception of the role of the Master Imagineering educational practices as a collaborative and co-creative model has exceeded the initial research goals. Rather than a period onto knowledge generation, the time spent throughout the Master's programme is being viewed as a meaningful opportunity, which engages students in active design and research projects while delivering valuable transformative and generative insights. Beyond the Master programme curriculum, the entire learning expedition has become an important assignment as a preparation for multi- and interdisciplinary research with an overall impact for the future behavior and value creation processes. This study has confirmed that students can develop focused research questions, make meaning from a variety of sources, and contribute their learning in a collaborative environmental and experiential methodology.

Based on this type of Imagineering practical educational foundation, the students are more than trained and prepared "to mobilize bottom-up movements in order to help shape a more positive future whether this bottom-up movement has a tactical or a strategic dimension" (Nijs, 2012).

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# INFLUENCES OF EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE AND JOB POSITION ON THE SATISFACTION OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT STUDENTS WITH EMPLOYMENT IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Milan Ivkov<sup>A</sup>, Viktorija Šimon<sup>A\*</sup>

# Abstract

Education, complex skills and specialized knowledge of employees are crucial in industries such as hospitality industry. Students of hotel management in various ways try to acquire the experience necessary for employment, such as: professional practice, student exchange, attendance of specialized courses, etc. The importance of human resources both in hospitality industry and in all service industries is constantly growing. The main goal of this paper is to determine the expectations and satisfaction of hotel management students with employment in the hospitality industry. The survey was conducted among former and current students of hotel management of the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad in September 2018. An online questionnaire was created in Google Docs, which was distributed via social networks. The study sample consists of 55 respondents. For the purpose of this research, a model developed by De Beer and associates (1987) was used. The model was slightly modified in order to meet the research needs. The application of the ANOVA analysis and LSD post-hoc test examined differences between dependent variables (questions related to expectation and satisfaction with the employment in the hospitality industry) and independent variables (socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents). The results revealed statistically significant differences in responses in relation to the length of work experience in the hospitality industry of the respondents, the level of education acquired, and the hospitality sector in which the respondents are employed. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed in order to help scholars and practitioners better understand this topic.

Keywords: Hospitality industry, Job expectation, Job satisfaction, Students

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# Introduction

Nowadays, the hospitality is cited as one of the most fascinating and fun industry to work. This is an industry that is open 24 hours a day and 365 days a year (Walker, 2007). According to the opinion of the ruling philosophy of human resource management, human resources are the most valuable and dynamic resources of an organization (Nedeljković, 2011). Quality service can be provided only by an employee who is satisfied with the job (Stanković, 2015). In addition, human resources play a key role in achieving the goals of the company, because they represent its vision and mission. In fact, the biggest challenge of each company is the human resources management. On the other hand, human resources may represent the greatest competitive advantage on the market (Jovančević, 2015). Moreover, human resources have a big importance in the hospitality industry. It is known that the hospitality industry is very specific and is characterized by high heterogeneity. Because of that, hospitality requires wide range of different professional profiles and educational levels of employees.

According to data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, in 2008 the hospitality industry had the largest proportion of employees with secondary education (total 60.04%), while the share of employees with completed higher education school is only 4.33%. According to the same data, the share of employees with degree is 6.52%. A disadvantage is that a considerable number of employees with secondary education occupy top management positions in hotels and restaurants. Top management positions should require university degree and the highest level of managerial knowledge. Accordingly, one of the major problems in the modern hospitality industry of the Republic of Serbia is the lack of competent managers, who have sufficient knowledge, international experience in the hospitality industry and special abilities and skills necessary for managing hotel operations (Blagojević and Redžić, 2009).

One of the problems of working in the tourism sector is that there are two types of jobs in the industry, two different extremes. There are a large number of those jobs that are poorly paid and require low skills, while a small number of positions require a highly-skilled people who are generally well-paid. Of course, there are a small number of jobs that are between those two extremes (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996).

National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago conducted a survey in 2007 on employee satisfaction in the US. The results showed that employees in the hospitality industry are among the most dissatisfied. The degree of satisfaction for employees in the food and beverage sector was below 30%: chefs - 24%, bartenders - 26%, waiters and servers - 27% (http:// www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070417.jobs.pdf).

It is very important to identify the key components of dissatisfaction, to take specific steps to eliminate them and more frequently measure job satisfaction, in order to determine and monitor its level and progress. International hotel chains care for employees as one of the eight key principles of quality management (Kosar and Rašeta, 2005). The impact of employees on service quality in the hospitality industry is obvious, because only satisfied employees can make the guest happy (Kosar, 2009).

#### Methodology and research description

The survey was conducted among former and current students of hotel management of the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad in September 2018. An online questionnaire was created in Google Docs and it was distributed via social networks. The study sample consists of 55 respondents. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part of the questionnaire is related to the profile of participants. The second part focuses on the expectations that students had with the employment in the hospitality industry and the third part of the questionnaire is related to their satisfaction with employment in the same industry.

For the purpose of this research, a model designed by De Beer and associates (De Beer at al., 1987) was used. The initial model comprised of 43 items and nine dimensions: *Work Content, Payment, Promotion, Recognition, Working Conditions, Benefits, Personal, Supervisor and Desire to quit the job.* However, the initial model has been modified for this research and consists of 40 items and eight dimensions. The last, ninth dimension *Desire to quit the job* was omitted. All eight dimensions appear in both the second and the third part of the questionnaire.

Each of the statements, in the second and third part of the questionnaire, had five possible answers from which respondents could choose the one that best suits their attitude or feeling at the given moment. A five-point Likert scale is used for assessing the statements: (1)-strong-ly disagree, (2)-disagree, (3)-neither agree nor disagree, (4)-agree, (5)-strongly agree. Reliability of the modified questionnaire was tested by calculating the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha). It can be concluded that used questionnaire is reliable given that the coefficient for the scale of 40 questions concerning expectations is 0.902, while the scale of 40 questions regarding satisfaction coefficient is 0.944 (Nunnally, 1978).

#### Sample description

Based on the analysis of the sample, it can be noted that more than a half of the respondents have a master degree (Table 1). The smallest number of participants is still in the process of education, while one-third completed undergraduate studies. It can be also seen that the most numerous, actually more than the half of respondents, are those who are in the industry up to three years. On the other hand, just few respondents work in the hospitality industry for up to nine years, which coincides with the fact that most students start their career at the end or after graduation. The largest number of respondents is employed in reception (40%) and restaurant (34.5%). Those are the most common sectors in which students of hotel management start their professional life. This is also related to the years of experience that respondents have

Level of education acquired	Number	Percent
Current student	8	14.5%
Bachelor's degree	17	30.9%
Master's degree	30	54.5%
Length of work experience in the hospitality industry	Number	Percent
Up to a year	12	21.8%
Up to three years	29	52.7%
Up to six years	10	18.2%
Up to nine years	4	7.3%
The hospitality sector in which respondent is employed	Number	Percent
Kitchen	9	16.4%
Restaurant	19	34.5%
Reception	22	40%
Marketing and Sales	5	9.1%

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (N=55)

in the hospitality industry. The smallest percentage of the respondents is employed in marketing and sales department (9.1%).

# **Results and discussion**

#### **Results of analysis of variance ANOVA**

The application of the ANOVA analysis and LSD post-hoc test examined differences between dependent variables (questions related to expectation and satisfaction with the employment in the hospitality industry) and independent variables (socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents). The results revealed statistically significant differences in respondents' responses in relation to the length of work experience in the hospitality industry of the respondents, their level of education, and the hospitality sector in which the respondents are employed.

According to the length of work experience in the hospitality industry, the results of the analysis of variance ANOVA show statistically significant differences in responses (Table 2).

Respondents who work up to a year in the hospitality industry, as well as those who work up to three years, gave the lowest ratings to dimension Payment. The reason for this can be found in the fact that wage increases with the length of experience that employee has in the hospitality industry, time spent in the company as well as with the skills and qualifications that a person possesses. Experience of employees in the industry such as hospitality is very important so respondents who work up to six years in the hospitality industry have provided the highest average rating concerning other categories of respondents, for this dimension. It is believed that during that period they progressed, and accordingly achieved financial benefits. Years of experience usually lead to higher positions as well as to greater responsibilities. However, employees with greater responsibilities also expect to receive higher salaries. The problem in the hospitality industry is that earnings are low even at the highest and most responsible positions, so it is not surprising the fact that respondents who work up to nine years in the industry did not give the highest average score to the dimension *Payment*.

All the above mentioned explains also the results related to the dimension *Promotion*. Accordingly, respondents who work up to a year and those who work up to three years in the hospitality industry, presumably still work at executive positions until they gain enough experience to progress. On the other hand, respondents who work up to nine years probably reached their pinnacle concerning the advancement in the industry. The highest average score for this dimension again gave respondents who work up to six years. It is assumed that they have been promoted in the recent period.

The results show that respondents rated the dimension *Recognition* in the same manner as previously explained. The third group of respondents, those who work up to six years in the hospitality industry, for this dimension gave the highest average rating.

Dimension *Personal* includes statements "I am given work in accordance with my qualifications and skills" and "I work in the department of my choice". As expected, the lowest average score for this dimension is given by the respondents who work up to a year in the hospitality industry, and have lack of experience, skills and qualifications. According to that, they still do not have a clear picture of the sector in which they would like to be employed. On the other hand, respondents who have up to six years of experience in the hospitality industry, with necessary qualifications and skills, agree that they can choose in which sector of the company they can work. Therefore they gave the highest average marks.

	Length of	work experience	in the hospitalit			LSD Post-		
Dimensions	(1) Up to a year	(2) Up to three years	(3) Up to six years	(4) Up to nine years	F	р	hoctest	
D2-Payment (satisfaction)	2.5000	2.6293	3.6000	2,8125	1.950	0.031*	1,2<3	
D3-Promotion (satisfaction)	2.6667	2.9080	3.9667	2,6667	2.613	0.020*	1,2,4<3	
D4-Recognition (satisfaction)	3.0000	2.6897	4.1000	2,3125	3.383	0.025*	2,4<3	
D7-Personal (satisfaction)	2.8333	3.4138	3.8500	3,1250	1.464	0.048*	1<3	

Table 2. Analysis of variance ANOVA according to the length of work experience in the hospitality industry

\*p<0,05

The results of the analysis of variance ANOVA according to the level of education acquired show that there are statistically significant differences in responses of participants regarding dimension *Benefits*. The biggest difference in the responses can be seen in the statement "My medical care is satisfactory". Respondents, who are currently students, gave the lowest average score (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of variance ANOVA according to the level of education acquired

Dimension	The	level of education acqui	LSD Post-			
Dimension (1) Current student (2) Bachelor's	(2) Bachelor's degree	(3) Master's degree		Р	hoc test	
D6-Benefits (satisfaction)	2.2500	3.4510	3.1667	2.556	0.29*	1<2

\*p<0,05

Statistically significant differences in the responses of participants can be seen in the results obtained by analysis of variance ANOVA according the hospitality sector in which the respondents are employed (Table 4).

It may be noted that the respondents who are employed in departments Reception and Marketing and sales had higher expectations of *Work content* than those who are employed in the department Kitchen. A more detailed analysis shows that identical results were obtained for statements that fall within the mentioned dimension such as "I expected to be interested in my work" and "I expected to be proud to say what kind of work I do". The reason for this may be that job in the sectors Reception and Marketing and sales include a wide range of different tasks and activities. Besides that, studies show that employees in the kitchen feel undervalued and also they find their job boring (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007). However, if the attention is paid to the results of satisfaction with the dimension of *Work content*, it is evident that the lowest average grade is given by the respondents employed in the Restaurant, while significantly different assessment is given by the respondents employed in the Reception. This may represent the fact that jobs in the Restaurant are based on service, while jobs in the sector Reception include various tasks such as communication, administration, reservations, etc. It is very common situation that in sector Restaurant do not work employees with proper qualifications and professional orientation (Kosar, 2009). This can cause a lack of motivation at gualified hospitality employees and create the impression that this kind of job is not complex and that the work can be performed by anyone regardless of qualification and skills.

While respondents who work in Kitchen department gave the lowest average score for expectations for the dimension *Promotion*, respondents who are employed in the Reception had the highest expectations for the same dimension, compared to employees in other sectors.

Statistically significant differences in the responses can be observed with the dimension *Benefits*, (expectations scale). Differences in responses occur between employees in the Restaurant sector, who had lower expectations than employees in the Reception.

As mentioned before and according to data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia from 2008 (Republički zavod Srbije za statistiku, 2008), the wage of employees in restaurants and hotels is extremely low. The highest average score for dimension *Payment* was given by participants employed in the sector Restaurant. Practice shows that it is not uncommon that employees in this sector, in addition to their regular salaries or wages, receive additional income/bonus from the employer or tips from guests directly, due to the good services they provide. On the other hand, employees in the sector Kitchen gave the lowest average score for the same dimension. According to the survey that was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago on employee satisfaction in the US, chefs are the most dissatisfied employees in the hospitality industry and their degree of satisfaction was 24% (http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070417.jobs.pdf). Also, dissatisfaction with salaries was recognized as one of the main sources of stress of chefs at work, followed by treatment by managers, pressures at work and working time per day (Smith and Carroll, 2006).

The results obtained for the dimension *Working conditions* show the lowest average rating from the Restaurant sector staff, while the highest average grade is given by employees from sectors Reception and Marketing and sales. The explanation can be found in the way of functioning of the restaurant, where it is understood that the restaurant is open until the guests are in it. Considering that, employees from this sector gave the lowest average ratings for statements within this dimension "My work hours are reasonable", "I am never overworked" and "I have the opportunity to mix with my colleagues and to communicate on aspects of our work". If it is assumed that those employed in the Restaurant sector have previous experience, it is not surprising that exactly they had the lowest expectations concerning this dimension.

While respondents who are employed in the sector Restaurant disagree or neither agree or disagree with satisfaction of dimension *Personal* which includes statements "I am given work in accordance with my qualifications and skills" and "I work in the department of my choice", respondents from the sector Reception gave the highest average marks to this dimension. Employees in the Restaurant sector may not be satisfied with the sector where they work and with the job they do, but despite that, they gave the highest average grade to the dimension *Payment*.

	The hospit	ality sector in w	hich respondent	is employed			LSD Post- hoctest
Dimension	(1) Kitchen	(2) Restaurant	(3) Reception	(4) Marketing and sales	F	Р	
D1-Work content (expectation)	3.6863	3.8452	4.1230	4.3059	3.186	0.031*	1<3,4
D3-Promotion (expectation)	4.1111	4.5263	4.7273	4.6667	1.791	0.027*	1<3
D5-Working conditions (expectation)	3.4074	3.3158	3.9091	3.8667	2.636	0.013*	2<3
D6-Benefits (expectation)	3.9259	3.4737	4.2576	4.1333	2.261	0.014*	2<3
D1-Work content (satisfaction)	3.4837	3.2755	3.8396	3.8706	3.486	0.022*	2<3
D2-Payment (satisfaction)	1.9444	3.0789	2.8750	2.8500	1.918	0.023*	1<2
D5-Working conditions (satisfaction)	2.8519	2.4035	3.3333	3.3333	3.836	0.015*	2<3,4
D7-Personal (satisfaction)	3.4444	2.8947	3.6818	3.4000	1.579	0.036*	2<3

 Table 4. Analysis of variance ANOVA according to the hospitality sector in which respondent is employed

\*p<0,05

### Conclusion

The topic related to employee satisfaction is very interesting, many studies have been conducted about it and it was the focus of interest of many authors. Taking into consideration that the hospitality industry is very specific, mainly because it is based on service it can be concluded that the combination of these two themes provides a very convenient and interesting base for research.

The fact that mostly there are no established human resource departments, especially in small hotels and restaurants, represents a big problem in the hospitality industry of the Republic of Serbia. Those departments would deal with employees, innovations, trainings, new technologies, etc. For the employees in this industry is necessary to keep acquiring new knowledge and skills, and this can be achieved through various forms of continuous education and training. Those who should initiate and provide the necessary training are certainly employers.

The research results showed that the respondents had high expectations about the job, which is considered adequate for people who have a university degree, but the real picture shows that respondents were dissatisfied with payments, recognition, and working conditions. All of the above negatively affects the attractiveness of employment in the hospitality industry as well as a lack of motivation of employees in this industry. Certainly, it is known that the salaries and benefits of employees in the hospitality industry in the Republic of Serbia are devastatingly low. This is the first thing that should be changed in the whole system, and also to increase awareness of the importance of employees in the industry, with regard to education, skills and competencies that are expected from them (Šimon, 2018).

Managers in tourism and the hospitality industry have difficulty hiring new employees and also struggle with retention of qualified, competent, organized and motivated employees in

companies. Working conditions in the tourism and hospitality industry differ from country to country and from company to company. Where wages are competitive, the working environment is attractive and working conditions are good, usually the employee turnover is much lower compared to companies where wages are low, where a large number of workers come from socially disadvantaged groups and where professionalism almost does not exist (Đeri, 2009).

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5. Natural and cultural resources and thematic routes (Urban thematic routes)

# NEW KIDS IN TOWN: DIMENSIONS OF INNOVATIVENESS OF THE 'NEW' CITY TOURS OF SOFIA, BULGARIA

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# Abstract

In the context of current trends and dynamic changes in tourism supply and demand, the issue of the need for innovations in the tourism sector is becoming increasingly important. The aim of the article is to investigate the innovativeness of selected city tours of Sofia based on six dimensions of innovativeness as outlined in the model of den Hertog et al. (2010), namely: new service concept; new customer interaction; new business partnership; new revenue model; new delivery system (personnel, organization, culture); and new delivery system (technology). The study presents a qualitative analysis of the information available on the websites of five organizations offering both "free" (tip-based) and paid city tours of Sofia followed by semi-structured interviews with managers and tour guides. Results reveal implementation of service innovations in all studied aspects of the tours and stress the significance of those innovations considering customer interaction, delivery system, business partnerships, and revenue model, since they considerably affect the market and change Sofia's tourism scene.

Keywords: Urban tourism, Guided tours, Innovation

# Introduction

In the context of current trends and dynamic changes in tourism supply and demand, the issue of the need for innovations in the tourism sector, not only at an organizational but also at a destination level is becoming increasingly important. The issue is particularly relevant to the capital city of Bulgaria, which is currently emerging as an internationally known tourist destination (Dogramadjieva et al., 2018; Stone, 2018). Among other factors, Sofia's successful tourism development over the last several years is also related to the appearance of a number of "new" city tours, some of which have been on the market since 2010, while others have been offered since quite recently. These tours are not provided by traditional tour operators but by NGOs and business companies of a different background. Although they have strongly con-

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tributed to the diversity of the urban tourism product and have experienced a considerable market growth, these tours have been only vaguely mentioned in a limited number of studies, and have not yet been subjected to an in-depth analysis in the context of innovation.

# Literature review

(Free) city tours in other regions of the world have been explored from different perspectives in scientific literature, like the role of walking tours or the tour guides in terms of: representing the place (Hallin & Dobers, 2012); transforming a place into a city worth visiting (Guano, 2015); creating, changing and improving urban culture and visions of the city (Wynn, 2010); presenting street art as a cultural product (Andron, 2018). Some papers reveal what is innovative about the tours. For example, guides and tourists are seen as mutually depending co-producers of the guided tours (Larsen & Widtfeldt Meged, 2013). City tours in particular are often regarded innovative, being defined as: a product innovation (Ratz, 2016); a service, institutional, management or a business concept innovation (del Pilar et al., 2017); a market (marketing) and organizational innovation, and even a disruptive innovation in the case of free walking tours (Widtfeldt Meged & Zillinger, 2018).

These implications are in line with the development of innovation theory in general and innovation in services in particular, which have become increasingly popular in recent years. It is widely accepted that service innovations (including tourism innovations) are different from manufacturing innovations. Besides new products and processes, innovation in services has brought also new ways of organizing and distributing services (Camison & Monford-Mir, 2012). Tourism innovations are based on the co-creation or the process through which customers interact with the company and create their own experiences. In addition, tourism experiences are also influenced by technology (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). Thus, technology can be viewed as a source of innovation to co-create enhanced destination experiences (Neuhofer et al., 2012). In accordance with the characteristics of services and tourism, and due to the contribution of the ideas brought, specific classifications of tourism innovations have been developed, the most well-known of which is probably that of Hjalager (2010) who addresses the following categories of innovation in tourism: product, process, managerial, marketing and institutional.

In the wider context of services, an even more complete and comprehensive model of innovations has been developed by den Hertog et al. (2010) outlining six dimensions where service innovation can take place in a business: new service concept; new customer interaction; new business partnership; new revenue model; new delivery system (personnel, organization, culture); and new delivery system (technology). The authors also claim that "a service business can innovate every single dimension or a combination of several dimensions" and that "the business model innovation can be perceived as a system-level innovation where (almost) every dimension is changed" (den Hertog et al., 2010, p. 496). Further, the model is completed by six dynamic service innovation capabilities that are necessary for managing service innovations: signalling users' needs and technological options; conceptualizing; (un-) bundling; co-producing and orchestrating; scaling and stretching; and learning and adapting (den Hertog et al., 2010).

Authors argue that the whole model or particular elements of it might be used to assess innovativeness in tourism both at organizational and destination levels, as it takes into account the specificity of the sector, and summarizes and complements all the above presented concepts.

# Methodology

The aim of the article is to investigate different aspects of innovativeness of selected city tours offered in Sofia based on the six dimensions outlined in the model of den Hertog et al. (2010). Dynamic service innovation capabilities of the supplying organizations are also included in the analysis. Starting hypothesis is that the studied city tours of Sofia represent a business model innovation because novelty refers to each dimension of the theoretical model.

The study is focused on five organizations (two NGOs and three business companies) that offer city tours in Sofia, mainly aimed at foreign visitors. The selection of these suppliers is based on their TripAdvisor ranking. Only providers ranked among the first 12 out of all 107 offers available in Sofia as of April 2019 are included in the study. Companies offering tours outside the city are not taken in consideration. As some providers offer several different city tours of Sofia, the total number of studied tours is thirteen. Almost half of them (6) are "free" (tip-based) and the rest are offered on a fixed price. Only two of the tours are general (introductory) in content while the rest are targeted at specific areas of interest such as communist heritage, traditional culture, local cuisine, nightlife, street art, contact with nature, etc. (Table 1).

Tour content	Tour name	Type of payment		Type of content		Type of supplier		Trip
		Tip- based	Paid	Introductory	Thematic	NGO	Trade company	Advisor ranking*
Introductory	Free Sofia Tour							1
(history) tours	The feel of Sofia							4
Traditional culture tours	Sofia 3-hour Bulgarian Culture tour							1
	Balkan Bites Free Food Tour							9
Alternative	Sofia Graffiti Tour							8
culture tours	365 Sofia Alternative Tour							1
Communist tours	365 Communist walking tour of Sofia							1
	Sofia's Free Communist Tour							11
	Sofia's history communist tour in a classic Trabant							11
Green tours	Free Sofia bike tour							10
	Free Sofia hike tour							10
Pub crawls	The New Sofia Pub Crawl							12
	Sofia PubCrawl Tour of Hidden Unique Bars							12

Table 1. Studied innovative Sofia city tours by content, type of supply, and TripAdvisor ranking

\* TripAdvisor ranking among 107 tours offered in Sofia as of April 2019

The study presents a qualitative analysis of the information available on the websites of the studied supplier organizations, which is completed by semi-structured interviews with four managers / owners and four tour guides. Information from the websites was extracted and analysed with the reference to the dimensions of innovativeness according to the model of den Hertog et al. (2010).

The interviews were conducted in the period April - June 2019. Separate questionnaires for managers and guides were prepared by the research team. Both questionnaires contained open questions, the main difference between them being the way of formulating the questions in compliance with specific competences and perspectives of the interviewees. In most cases the interviews were conducted by two interviewers so that they could later complement each other's notes. The integrated information was grouped, categorized and analysed in terms of the envisaged theoretical model of innovations (den Hertog et al., 2010).

# **Results and discussion**

#### New service concept

The studied tours are aimed at non-organized tourists who would buy a city tour as a separate service, not as a package along with accommodation, food, transportation, etc. For a long time, such tourists have not been of particular interest to traditional tour operators in Sofia, which usually target organized groups or the MICE segment. Considering the new trends in travelling and especially the recent dynamic change of Sofia's tourist market caused by the penetration of low-cost carriers, and the subsequent flow of individual international visitors to the capital city, the studied organizations have recently found a new market niche (that of previously largely unattended non-organized tourists) for providing city tours of a new type. By offering regular city tours of Sofia that are open for everyone, these organizations have revealed the dynamic capability of (un-) bundling.

The concept of tours that can be booked as a separate service is definitely not new to the world but it is relatively new to Sofia as only recently the destination has started attracting large numbers of independent foreign tourists. The concept of free tours, on the other hand, is relatively new world-wide and is even considered a disruptive innovation on the scale of Europe (Meget & Zillinger, 2018; del Pilar et al., 2017). Sofia was among the first cities, where free tours occurred about ten years ago, following the example of Berlin, and there are particular innovations regarding the service concept, such as offering a free food for the first time ever, based on specific partnership with local restaurants and cafés (The Balkan Bites Free Food Tour).

Generally, the core idea of the "new" city tours as a service concept is to present Sofia to the world in a different, positive and more attractive way. Newly developed tours arise from the needs of contemporary market along with the availability of creative ideas for utilizing particular assets of the urban environment. Various aspects of the city such as fascinating history, traditional culture, modern art, active lifestyle, nightlife or daily cuisine of the locals are emphasized in different tour routes and narratives, in which the guide's skills and personality have an important role to play. All tours promote an interactive and fun way to get to know Sofia but some of them are aimed at providing quick and enjoyable overview of the city while others are focused on specific knowledge, hidden places, and/or informal communication with locals to let the tourists acquire deeper understanding of Sofia's past and present life.

The organizers strive to provide an easy access of everyone to the tours (both financially and in terms of organization). Free tours present a brief introduction to different aspects of the city while those customers who search for a more flexible and personalized approach in terms of timing, group size, routes, etc. are encouraged to join the other (paid) tours of the same organizations. Studied tours vary also in terms of means of transport, sites included, level of difficulty, duration, geographical area, etc. Some of the tours are already established at the market as brands. At the same time, the organizers constantly develop new products. Innovative concepts arise frequently and from various sources – mostly from the company owners and managers but quite often from the guides, and also from customers who share their views and creative ideas. Usually it takes a long time for a new idea to become a reality and in most of the cases it is subjected to intensive discussions among the management and the personnel. Therefore, the organizations have developed the capability of conceptualizing. The study has shown that although a lot of ideas are shaped in concepts and then tested and applied, not all of them turn out to be successful. Tour companies constantly monitor the developed the capability of learning and adapting.

#### New customer interaction

The studied organizations have created user-friendly web sites as a first step towards being recognised and distinguished at the market. Information on the web sites is practical, attractive and easy to reach. It contains short texts, photos, maps, calendars, videos, etc. to help potential customers to get informed about when are the tours conducted, what they should expect (route descriptions, duration, number of participants in a group, etc.), and how to get prepared (what should they wear; whether a reservation is required in advance; what is the price of the tour and the additional services; where to rent bicycles, etc.). In particular cases specific information is provided regarding the distance walked and the level of difficulty, the type of terrain, altitude, etc. On some websites there are options for buying tours from e-shops with selecting the tour parameters, tracking orders, etc. Generally, the studied websites' content and presentation is indicative of the organizations' capability of signalling users' needs and technological options.

Striving to expand their market share, the tour providers collect detailed information about their customers. In each tour the guides keep record on where the tourists are from, how do they know about the tour and where are they staying.

Another important element of the new customer interaction is that of informal, friendly communication that takes place on the ground during the tours and even afterwards. It is stressed as a key concept and a distinctive feature of the tours by all interviewees that tourists are given the opportunity to see the tour guide as a local friend, as well as to mix with people from different countries and cultures. Tour guides try not just to deliver information but to establish a personal relationship with the tour participants. They are ready to answer any question and express their own opinions on politics, economy, etc. which appeals to customers and also reveals the capability of signalling users' needs of authentic experiences.

#### New business partnership

Information collected from websites and interviews reveals that the city tour providers have built a dense network of both formal and informal partnerships with a wide range of organizations aimed at product development and/or promotion. An interesting example of such a partnership is that of the Balkan Bites Free Food Tour. The tour takes tourists to several different restaurants in the city centre that provide tasting of sample food for free while the guide explains peculiarities of the local cuisine and tells food-related stories. Thus, food is used to lead visitors through Bulgarian history and culture, and on the other hand, local businesses are promoted, since people get a sense of good restaurants to return to later. Other business or public organizations are also considered (potential) partners for (new) products development. These include various food-and-beverage establishments, retail outlets, cultural institutions and other service suppliers in the city, the main condition for inclusion being the quality of the services provided and willingness to collaborate.

Most partnerships, however, are merely focused on promotion or cross promotion. These include either paid forms of advertising or cooperation based on goodwill. Commercial partners most frequently mentioned by the interviewees are various providers of web advertising (Google, TripAdvisor, etc.) to which a substantial part of the studied organizations' budget is allocated. Furthermore, the tour providers heavily rely on promoting themselves through fliers distributed in accommodation facilities of different types - hotels, hostels, Airbnb and Couch-surfing places, etc. Tourist information centres run by the municipality of Sofia are also mentioned as a partner in this respect, though only by the 365 Association that is obviously the only one organization in the field, actively collaborating with the local authority.

In terms of both self-promotion and promotion of other businesses, it is worth mentioning the special booklet issued by the 365 Association which is given to the Free Sofia Tour attendees at the end of each walk. It contains attractive and well-structured information regarding not only the organization's own products but many other things for tourists to see and do while in Sofia. It represents a good example of business partnership and collaboration with a considerable number of local restaurants, cafes, bars, shops, museums, theatres, and concert halls, as well as unconventional cultural spaces that are efficiently promoted to a wide audience of independent travellers. Few traditional tour operating and transportation companies offering services outside the city are also part of this partnership. Probably, the main obstacle to extending the scope of partners from conventional tourism industry is the "alternative" status of the organization, which is often blamed for unfair competition.

Similar "alternative" tour providing organizations are considered partners for informal cross-promotion, as they usually recommend to their customers tours run by other suppliers. This is, however, valid only of those tours that are different in content than their own products. In fact, all studied organizations are both partners and competitors. They differentiate themselves on the ground of specific tour content and actively collaborate with each other in order to achieve the common goal of "opening" Sofia city to the world and making it more interesting and accessible to foreigners, which would benefit everyone. On the other hand, these companies strive for the same market of non-organized tourists who visit Sofia for a limited period of time and have to choose among a number of offerings to spend their time and money on. Yet, some of the interviewees call the partnership network of "alternative" tour providing organizations a "quasi-cartel", since it is built on common business interests. In addition to competing in terms of ideas and "territory", these organizations have friendly relations and in many cases guides working for one of them lead tours of another, too.

The analysis of the partnerships has shown that the organizers of the "new" Sofia city tours have developed the dynamic capabilities of co-producing and orchestrating.

#### New revenue model

The study reveals the presence of a mixed revenue model, which includes a combination of both "free" (tip-based) and paid tours. Offering "free" tours represents probably the most prominent novelty among all other studied dimensions of innovativeness, since these tours operate on a "pay-as-you-wish" basis. Customers are empowered to decide whether to pay or not, and pay the amount they think the service is worth of, i.e. they determine the price, which gives them a

sense of freedom and independence. Moreover, they do not pay in advance, which would oblige them to attend and stay until the end of the tour, regardless of whether they enjoy it or not. Unlike the traditional pricing model where the price is set by suppliers according to their costs, hereby it is determined by the consumers according to their perception of service quality.

Besides being favourable for the customers, the revenue model of "free" walking tours is also beneficial to the supplying organization, as the guides try to give their best, and if the customers are very pleased, they might pay a much larger amount of money than the organizer would set as a price. Thus, the provider is motivated to continually improve quality and exceed customers' expectations. In addition, customers satisfied with a free tour are likely to buy paid tours from the same organization, resulting in revenue growth. Finally, revenues from donations are partly spent on charity causes that create a favourable public image of the organization.

Free tours are often associated with the concept of collaborative or shared economy. On the other hand, they can be viewed as an example of the traditional Freemium-Premium business model that involves offering customers both complementary and extra-cost services, or promotes the paid products of a company via suggesting free ones. Conducted interviews with both managers and guides of the free city tours of Sofia have revealed that they rather see their revenue model as a mere business than an illustration of the collaborative economy principles. This is in line with the study of Del Pilar et al. (2017) who note that free walking tour enterprises in Europe are doing "business-as-usual".

It could be summarized that the mixed revenue model of "free" and paid tours provides certain advantages for customers and supplier organizations while posing significant challenges to traditional tourism companies. Such a revenue model innovation, however, goes far beyond the tourism sector, challenging national legislation, tax system, and labour market regulations, and therefore is considered a disruptive innovation (Widtfeldt Meged & Zillinger, 2018).

#### New delivery system

#### Personnel

Tour guides are either volunteers or free-lancers, most of them having their background in spheres different than tourism, e.g. arts, humanities, law, economics, and even engineering. Quite often these people are students or practice their first profession on a regular basis, and perform guiding as a second job. They are included in the tours schedule for the month according to their availability options. Until recently, obtaining an official guiding license had never been their priority. However, the situation has changed as legal requirements for professional guiding services in Bulgaria were set in 2016. Since then, many guides serving the studied city tours have been officially licensed. On the other hand, obtaining a license has proved to be quite a challenge for some of them, who are currently practicing in violation to the Tourism Act.

Yet, in the studied cases, central to both the service concept and the delivery system is not so much the guides' knowledge per se but rather their personalities and skills in communicating knowledge to a foreign audience in a nice and entertaining way. Therefore, creative people with bright personalities and excellent language skills are generally valued, and in specific cases mountain guides or professionals in the field of history, archaeology or arts are searched for. On the websites, they are most often represented by their first names, as well as with pictures and texts, telling in brief their personal stories. Most of them are young people. The photos are taken in a variety of (usually informal) contexts and in different places – indoors or outdoors, while taking part in sports or other activities, in different urban or nature surroundings, etc.

However, as del Pilar et al. (2017) stress, companies providing free walking tours throughout Europe offer professional services. In Sofia too, the guides' knowledge on the particular subject of the tour is not underestimated. It is also crucial for them to be able to handle the organizational aspects of the tour, e.g. timing, group management, conflicts solving, etc. Therefore, the guides go through a lengthy procedure of recruitment and training that might last 2-3 months and resembles the best examples of traditional tour operating companies.

#### Organizational patterns of the tours

A distinguishing feature of the studied "new" city tours of Sofia is their flexible organization, including the possibility for customers to show late, leave the tour at any time, and (in the case of free tours) decide what to pay in the end. Such freedom awarded to customers requires well-thought planning and capability to respond immediately to ever changing situations. Therefore, it is a common practice that several guides are waiting at the starting point of the tour, so that the crowd of coming tourists is split into smaller manageable groups that sometimes even follow different routes. In particular cases (e.g. the pub crawl tours) a group is always accompanied by two guides in order to take better care of the participants while visiting the bars.

Routes are pre-defined but there is room for change by the guide's decision - e.g. in case of bad weather or construction works, as well as to meet specific customers' needs, etc. In some tours, the decision about which sites (e.g. restaurants) to be included depends on the latest's ability to receive a group at a particular day and time. Generally, paid tours (especially private ones) are characterized by greater flexibility than free tours: their customers can choose the route, means of transport, time, date, meeting point, to be taken from the hotel, etc.

In terms of tour content, some of the studied offers are not innovative as they follow traditional tourist routes and stress on most popular tourist sites. Even though, the guide's narratives and the interactive way of delivering information, create a completely different experience compared to standard tourist companies' products. Generally, the guides are free to decide what information to share with the visitors, how and when to do this. Their style of speaking is very informal, often mixed with jokes but also honest, since they are not striving to present everything from the positive side; contradictory opinions are also freely commented. An important feature of the tours (especially of those run by the 365 Association) is their high level of interactivity that fully complies with the concept of experience co-creation (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). The guides play games with the group, assign tasks and riddles to the participants, give candies to reward the right answers, and sometimes even sing and dance. People know it will be fun and this is definitely a reason for them to come, according to the interviewees.

#### Organizational structure and culture

Organizations that offer the studied "new" city tours of Sofia operate as different legal entities. Some of them (including the largest and the oldest one - the 365 Association) are non-profit organizations registered for VAT while others are private companies running other businesses as well. Most often managers are not only engaged with organizing and marketing the tours, but intensively practice guiding, either because they love the job or because "guiding provides 'easier money' than working in the office" as one of the interviewees shared.

Despite the existing differences in terms of their legal status, all studied structures are featured by flat hierarchies. Relations with colleagues and managers are not strictly formalized. Periodically, informal meetings are held, where guides have the opportunity to get to know each other, as well as the managers. Despite the friendly informal atmosphere at work, however, the studied organizations have strict quality control and monitoring systems.

An important feature of some structures' organizational culture is the wide participation of the whole personnel in the decision-making process. This is definitely favourable in terms of knowledge exchange and diffusion of organizational and marketing innovations (Camisón & Monfort-Mir, 2012) but also poses challenges in terms of decision-making speed and efficiency. It is quite an issue particularly in the case of NGOs where all important decisions are voted by every member of the General Assembly, in which all guides and other staff participate.

The interviews reveal that while some guides are specialized in only one tour, others are involved in different thematic ones, and even in tours managed by different organizations. In particular cases one and the same person is connected with several organizations even at a managerial level. The interviewees seem to be well aware of both the pros and cons of such a tricky situation but discuss it rather from the positive side, stressing cross-promotion (of tours conducted by different organizations) and transfer of ideas and know-how (between otherwise competing organizations) as a positive outcome at a destination level.

Yet, an expansion of offering new city tours is observed, which strongly affects overall competitive environment. Existing organizations offer new products in Sofia and other cities, and similar new companies are established. Thus, the studied entities reveal the capability of scaling and stretching but new challenges are posed in terms of competition, collaboration and survival.

#### Technology

A distinguishing feature of the studied providers of the "new" city tours of Sofia is that they take advantage of new technologies much more than many conventional companies from the travel industry. Thus, they implement innovations enhancing the service concept of flexibility and create sense of independence and freedom of choice that customers acquire. In regards to the technology of operation, services can be booked on-line but are available on site as well. In most cases there is no need to make a reservation in advance, which allows customers to decide to join last minute, providing flexibility according to their needs.

In terms of customer interaction, the use of technologies allows personal communication to take place not only "on the ground" during the tour but even more intensively prior or after the tour, in the form of providers-to-customers, customers-to-providers and customers-to-customers communication through social networks and web platforms. Social media have become a significant source of knowledge exchange, feedback and advertising that is particularly well utilized by the studied organizations. User-generated content is considered by the managers more efficient than traditional marketing communications. Therefore, the companies' websites provide links to various social media (TripAdvisor, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) and also give the customers opportunity to publish their reviews directly. The tours' recognitions, such as "Best Attraction according to TripAdvisor" or "Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor" are also placed on the websites. Furthermore, tour organizers strive to be available on as many platforms and travel blogs as possible so that as many people as possible could learn about them. Most often they are found on Google maps, AirBnb experiences, Get your Guide, Inspider, etc.

Since the studied Sofia city tour providers are well aware that people are increasingly searching and buying from the Internet, and constantly monitor current trends and new opportunities in this regard, they have definitely developed the dynamic capability of signalling technological options.

# Conclusion

The research presents results of a study on the different aspects of innovativeness of selected city tours of Sofia that have become increasingly popular over the last few years among foreign visitors to Bulgaria's capital city. These tours vary in terms of thematic content and types of payment. Some of them are "free" (tip-based) while others are sold on a fixed price. They are provided by five supplier organizations that are not traditional tour operator companies and therefore, are considered new players on the Sofia's tourism scene.

The performed analysis is based on the theoretical model of service innovations developed by den Hertog et al. (2010), which covers six dimensions of innovativeness, as well as related dynamic capabilities that are necessary for generating and implementing innovations. The model was helpful in structuring, analysing and synthesizing the large amount of information regarding the tours' content, organization, marketing and management. The study confirmed that the model could be successfully applied in the field of tourism and particularly in academic studies of guided tours as a specific tourist service. The challenges in implementing the model refer to difficulties in making a concise distinction among separate dimensions of innovativeness, since they overlap and penetrate one another due to the complex process of generating and putting into practice new ideas.

Based on the results of the present study, a conclusion can be drawn that organizations providing the "new" city tours of Sofia have developed a business model innovation where all six dimensions of innovativeness are covered. The tours bring a novelty through the utilization of previously unemployed elements of the urban environment of Sofia city such as communism heritage, local cuisine, nightlife, city parks, street art, etc. but they are much more innovative in terms of customer interaction, delivery system, business partnerships and revenue models applied. The studied tour providing organizations have demonstrated the availability of all the necessary dynamic capabilities (as revealed in the theoretical model) without which generating and implementing new ideas would not be possible.

These organizations have definitely played a positive role in diversifying the local tourism product and making the capital city of Bulgaria a more accessible and attractive destination to foreign visitors. Most probably, they will have a significant influence on its tourism development in the future, too. However, the studied new business model poses challenges to traditional tour operating companies, as well as to the tax system and labour regulations in Bulgaria. These (and probably other) unstudied aspects of the "new" city tours would be a subject of future academic interest and further in-depth research from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

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NEW KIDS IN TOWN: DIMENSIONS OF INNOVATIVENESS OF THE 'NEW' CITY TOURS OF SOFIA, BULGARIA

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# CREATION OF LITERARY TOURISM ROUTE IN SOMBOR (SERBIA) – PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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# Abstract

Famous writers and their literary works attract the attention of the public and have an attractiveness that encourages people to travel in order to get to know more about the writer's life, the time in which they lived in, their work and creativity, developing in such way literary tourism. Sombor is a town of rich history where exist numerous resources which can be used for this type of cultural tourism. A large number of prominent writers lived in Somor, but it is certainly, the most recognizable after the poet of romanticism, Laza Kostić, who, after his marriage with Somborin, Julijana Palanački, settled in this city. House of Laza and Julijana Planački, salon of Laza Kostić in the Municipal Museum of Sombor, church of St. Georgije as the wedding place of this couple, monument of Laza Kostić on the bench, Serbian reading room "Laza Kostić", are only some of tourist localities which can be connected in the whole by forming a literary tourism route. The subject of the research was cultural heritage related to the life and work of the writers of the XIX century in the area of Sombor, as well as the service facilities in surroundings, and examining the possibilities of connecting, gathering and networking these elements into a common tourist offer by forming a literary tourism route. Research methods included research and analysis of secondary data sources; field research and creation of photo documentation on a potential route; individual interviews with the representatives of the tourist organization of Sombor and the association "Moj Sombor" as important stakeholders at the destination. The results of the research show the state and perspectives of the development of literary tourism and thematic tourism routes in Sombor, defining the main problems, challenges and suggestions of the solution from the perspective of the respondents. Some answers are related to the heritage that should be included in the tourism offer of literary route, profiles of literary tourists, suggestions for improving the tourism offer, the challenges of creating public-private partnerships, and others.

Keywords: literary tourism, tourism route, Laza Kostić, Sombor, Serbia

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## Introduction

The type of literary tourism that is very popular in the world, particularly in countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland (Watson 2006; Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014), is still in its initial phase of development in Serbia. Apart from certain cultural events dedicated to literature (Bjeljac & Ćurčić, 2008) there is almost no developed tourism offer in this regard, or it is inadequately marketed.

Romanticism and subsequent realism had birthed many great poets and writers in Vojvodina, such as Branko Radičević, Laza Kostić, Zmaj, Sterija, Sremac, Đura Jakšić, all of whom have left a trace in our history (Deretić, 1996). Each of these prominent persons has the power to attract tourists inspired by the desire to become better acquainted with their lives and creative works.

Sombor is a city in north-western part of Bačka and has been and still is home to many educated scholars, which is why culture is one of the basic motives of visiting this city. As far as literature is concerned, personalities such as Laza Kostić, Jovan Dučić, Isidora Sekulić, Avram Mrazović, Mita Popović, Veljko Petrović and others come to mind. This paper deals precisely with the tourism resources related to these creators and examines the developmental possibilities of literary tourism in Sombor by creating a new tourism product – a literary tourism route.

## Literature overview

By analyzing secondary sources of information, main literary tourism resources in Sombor related to the period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been identified. Their short description is given in the continuation.

**"Norma" The First Serbian Teacher's College** – The most significant year for education in Sombor was 1778, when Avram Mrazović opened "Norma, the predecessor of the famous Sombor "Preparandija" – modern day Faculty of Pedagogy. Many scholars attended this school and among others were writers Isidora Sekulić, Jovan Dučić, Draga Gavrilović and others (Vojnović & Jančić, 2013).

**Memorial room of Norma and Preparandija in the Faculty of Pedagogy in Sombor** –It houses a museum collection testifying of the development of the First Serbian Teacher's College, including photographs, report cards, teaching props, portraits of respectable persons of that time, etc.

**The House of Juliana and Laza Kostić** – This house was erected in the year 1888 by Juliana's uncle Stevan Popić. It served as a home to Juliana (Palanački) and Laza Kostić after their wedding in The Church of St. George on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1895. (Vojnović & Jančić, 2013b).

Laza Kostić showroom in the City Museum of Sombor – In 1984, the City Museum acquired a large number of items from the legacy of the famous poet. The museum exhibits of applied art are mostly a permanent exhibition of the Museum and make up several ambience entities from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus illustrating the time when Laza Kostić lived in Sombor. (Šipoš, 2015).

**Serbian Reading Room "Laza Kostić"** - it was founded on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1945. The reading room was headed by Laza Kostić for ten years. Due to the paintings of the most famous Sombor buildings and portraits of 20 "most famous literary men", gifted by painter Sava Stojkov, today the room is one of the most noble spaces for cultural activities and a gallery of sort (Srpski legat, 2015).

**St. George Orthodox Church (wedding venue of Juliana and Laza)** – it was built in 1761. It houses extremely valuable iconostasis of Pavle Simić and 77 icons of various sizes from year 1867. It was where Juliana Palanački and Laza Kostić were wed in 1895. (Stepanović, 2018).

**Monument to Laza Kostić** – at the beginning of May in 2011, in Kralja Petra I Street, in front of The House of Juliana and Laza Kostić, a monument was erected in order for the people of Sombor to pay respects to the great writer (Srbija danas, 2017).

**Monument to Veljko Petrović** – The memorial to the famous Serbian literary writer and a born resident of Sombor, Veljko Petrović, is located in front of the city library "Karlo Bjelicki" as of December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. It is the work of a Sombor sculptor Igor Šeter. (Novi radio Sombor, 2017).

**Monument to Ernest Bošnjak** – Ernest Bošnjak will remain in memory as one of the architects of cinematography in the area of former Yugoslavia. He was also a printer, publisher of several newspapers, sealer. His statue in natural size, made in bronze and work of Igor Šeter, was placed in the downtown of Sombor in 2013 (Vasiljević, 2018).

**Monument to Jovan Dučić** – the monument to Jovan Dučić in Sombor in front of the Faculty of Pedagogy is identical to the one located at the entrance to the park in Trebinje.

**Bust of Isidora Sekulić** – She graduated Serbian Teacher's College in Sombor in 1894 as the best student in her generation. In her honor, a bust was placed in front of the Faculty of Pedagogy, not far from the monument to Jovan Dučić, her school fellow (Stepanović, 2018b).

**House of Veljko Petrović** – the birthplace of literary writer Veljko Petrović is found in a street now bearing his name. The original small ground-floor house was erected at the beginning of the 19th century. It was destroyed in 2008, and a new house was erected. There is a memorial plaque placed on the façade of this house with the inscription: "In this house, on February 5, 1884, literary writer and academic scholar Veljko Petrović was born." (Vojnović & Jančić, 2013c).

**"Karlo Bijelicki" City Library** – On its shelves, the library preserves a true wealth (over 300,000 copies), among which the Rarity Collection can be distinguished with 309 books. It is necessary to point out the valuable collections in the Local history department with over 4,000 volumes and copies of numerous papers and magazines printed in Sombor (Turistička organizacija Vojvodne, 2012).

**Sombor National Theatre** – the first play in the building of Sombor Theatre was held on November 25, 1882.. Ever since then, the theater in Sombor has continuously been in operation. Permanent professional theatre is active as of 1948, and it grew into a national theatre in 1952 (Narodno pozorište Sombor, 2019).

**Laza Kostić Day event** – the cultural event titled Laza Kostić Day takes play on the same day as when, in 1909, Laza Kostić had completed his most beautiful poem Santa Maria della Salute. The event takes place in the hall of the Children's Department of the library. The event is organized every June 3<sup>rd</sup>, where a selected poet is awarded with the "Laza Kostić Wreath". The first winner was Pero Zubac (RTV, 2017).

**Days of Veljko event** – Literary event Days of Veljko, takes place in December. "Veljko's dove" is a recognition award given at the event for the complete literary volume, and "Little dove" award for the most successful story written by an elementary or high school student in Serbia (http://www.rtv.rs/sr\_ci/vojvodina/backa/veljkovi-dani-u-somboru\_877023.html).

## Methodology

The research subjects are the cultural resources related to the life and creative works of literary writers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the area of Sombor, as well as facilities providing services in their surroundings, while examining the possibilities of linking, gathering and networking all elements into a unified tourism offer. The research was conducted in May of 2018, and it included the analysis of secondary information sources, traveling to Sombor and collecting photo-documents regarding the main tourist resources and conducting interviews with representatives of TO Sombor and Association "My Sombor" as important focus groups.

## Results

The story of Sombor and its literary resources was told by members of the "My Sombor" association and the employees in tourist organization. Even though the interviewees point out that Sombor has a rich literary history, they believe that literary tourism at the time does not have a strong power of attraction for tourists and should be developed in package with other tourist content.

**My Sombor Association:** We are witnesses that tour guides guiding the tours through Sombor alleyways do not have much to talk about except the history of artistic creation and literature in the history of the city. However, I believe that it would be a rare case for someone to travel here only to see the sights related to writers. Independently it cannot nor should it be developed, as it would serve its own purpose. It should be developed as an annex to other forms of tourism. Tourists should be offered additional content, music of Sombor tamburaši (players of tambura), a boat ride in the canals or a walk through the nature reserve.

**Sombor Tourism Organization:** At the moment it cannot be developed separately, perhaps only at a better time for tourism, if there is a market for it, and I believe there is. Unfortunately, for now, it is all the more or less based on potential, but it seems to me that the government recognizes tourism as a branch that should be developed and that more money will be invested into it. There is definitely a great potential in literary tourism.

Tourism Organization points out that tourists are the most interested in Laza Kostić:

**Sombor Tourism Organization:** Generally, everyone is informed that Laza Kostić had spent a period of his life in Sombor. People want to see where the house and the grave of Laza Kostić are located. However, those tourists are not exclusively motivated by literature, but it is a side interest for them.

From the perspective of the local population, members of the My Sombor association point out that May and June are the peak months when an influx of tourists is seen in Sombor. They say that Sombor is visited by people employed in education, high schoolers and primary school pupils, the elderly through pensioner associations both from within the country and abroad, and also as part of business trips. Tourism Organization states that literary tourists are mostly older persons, more educated and predominantly women. As far as school trips are concerned, they are of the impression that the professors are more interested to hear more about this than the students.

In My Sombor association, they point out that marketing is what needs to be improved in the city's tourism offer, but content and animation also require a lot of work if we wish to see more literary tourists.

**My Sombor Association:** People are not informed enough. Providing information about an event must be started much earlier, up to a year in advance, in order for the expected visit rate

to be met. Furthermore, during Laza Kostić day (the event), a show should take place in the theatre that would be related to Laza. There should be a Laza walking around the city or sitting in a café and talking to the guests. There are no bookstores downtown where Laza Kostić books can be bought, for example, in Serbian reading room a bookstore could be opened in one room. Apart from all that, accommodation is lacking, so it is also a problem that should be gradually solved.

Regarding the question what is the main obstacle in the development of tourism, the association My Sombor specify the lacking support of the community.

**My Sombor Association:** It all starts from the people, and tourist organizations are political oases and there is rarely any qualified staff. We do not have organized society and the government which would take care of the cultural politics of tourism as economy, of city as a local self-government, which, among others, has resources of the literary type. Currently it is all up to the individual. It is interesting to note that we cannot make an attraction out of literary truth, and on the other hand, across the world they make attractions out of literary lies, as is, for example, the terrace where Romeo and Juliette fell in love in Verona.

The interviewees agree on the fact that Sombor has potential to become a part of "Following the paths of Vojvodina's literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" regional route. However, they list numerous challenges in creating such a route, particularly in terms of partnership interests, animating the partners to participate, as well as in terms of project carriers.

**My Sombor Association:** When you are negotiating and you want something, you must know what is in that person's interest. The hotel would be a partner as they would fill up their facilities, and the theatre would be a partner because they would increase ticket sales for their plays, transportation agency would be a partner since they would have additional tours. All is easier when we link the interest groups, but that should not be done by an individual, but a tourist organization on a local or regional level. When you have a goal then you focus all your efforts on it. People are constantly using as an excuse that there is not enough money in the budget. It's not true that there isn't money, it just isn't allocated. On the other hand, people are grouchy and reckless in regards to finding finances, to apply for sponsorships, or to find money from some sources. There is no will and that's the biggest problem. Therefore, there needs to be a project based on interests, a project manager and a partner hierarchy.

Similar opinion is expressed by the employees in Sombor Tourism Organization.

**Sombor Tourism Organization:** *My opinion is that there are both subjective and objective challenges. The objective challenge is that it is not defined by law, I mean a specific form of cooperation, how this all would function. I believe that there should be someone who is the legal carrier and who is responsible in terms of finances and everything. On the other hand, there is inertia and insufficient development and financial strength of direct performers or subjects that deal with tourism. Many are here by accident. On the other hand, many subjects do business independently without participating in the route. Their consciousness should be opened as to why they should participate and the good it would bring to them from an economic aspect. I believe the carrier of this route should be a tourist agency, which would envision and wrap it all up into a tourist route. If there is no specific financial motive, based on experience, it is not so effective.* 

The interviewees list numerous subjects from Sombor that could be partners in the literary route. Here, those primarily listed are the local self-government, tourism organization and cultural institutions. Possible problems could be catering and housing capacities.

**Sombor Tourism Organization:** There is not a single restaurant of thematic nature, and the issue of adapting to something new is usually seen by people from the perspective of profit,

and mostly this is barbecue, etc. There is currently no restaurant in Sombor that offers national cuisine. Housing capacities are also low.

The role and interest to be included is shown by both interviewed parties.

## Conclusion

By talking with the representatives of interest groups in terms of literary tourism in Sombor, we are thrilled by the fact that the examinees show interest for developing this type of tourism by forming a literary theme route, both on the local and regional level. They believe that Sombor has an abundance of resources related to literary scholars, but they are not geared towards tourism in sufficient measure. In this sense, Laza Kostić is the most prominent figure and is the most present in the consciousness of tourists, which should be utilized in further tourist branding of Sombor.

From their experience, we could learn that school trips and fans of literature (predominantly women, professors by profession, teachers, journalists, but also pensioners, as well as persons that care for their personal development) are the main focus groups for this type of offer. This tour should be offered as complementary content without extensive interpretation to remaining tourists.

It is a fact that hard work is required in order to improve such an offer. This primarily refers to tourist animation and content presentation, which would be done in such a manner that the participants, or tourists, actively participate. What is significant is to ensure that the route is dynamic, which can be achieved by introducing additional content during the breaks, such as spending time in nature, hiking, riding carriages, bicycles, boats, tasting Vojvodinian cuisine and wines accompanied by the sound of tambura after a long day.

Theme routes in their essence require cooperation among many mutually different subjects, which is often made more difficult due to numerous reasons. Possible partners in Sombor are Sombor Tourist Organization, "Karlo Bijelicki" City Library", Serbian Reading Room and National Theatre, City Museum, The Faculty of Pedagogy, associations such as "My Sombor" and "Laza Kostić", as well as other subjects in the service industry, such as transportation agencies, souvenir shops, restaurants, hotels, and other.

The interviewees emphasize that the most significant reasons for bad cooperation or a lack of cooperation in Serbia are laziness, inadequate financing, bad communication, frequent change of power, lack of information. In order for Serbia to have more developed thematic routes, these segments of success need to be worked on first.

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# INNOVATIVE GUIDED TOURS OF SOFIA CITY AS A TOURIST EXPERIENCE: ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMERS' ON-LINE REVIEWS

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## Abstract

The aim of the paper is to study innovative city tours from a customers' perspective in the context of tourist experiences, value creation and customer satisfaction. The study refers to thirteen recently developed guided tours of Sofia city offered by five providers that are selected on the ground of their TripAdvisor ranking and the type of supply, including both "free" (tipbased) and paid tours. It is focused on identifying and analysing perceived value of the tours as revealed in the studied customers' on-line reviews. Results outline five main aspects in which people express their opinions that may be considered key dimensions or determinants of a valuable tour experience: 1) the guide's skills and personality; 2) enjoyable learning and deeper understanding; 3) local experience and discovery; 4) fun and entertainment; 5) freedom and flexibility. Conclusion summarises the paper contributions to understanding valuable tourist experiences, outlines the study limitations, and sketches possible future research directions.

Keywords: Guided city tours, Tourist experience, Perceived value, User generated content

## Introduction

Over the last several years the Bulgarian capital city has experienced dynamic development and has recently been distinguished as an emerging tourist destination on the international scene (Stone, 2018), with official numbers revealing 922,075 overnight visitors from abroad and 1.73 million nights spent by foreigners in 2018 (Sofia Tourism in Figures, 2019). Moreover, Sofia has been included in several European and world rankings of the most accessible and fastest-growing destination cities, mainly due to "a surprisingly lovely urban experience at shockingly reasonable prices" (www.priceoftravel.com/1979/european-backpacker-index#-Sofia\_Bulgaria).

A study by Dogramadjieva et al. (2018) has shown that recently observed changes are most visible in the rapidly growing numbers of foreign visitors, their changed profiles, and behav-

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ior patterns. A boom in individual visitors from abroad has been registered since 2016 when the low-cost carriers Ryanair and Wizzair accelerated their market penetration and started operating to more than 30 destinations from Sofia Airport. Additionally, the city's accessibility and tourists' awareness of the destination have been strongly affected by new technologies and possibilities for information exchange and on-line booking. As a result, Sofia has gradually become a major goal of the visit rather than a stopover and is increasingly visited for leisure and entertainment but not just for business as it used to be in the past. Important implications for the local (tourism) businesses are that regardless of the main purpose of visiting, tourists are more interested in local culture than before, and are looking for related services.

According to the same study (Dogramadjieva et al., 2018) considerable progress has been made in providing diversified services and new experiences to tourists. Although positive supply changes are still assessed as insufficient, they have strongly contributed to building Sofia's attractive tourism offer. The development of a number of "new" city tours of Sofia stands out among the main innovations in the local tourism productThey are operated by NGOs and business companies that do not belong to the traditional tourism industry. These organizations are not officially licensed for tour operating; they are created by people coming from other spheres of activity and implement a mixed revenue model by providing both "free" (tip-based) and paid tours. The oldest and largest of these tour providing organizations (the 365 Association) was established in 2010 while others have appeared only in the last 2-3 years. In terms of the type of operation and organizational culture, these new players on Sofia's tourism scene embody the model of free walking tours in different European cities as outlined by del Pilar et al. (2017) and Widtfeldt Meged and Zillinger (2018), and in the aspect of creativity are also similar to alternative guiding services in Budapest studied by Rátz (2016).

For a relatively short period of existence, above mentioned city tours have obtained great popularity among foreign visitors to Sofia that compose more than 98% of their attendees (Dogramadjieva et al., 2018). Reported demand in 2016 was 43% higher than the previous year, while the number of participants in 2017 tripled compared to 2016, and continued growing in 2018 (exceeding 150,000 attendances), though a slight decline has been observed in 2019. Thus, over the last several years customers attracted by the "new" city tours of Sofia have revealed much faster growth compared to the registered upturn in overnight visitors and nights spent by foreigners in the capital city, which outlines a clear trend of widening and deepening the cultural experience element of Sofia's tourism product.

Despite their considerable impact on the city's recent tourism development and apparent contribution to offered experiences and customers' satisfaction, these innovative guided tours have rarely been specifically investigated (Kazakov and Nikolova, 2015; Dogramadjieva et al., 2018) and have not yet been subjected to in-depth analysis with the reference to the demand side. This paper strives to fill the gap by studying selected "new" city tours of Sofia from a customers' perspective and discussing identified perceptions in the context of tourist experiences, value creation and customer satisfaction. The paper aims to outline those aspects that are revealed in the studied on-line reviews as key dimensions or determinants of the tour experience and to contribute to a deeper understanding of what makes tourist experiences valuable, particularly in regards to guided tours.

## Literature review

The concept of "experience economy" formulated by Pine and Gilmore (1998) has set a "new management paradigm which emphasizes the transition from service delivery to experience creation" (Tung and Brent Ritchie, 2011, p. 1371). Similarly, researchers' attention has been shifted from analyzing customer value and satisfaction with products and services to searching deeper insights into experiences. Being intangible, inherently personal and, therefore, more difficult to explore, experiences "touch" people, create higher value to them, and are generally considered the "next stage of economic value" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009).

Over the last twenty years offering experiences has undergone deep transformations that are conceptualized in different generations. The upturn of the "first-generation experiences" is dated to the late 1990s. These experiences are characterized by merely staged entertainment and fun while the "second generation experiences" are based on co-creation and take the individual as a starting point (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009).

From the modern tourists' standpoint, experiences should be context-related, authentic and balanced in terms of providers' control and customers' freedom for spontaneity and self-expression (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009). Drawing on Pine and Gilmore's concepts in the context of tourism, Sinclair-Maragh (2017) stresses that the new generation of travellers is in quest of fulfilling experiences and in order to create such experiences, entertainment might be essential but the focus should be put on engaging the visitors rather than entertaining them.

One specific sphere of interest with the reference to tourist experiences is that of guided tours, although the field is far from well-studied (Zillinger et al., 2012; Mykletun, 2013). Despite being often stereotyped and even ridiculed, guided tours are also viewed as an innovative and co-creative way of designing visitor experiences (Zillinger et al., 2012; Larsen and Widtfeldt Meged, 2013; Rátz, 2016). What else is of importance, is that designing experiences through guided tours is applicable everywhere, i.e. in destinations that are not "iconic". Generally, the guided tours and the guides themselves are significant creators of value as they "add meaning and enhance the visitors' experience and enjoyment of place and space" (Mykletun, 2013, p. 269). In doing so, the guides' main tools are their interpersonal and communication skills, as well as their explicit and tacit knowledge (Mykletun, 2013; Rátz, 2016).

Academic literature concerning guided tours in connection to experiences (Wynn, 2010; Hallin and Dobers, 2012; Guano, 2015) is oriented to the supply side (e.g. the process of operating the tours and producing the experience) rather than the demand side and the perceived customer value. On the other hand, a notable general trend in studying tourists' perceptions and behaviour is that of tackling the meaning of travel and the sense people make of visiting different places (Tung and Brent Ritchie, 2011; Yagi and Pearce, 2018). In this respect, the abundance of user-generated content (UGC) in various on-line media has proved to be a very useful source of information, despite the existing limitations and concerns (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2014). TripAdvisor is widely recognized as the largest stand-alone UGC web site within the travel sector that is powerful in creating either positive or negative word-of-mouth and is instrumental in changing the way in which consumers conduct research and plan travel (O'Connor, 2010; Barreda and Bilgihan, 2013; Litvin et al., 2018). Therefore, it is the most frequently studied source of tourism-related UGC, but most of the research refers to service quality in the hospitality business (mainly within the lodging setting) while experiences and tourist behaviour represent a relatively uncommon area of study (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2014).

# Methodology

This paper is focused on identifying and analysing the perceived experience value of the innovative guided tours of Sofia city as revealed in the studied on-line reviews posted on TripAdvisor in 2018. The tours were selected on the ground of their content, type of supply, and TripAdvisor ranking (Table 1). Only tours (and providers) ranked within the leading 12 positions among a total of 107 tour offers in Sofia listed on TripAdvisor as of April 2019 were included in the study. Guided tours and day trips from Sofia to other places in the country were excluded. Thus, a total of thirteen city tours of Sofia offered by five providers were selected. The tour providing organisations embrace three business companies and two non-profit entities that fall within the above described "new" players on Sofia's tourism scene. Seven of the tours are "free" (tip-based) and six operate on a fixed price. Only two tours are introductory in content while the rest are themed products targeting specific areas of customer interest such as traditional or alternative culture, communist heritage, green urban environment, and nightlife.

TripAdvisor rankings do not refer to separate tours but to the providing organisation. Therefore, two or more products of the same provider appear in Table 1 at one and the same position. Just two of the tours (Balkan Bites Free Food Tour and Sofia Graffiti Tour) are scored individually since their actual provider has registered separate companies to manage them.

Thematic group	Tour name	Type of organization	Revenue model	TripAdvisor ranking*	Number of reviews**
Introductory (history) tours	365 Free Sofia Tour	NGO	tip-based	1	501
	The feel of Sofia	company	tip-based	4	25
Traditional culture tours	365 Sofia 3-hour Bulgarian Culture tour	NGO	fixed price	1	39
	Balkan Bites Free Food Tour	company	tip-based	9	100
Alternative culture tours	Sofia Graffiti Tour	company	tip-based	8	26
	365 Sofia Alternative Tour	NGO	fixed price	1	10
Communist tours	365 Communist walking tour of Sofia	NGO	fixed price	1	48
	Sofia's Free Communist Tour	company	tip-based	11	7
	Sofia history communist tour in a classic Trabant	company	fixed price	11	8
Green tours	Free Sofia bike tour	NGO	tip-based	10	14
	Free Sofia hike tour	NGO	tip-based	10	16
Pub crawls	The New Sofia Pub Crawl	company	fixed price	12	44
	Sofia Pub Crawl Tour of Hidden Unique Bars	company	fixed price	12	11

Table 1. Studied innovative Sofia city tours by content, type of supply, and TripAdvisor ranking

\* TripAdvisor ranking among 107 tours offered in Sofia as of April 2019

\*\* Only TripAdvisor reviews posted in 2018 were studied

A total of 849 on-line reviews written in English by customers from 57 countries (including Bulgaria – 4% of all reviews) were extracted and subjected to both manual coding and automated manifest content analysis based on synonyms frequency count. The relatively limited number of studied reviews (posted only on TripAdvisor and only in 2018) is acceptable considering the exploratory design of the study. Moreover, it is manageable for manual data handling which allows for deeper mining and drawing of finely granulated details regarding customers' perceptions and assessments. On the other hand, the sample size is large enough to produce meaningful results in the form of frequency tables and word clouds using the trial version of the Nvivo 12 data analysis software.

# Results

The study has outlined those aspects of the innovative Sofia city tours that customers highlight in their on-line reviews as determinants of the experience since they share opinions on what has strongly impressed them without being guided or restricted in regards to predetermined issues of importance. Performed manual coding and in-depth analysis of the comments make it possible to shape five main aspects in which the tour participants evaluate their experiences and reveal the perceived factors of value creation and satisfaction. These aspects are: 1) the guide's skills and personality; 2) enjoyable learning and deeper understanding; 3) local experience and discovery; 4) fun and entertainment; 5) freedom and flexibility (Fig. 1).

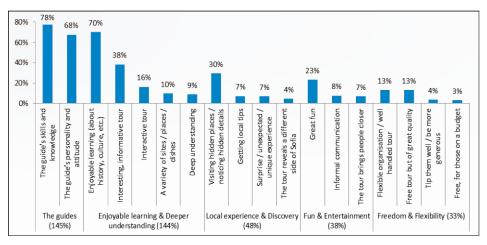


Figure 1. Main themes and categories related to customer value and satisfaction identified by manual coding in the studied on-line reviews (share of cases)

The relative weight of individual factors shown in Fig. 1 reveals the share of coded explicit statements out of all studied cases (reviews). The group percentages are calculated as a sum of the shares within the group, thus indicating the overall significance of the different aspects from the customers' perspective. Additionally, the word cloud based on automated word frequency count (Fig. 2) shows similar results, though presented in a different form that is nice to look at but more difficult to interpret.



Figure 2. Word frequency in the studied on-line reviews based on automated synonyms count by Nvivo 12 data analysis software

## Tour guide's skills and personality

Study results clearly outline the great significance of tour guides for creating value and memorable experiences. As both Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 indicates, this is the central theme identified in all comments with a slight prevalence of those stressing the guide's skills and knowledge (78%) over those emphasizing their personality and attitude (68%). The guide's key role is apparent in all kinds of tours but their in-depth knowledge and professional skills are most appreciated in the reviews regarding introductory and communist tours while their individual characteristics appear more important (than knowledge) in tours focused on nature and nightlife. In fact, almost always the combination of personal and professional guide's features is what creates the experience and makes it memorable. This is neatly explained by an American tourist:

"Everyone knows walking tours are made or broken by your tour guide. Doesn't matter what city you're in or what the sites are or how good the food is, right? A lame duck guide produces a lukewarm experience. And a witty, kind, engaging one produces memorable experiences [...] Our guide knew when to lead discussion, when to give us historical background, and when to let us goof off on our own. She knows her stuff and knows how to manage a group. She's no amateur."

The words most frequently used to describe tour guides include: "great" "knowledgeable", "friendly", "funny", "excellent", "fantastic", "helpful", and "passionate" (Fig. 2). Customers are impressed not only by the guides' abilities to tell stories and "put history into words that everyone is able to understand" but also by their skills to interact with strangers of different nationalities and cultural contexts, and most importantly, "use humour as a universal way to connect with people". It is also touching for the tourists to see "young people talk with so much passion about their city and country". Sometimes, the background of a guide is pointed out in the comments stressing his/her emotional effect on the audience: "the tour was brilliantly led by [an actress], and her enthusiasm for the subject really showed" (Romania); "you really get the feeling that leading these tours isn't a job so much as a pleasure for him" (Korea); "after this tour [with an actress guide] we have fallen in love" (unknown nationality).

#### Enjoyable learning and deeper understanding

Above described professional and personal features of the tour guides are largely expressed in the fact that they produce experiences of enjoyable learning, deeper understanding, local discovery, and fun as important outcomes from the customers' perspective (Fig. 1). In the studied reviews, the most prominent of all these is enjoyable learning (70%) which usually goes together with interesting information (about history, culture, art, local cuisine, daily life, etc.) provided with honesty and sense of humour, personal touch, and interactive approach.

The majority of tourists do consider that the joyful and cheerful style most of the tours are performed in is a very attractive way to discover the city even if it is not a top tourist destination: "[the guide] did a very good job, she told many funny stories about the city and made us love the city at second sight, because Sofia never love at first sight" (unknown nationality). There are just a few isolated cases of customers who are rather unhappy with such a style: "the guide seemed a little too focused on making jokes and was very prone to overacting, which I personally found detracted from the experience" (Korea).

On the other hand, it is highlighted in some comments that the guides are honest but not just cheerleaders: "they even tell you the not so positive but real stuff" (a Dutch tourist). It is often stressed in the reviews that the guides tell jokes and harmonize the tour content with their family stories and personal memories which makes the experience more authentic and engaging. Such an approach "really adds another layer of understanding of Bulgaria's past and present" (unknown nationality). This is particularly valid of the communist tours that are generally considered fascinating and even funny, despite the touchy subject. Moreover, tourists appreciate the fair and balanced views on communism presented by the guides who are "not only focusing on the bad but also the positive side and why things developed the way they did" (Belgium) which is "so helpful to a Londoner like me who only has a westerner's view on communism" (UK), and thus they "allow people make their own opinion on the system" (unknown nationality).

Interactivity is another feature of the studied tours (especially of those run by the 365 Association) that strongly contributes to enjoyable learning. It is emphasized by many customers who like that the guides get them involved with quizzes and role plays, implement a candy reward system for answers, and even sing and dance with the group. Interactivity is appreciated at all times, even in bad weather which is essential, considering that some of the tours are run every day, year-round: "[...] it made a 2-hour walk in the cold and rain such a pleasure" (Australia).

While providing interesting information in a nice and entertaining way is relevant to all tours, one of them (The Feel of Sofia) is highly valued for digging deeper into history and creating more sophisticated experiences: "It really feels like an adventure, because you get to know facts, details and stories, which you can't find on the Internet, because they are usually buried in dust-covered books in libraries" (Bulgaria). Deeper understanding is also associated with other tours that are specialized in content, such as the Sofia Graffiti Tour: "You walk the same streets, see the same buildings but the story is different when told by a street artist" (Bulgaria).

#### Local experience and discovery

The next group of factors creating customer value and satisfaction is that of local experience and discovery provided by the studied city tours of Sofia. This group covers experiences related to visiting authentic places and noticing hidden details, getting local tips, being surprised by unexpected findings, as well as seeing the city from a different perspective. Altogether these factors are explicitly mentioned in nearly half of the studied comments (Fig. 1). Visiting hidden authentic places and noticing details that would have been missed without the tour, stand out among others (30%). Such aspects of the experience are discourse with the reference to all tours without an exception but some offers are definitely perceived as gate-openers to hidden gems.

The latter is especially valid of the pub crawl tours that ensure not only a discovery of secret places and local nightlife but also a surprising touch to the story behind the bars, since "this is not your typical pub crawl" (UK); "it's more about the cool bars and less about the beer" (New Zealand); "we went to bars and clubs that you would never find walking around the city" (UK); "the places we went to were really amazing and totally different from what you may expect" (Australia); "they brought us to the real Bulgarian culture and it was great to see how open and friendly this culture is" (unknown nationality).

Alternative and traditional culture tours, along with the Free Bike Tour, are also widely associated with local experience and discovery as they take visitors off the beaten track – to side streets, small restaurants, quirky businesses, parks that are usually not visited by tourists, etc. This is clearly emphasized in some comments: "you definitely see the city from a totally new, unexpected and exciting point of view" (France); "[...] unusual spots in Sofia - it was a very good, interesting and non-touristic experience" (Germany); "thanks for giving us the chance to enjoy something unique, that is usually given when u travel with locals!!!" (Italy).

Another aspect of "localness" which is specifically stressed in a smaller but still considerable number of reviews is that when attending a guided city tour, customers benefit from local tips and tricks regarding places to go and things to do in and around Sofia that guides share with them. In most cases these recommendations are not perceived as advertising but as genuine advice given by a local and are found very helpful, not only for a short stay in the city but even to start a longer trip in Bulgaria.

#### Fun and entertainment

A relatively small, though a significant group of factors creating customer value and satisfaction refers to just having fun and entertainment that is tightly related to meeting new people and open communication which brings people on a guided tour closer. Altogether, these aspects of the experience are identified in 38% of the studied reviews (Fig. 1).

Reasonably, mere fun is mostly associated with the pub crawls, since socializing and entertainment is the core concept of these tours. As mentioned above, in the case of Sofia they are not just about drinking but also about discovering unique hidden places and local culture, which definitely adds value to them according to the customers' reviews. However, having fun is not underestimated and going for a great night out with nice guides and people from mixed nationalities is what the comments emphasize, as well as that everyone gets easily involved, even older people and/or those traveling alone: "After a couple of drinks, everyone talks to each other" (Belgium). In general, these tours are recommended as "fun for all ages and great for solo travellers, friends or couples" (Australia). Yet again, considering the "classical" perception of pub crawls, a tourist from the Philippines warns: "Don't join if you're out to get smashed; do join if you'd like to meet a few new people over drinks and a bit of walking".

Despite not being the central theme of the comments, having fun and entertainment is highlighted with reference to all other tours, too. This is prominent particularly in the case of those communist tours that include a Trabant ride in their itinerary, as well as the circuits characterized by a higher degree of interactivity and informal communication. Connecting with people from all over the world and establishing a rather personal relationship with the guides is mentioned as an important aspect of the fun experience, especially by solo travellers. In this respect, the tours are valued for bringing people together and creating the feeling of "walking around with a local friend".

## Freedom and flexibility

The last group of factors creating customer value and satisfaction refers to perceived freedom and flexibility provided by the studied innovative city tours of Sofia. The aspects of "just-showup" and "pay-as-you-wish" are mostly deliberated in the reviews along with some additional comments regarding the tours delivery system and revenue model. These factors affect customers psychologically, letting them feel free and independent to a much higher extent compared to conventional city tours. Therefore, they are partly valued as an experience per se but are appreciated rather for supporting and enhancing the "real" experience of enjoyable learning, local discovery, connecting with people and having fun.

The majority of clients are very positive about the flexible organization of the tours, stressing that they are easy to attend and not too crowded: "This couldn't have been easier - simply show up 5-10 mins before the tour starts, join a group and you're off" (UAE). As in most of the cases there is no registration required and people can leave the tour at any time or join at any point, thoughtful planning and the availability of several guides to split the crowd into manageable groups is highlighted: "Quite many tourists from all corners of the globe gathered for the tour but there were enough guides to quickly form a few smaller groups and off we went" (Austria).

As for the "free" aspect of the tours, it is considered in one way or another in 20% of the studied reviews. Even when denoting "free" as a feature of a tour, people rarely see it merely as a bargain. Instead, they mostly focus on the quality of the experience, which to some of them is surprisingly high, given that there is no fixed price. Many tourists are not surprised, since they are well acquainted with the system of walking tours: "When we visit a new city the first thing we do is go on the "free tour", not that it is free but because they have to work extremely hard to earn your tip at the end" (UK). Experienced travellers often stress the high level of the services provided in Sofia compared to other cities and countries: "I have done free walking tours in many other European cities, and I have to say that Sofia is up with one of the best" (Australia).

Particularly, the innovativeness of the Balkan Bites Free Food Tour is emphasized in the reviews, as many tourists state they have attended guided food tours elsewhere but have not even heard of a free food tour. They are both surprised and delighted with the concept, especially with the reference to the variety and quality of restaurants and dishes included: "All this for "free"? I was very impressed [...]" (Australia). Criticism is also expressed, though by a very few customers: "This is not really a culinary experience but rather more of an advertisement for remote restaurants" (Israel).

Considering the overall high quality of "free" tours in Sofia and their satisfaction with the experience, some customers openly call for bigger tips to be given because the guides deserve it, as well as in order to keep providing organizations running: "kindly remember that these kids do it for free so… a tip would be the least possible method of expressing appreciation" (UK); "I support this business model, which runs a project on donations making nevertheless an impact for the tourism of the city" (Greece).

# Conclusion

In the "experience economy", offering experiences rather than mere products and services is widely seen as a competitive advantage and an efficient way for companies and destinations to distinguish themselves on the saturated market. Therefore, development of new tourism products and services is increasingly studied and managed in terms of a novelty not only with the reference to content, delivery system, revenue model, etc. but also in the context of experience creation, perceived value, and customer satisfaction.

Hopefully, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of what makes tourist experiences valuable, particularly in regards to guided tours. It is focused on innovative city tours of Sofia through identifying and analysing their perceived value as revealed in the studied on-line reviews. The research findings outline five main aspects in which people express their opinions that may be considered key dimensions or determinants of a valuable tour experience: 1) the guide's skills and personality; 2) enjoyable learning and deeper understanding; 3) local experience and discovery; 4) fun and entertainment; 5) freedom and flexibility. Negative aspects of the tour experience are found in just 2.5% of all studied reviews, considering mainly the tour concept and delivery system (choice of bars and restaurants, not enough local foods and drinks offered, large groups, fast pace, insufficient information provided), and occasionally – the guide's skills and attitude (overacting in making jokes, not paying enough attention to the group, asking for a tip at the end).

The study results confirm the central role of tour guides as value creators and experience designers, which has been outlined in previous academic publications (Zillinger et al., 2012; Mykletun, 2013; Rátz, 2016). Additionally, our results reveal that the tours delivery system and revenue model including both "free" and paid offers contribute to creating value as they affect customers psychologically, letting them feel free and independent to a much higher extent compared to conventional city tours. However, the "real" experience is mainly seen in enjoyable learning, local discovery, connecting with people, and having fun. All of the studied tours provide a combination of these aspects, though in different proportions, depending on the tour content and thematic focus.

This study is exploratory in nature, both in terms of subject area and methodology applied. Its main limitations refer to the relatively small sample of investigated on-line reviews, as well as to the data processing, restricted to manual coding and automated manifest content analysis. In order to achieve higher credibility of results, future research should be based on larger samples covering longer periods and/or more sources of UGC. This, however, would require better utilization of appropriate software products for qualitative information analysis.

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# CULTURAL ROAD "YOUNG PEOPLE ON ROAD OF THE HISTORY"

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## Abstract

The great challenge for a tourist offers in the modern world is the growing need for new tourist attractions and products on destinations. The tourism industry is adapting to the requirements of the modern tourist market, by introducing innovations to the existing destinations and activities. For the purpose of better tourist presentation and consumption of cultural heritage assets, it is necessary to encourage the development of tourist cultural routes that would be applicable in tourism practice. Numerous elements of culture on the territory of Loznica, such as material and spiritual culture, institutions and events, represent a significant potential for the development of a cultural tourism economy. However, as the Republic of Serbia does not yet have developed cultural tourism, because the resources of culture have not been turned into designed cultural and tourism products, such as designed cultural routes. Loznica has only potentials from which it is possible to create a cultural route as an important segment of the cultural industry. There are some good initiatives and cultural tourism projects, but they are still at the level of the individual, without the continuous marketing and synergy of all relevant actors. The aim of this paper is to determine the key values, as well as the possibilities for cultural and historical values to be the basis for creating a cultural route that will aim to educate young people and to show them interestingly the history of this region and include them in the creation of the mentioned route.

*Keywords:* Cultural route, Tourism, Cultural and historical heritage, Loznica, Young people, History

## Introduction

What makes one locality, settlement or region attractive, and worthy for visiting, most certainly are its natural beauties, however, its anthropogenic values, which are a testimony of human endeavour through different historic areas are also important. Cultural heritage reflected in different segments of society with its specific styles is also an inevitable element of one touristic region. With its natural and man-made treasures, Loznica sets itself as a separate and

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rounded tourist region. The primary group of touristic treasures in the region is connected to hydrographic characteristics of rivers and lakes and beauties of local landscapes based upon relief diversity. A stable foundation can also be seen in its historic heritage. Loznica is located on the banks of the Drina river, the natural border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. History of the region is also significant and we can see that once we set our eyes on remaining historic structures which are a testimony of the years gone by. Furthermore, the people of diverse ethnicities and cultures that either settled there or were only passing through also left significant marks on the region. The region is predominantly consisted of small villages which are filled with good people and great hosts, who protect their tradition and pass it down from one generation to the next one. They make the region even more unique. Besides natural beauties, monuments and memorial complex are also very attractive for tourists and are very important for tourism in Loznica. It is also noted that the number of tourists interested in the history and socio-geographic features of a particular region is increasing.

Loznica is a region of great natural beauty and numerous historic and cultural monuments and touristic events could be significantly more developed. Modern society should pull proper moves to represent Loznica to potential visitors because it is a region that has a lot to offer and people cannot find those segments anywhere else in the world. Based on all that has previously been mentioned we can conclude that establishing a route called "Young on the roads of history" is an ideal manner to promote cultural properties found in Loznica and for them to get the well-deserved spot on the tourist map of the region.

Once the route is established it will enable young people to create its content and participate in its realisation. "Young on the roads of history" would include visiting the localities that honour heroes of great wars who died in the battles that took place in the region namely memorial complex Tekeris, memorial complex Gucevo, a monument with ossuary in the Draganic village and village Prnjavor which also has an ossuary and a chapel. The tour would also include visiting numerous monuments of great historical figures who lost their lives in the Great War and World War II. The aim of this paper is to propose the tour based on reviewing of the touristic potentials and values of heritage sites of Loznica region.

## Literature review

The concept of culture is difficult to convey, as it consists of a broad set of tangible and intangible resources. These resources include historical resources, ethnic tangible and intangible characteristics, physical site characteristics and characteristics of the surrounding environment, visible human activities, natural factors and intangibles assets (Kafouros, 2015).

The fact is that tourism as an industry has a short history and in recent decades tourism industry is developing faster and faster. As a matter of fact, today we can talk about tourism as one of the most important economic branches worldwide, which generates about 9% of global GDP (World Tourism Organisation, 2015). Tourists in the past were inexperienced, uninformed, homogeneous, unspontaneous, predictable, they travelled in groups, ran away from the daily routine, they were addicted and they looked only for passive holidays. On the other hand, modern tourists are experienced, informed, heterogeneous, spontaneous, unpredictable, individuals, independent and they are looking for new experiences and other contents rather than only taking a rest during a holiday (Vrtiprah, 2006). Therefore, modern tourists make decisions on the choice of destination depending on whether the offer of destination meets with their needs, as they are looking that this offer can provide them an unforgettable experience (Vrtiprah, 2006).

Modern tourists want to get to know the local culture, they want to come in contact with local people, get to know national folklore, gastronomy, visit festivals, museums, galleries and so on. Many destinations face the problem of how to increase the total tourist offer, while the same offer adapts fully the wishes and needs of potential visitors. Certainly, tourism destinations which are rich with cultural and historical heritage, as also attractive locations for hold-ing various cultural events (from concerts and shows of up to museums and galleries) have a huge head start to develop an even wider range of tourist offer.

Speaking about cultural tourism we talk about the concept, which combines the concepts of culture and tourism, and which one is able to relate to the material and immaterial cultural heritage with tourism offer.

Cultural tourism consists of many elements including: a) a visit to the historic attractions and destinations, as well as attendance at traditional festivals, b) journey motivated by a desire for tasting national, regional and local food and drink, c) monitoring of traditional sport events and participation in local holiday activities, and d) a visit farms, factories, artisan workshops and more (Vrtiprah, 2006).

When talking about the specific notion of the cultural route, it is usually considered to be a set travelling direction consisted of roads with significant landscapes, historical, geological or natural values, and includes sightseeing and interpretation of the localities which are within the route (Vukašinović 2015).

Culture roads are one of the leading and increasingly more popular trends in the cultural tourism of today. The reason for that is the unique nature of this touristic product which connects several attractions in one authentic destination, be that in one or in multiple countries. Within the routes, there are a variety of events such as festivals, conferences, evenings of poetry, exhibits, concerts, plays, fairs, artistic workshops and many more.

All events make up a harmonised unity. Their significance is multifunctional and useful in many different ways for the local community. In terms of forming a route, there are no bystanders since people are in a way obliged to actively participate in the process. Benefits can be quite significant, but the most invaluable importance is reflected in the moral component of guarding the cultural treasures and heritage for posterity. Presence of the culture route undoubtedly leads to a better image of a particular country in the world and it is also one of its more important benefits and very important element of the development of a region.

It is furthermore important to point out that numerous political events, natural disasters, migrations and modern trends have influenced the cultural heritage and therefore changed the character of the cultural routes.

One of the examples of the expansion and diversification of the offer in cultural tourism is the forming of the theme cultural itineraries or so-called Culture routes with a specific theme. Termes Culture routes, culture roads and heritage roads are considered to be synonyms and define a unique complex of connected facilities of cultural heritage on a particular geographic territory (Council of Europe, 2009).

In the latest touristic world trends popularity of cultural tourism, as well as an increase of interest in connections between natural and cultural heritage with the life of local communities are more than obvious (Richards, 2000; Richards 2007).

The route is therefore specific type of touristic product, be it linear or circular, it consists of a series of destinations and localities which are connected by a specific theme and form of the route, it is usually marked parallel to setting up a touristic infrastructure along the line of cultural route (Kaczmarek et al., 2005).

Not all cultural routes are automatically a touristic product. In order to become touristic, cultural route must be commercialised. The basis of it can be found in different needs of the tourists, for instance, obtaining knowledge, leisure, religious experience, exploration, excitement (Hadžic and Dragin, 2010).

It is quite notable the fact that international organizations, for example the Council of Europe and UNESCO have taken the initiative to design and promote transnational cultural itineraries. In particular, and the Council of Europe created the program of the Europe an Cultural Routes (Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe) with a view to promoting the common European cultural heritage and to encourage cooperation among States through cross-border cultural exchange and dissemination of ideas (Moulin and Boniface, 2001; Moira and Parthenis, 2011).

What sets all successful routes apart are the following facts: a route is based on a specific theme, the brand is recognisable and multiple attractions which almost always include natural elements. All successful routes must have an impeccable infrastructure, developed system of route mapping and good promotion.

The system of management and marketing is institutionalised and there is a special organisation that coordinates these activities within the culture route (www.dgt.uns.ac.rs/download/ menkulturo3.pdf).

Cultural Routes can be divided into thematic cultural routes that include a specific thematic element and in historical cultural routes including monuments and cultural elements of a given period or season and in mixed cultural routes, which include cultural elements of the overall cultural identity of a place. Also, beyond the above mentioned distinction, cultural routes, can be distinguished in accordance with their width and can be divided into urban cultural routes, concerning monuments and cultural elements of a city-urban area, local cultural routes, which are concentrated in a limited geographical area and in hyper-regional cultural routes which apply to wider geographical area, especially when it concerns routes with precise and exact thematic core (Papageorgiou and Gantouna, 2012).

During the designation of cultural routes, special attention should be given to thematic, poetic and rhetoric of the "narrative description" of the route. The choice of the theme of a cultural route demands the formation of a multidisciplinary team (historians, archaeologists, etc.) and at the same time an approach which studies in depth the history and archeology of a place, the historical whereabouts of civilization, the character of the place and the location the selected "sites". The poetic behind cultural route concerns the aesthetic and conceptual elements of which is combined and the rhetoric refers to verbal means that capture the meaning (titles, knowledge, brochures, signs) and on the applied pedagogical methods during the process (participation, observation, exploration) (Karavasili and Mikelakis, 2011).

Significance of the culture routes is reflected in nurturing the spirit of tolerance and solidarity, exchange of experiences between various countries, as well as participation of regional and national institutions, individuals, groups and volunteering organisations. Establishing culture routes initiates development of tourism, which contributes to the overall economic development and strengthening of the region, including job creation. It is also important to point out that the more public figures, locations, attractions, events and people are involved the more the route itself gains in its importance (Vukašinović, 2015).

In order for one route to be established and adopted, certain standards must be complied with and adapted, so that they provide the level of quality of all the parts of the route. In that sense, renovation, reconstruction, advancement and revival of the passive cultural contents is necessary in order to create recognisable brand of the touristic destination. In 1987 the Council of Europe had started the program which is involved in creating the culture routes motivated by the desire to promote European history and culture. Nowadays there are 38 Culture roads in Europe and they combine tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Their importance and popularity are reflected in the fact that 40% of overall European tourism comes about within those routes (Rudaković, 2002). The goals which are achieved by creating cultural routes are reflected in attracting visitors, networking and connecting cultural destinations and resources, active participation of local communities, protection and conservation of heritage and promotion of sustainable tourism (Stanojlović, 2009; Stanojlović et al., 2011).

Charting a framework of cultural routes in a specific area, during the developmental process is obliged to take into consideration the local community and make the native people and its productive practices to get involved. In fact, apart from the visitors, it is addressed to the local residents and managers of tourism resources, especially in places where mass tourism has led to the partial destruction of important historical cities and monuments. Therefore, a well-designed development plan of a region through tourism, may contribute to the development of initiatives by local regulators for the maintenance of the local culture, enhancing the protection of cultural and natural resources and to support local sustainable development (Karavasili and Mikelakis, 2011).

# Localities of culture route "Young on the roads of history"

The idea behind the possibility for establishing a touristic culture rout on the territory of Loznica municipality was created first and foremost of all out of love for cultural treasures of Serbia and Podrinje county. Considering the fact that Loznica with its surroundings has the abundance of monuments, it was not so hard to conclude that there is a great potential for forming the route.

The fact that the founders of history and culture in the region had been numerous military personnel, events and battles that took place on the grounds in two World Wars, was the one



**Figure 1.** Tourist map of the municipality of Loznica Source: https://vodickrozloznicu.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/togl-informator-2017-srpski.pdf

that brought the conclusion that they are the most precious treasure which could be used for touristic purposes.

The beginning of the route "Young on the roads of history" would be in the "Memorial Gallery of Battle on the river Drina" which is located in Banja Koviljaca. "Memorial Gallery" is a museum exhibition set to commemorate Serbian defence in the World War I and the battle on the river Drina which is nowadays unjustly forgotten. That is exactly what inspired young enthusiasts to found Civil society of the same name in 2012. The idea was to establish the exhibition which would bear a resemblance to the battle itself and the events that took place in the surroundings of Banja Koviljaca. Gallery was established the same year in the building that used to be the old post-office and the setup which was placed on the surface area of 68 square meters was temporary. In 2014 the exhibition was expanded to 110 square meters and it was enriched with the additional artefacts. Copies of the documents from the War, schemes and photographs from the era and especially the photographs from the Battle on the river Drina were displayed. A 3D object of Serbian and Austro-hungarian army, such as armament, military equipment and uniform replicas, were displayed in the showcases. Within the souvenir's shops, visitors can buy books relating to the Battle on the river Drina. Visitors are guided by very passionate and dedicated tour-guide volunteering on the project. In the guest exhibitions hall exhibition "The Drinska Divizija", which is about organisation, formation and combat actions of Drina division of the Serbian army from the World War I, is set. The exhibition is consisted of 24 themed display panels which, in a chronological manner, represent basic data about the unit in which warriors from western Serbia were fighting.

After visiting the gallery, the culture road would continue towards memorial-ossuary on the Gučevo mountain which above Banja Koviljaca. Mountain Gucevo has found its way in history after the World War I when the first trench battle on the world was held on its slopes. High atop the mountain, there is a 16-meter tall monument-ossuary shaped like a pyramid, which raised for the soldiers who died in the Battle for Gucevo in 1914. The monument and ossuary were raised in 1929.

Remains of both Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers were buried in the ossuary which is in fact 16,85 meters tall and made of artificial stone. The base of the pyramid is a square. Its overhangs reach all four sides of the square forming a cross-shape structure. On the top of the monument, we can see the statue of the two-headed eagle with spread wings carved of white marble. On the west side of the pyramid, there is a big laurel wreath which is also carved out of white marble having a cross in the centre. Below the pyramid, there is a thumb covered with concrete block. On the left and on the right side of the pyramid there are two concrete benches with lion-shaped footings. Memorial ossuary is the cultural property of great importance.

On the monument itself there is a sarcophagus with an inscription "Gucevo heroes from the Battle of 1914." and below it, there is an architrave containing the following verses by Njegos "Blessed is he who lives forever, for he had a reason to be born." Behind the monument, we can see the remainings of the trenches from World War I. Surroundings of the monument are nicely arranged for the visitors to enjoy the view on the Podrinje, Pocerina, Semberija and Majevica.

Visitors can then go to the city of Loznica in which they can visit Jadar Museum. In the city centre in the building of the former apothecary in the year 1987. Jadar Museum has officially been opened and it is nowadays one of the finest examples of the city-style architecture in this part of Serbia. Visitors can see plenty of artefacts from all segments of both life and work of the people of the area - from the prehistoric era to 1950es. Besides archaeological, ethnological, historical, art and medal collection, the museum has more than 1.500 documents

and photographs. Furthermore, people can see not only the regular exhibition but every year there are around ten new ones. The museum participates in commemorating important dates, events and historical figures, for instance, Momcilo Gavrić, the youngest soldier in World War I, which is especially important in honouring the Battle of Cer and Battle of Gucevo.

Jadar museum can be quite significant as a part of culture route "Young on the roads of history" because of the educational role it can and should provide for young people. Inclusion of exhibitions dedicated to events related to the mountain Cer and Gucevo, including all other World War I events, which took place in the region, would be very significant not only for the museum but also for attracting young people who are interested in learning about their national history and later interpret it to posterity.

After visiting the Jadar Museum visitors would then be able to go to the native library "Vuk Karadzic" in Loznica where they could hear the story of Momcilo Gavric, the youngest soldier from World War I. The library is the oldest cultural institution in Loznica, founded in 1868. Today it is a great example of modern information and educational institution. Besides its primary occupation, the library is set to promote the culture and also organising high-quality diverse programs. The main objective is to nurture a passion for reading and to promote proper care for books, library and all other forms of enlightening and cultural advancement. Throughout the entire year, the library hosts a variety of cultural events such as book nights, concerts, exhibitions, tribunes, lectures and plays which enable the locals to meet the most prominent artists.

Memorial-complex Tekeris would be the final destination of the culture route "Young on the roads of history". The complex itself is a memorial dedicated to the battle of Cer, which took place in the period 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1914 between Austro-Hungarian and Serbian army. The above-mentioned battle was victorious for the Serbian army and can easily be defined as a masterpiece of the art of war. As an extraordinary example of transitioning from defensive to offensive strategy, it is to this day studied on the top military academies including the American West Point. This was the first allies' victory during the war. Fourteen years later the remains of the diseased Serbian soldiers and 28th Prague regiment were gathered and laid to rest in ossuary on Tekeris. Ossuary was build based on the plan and the design of a Russian architect Sergey Bagenski. Above the ossuary, there is a 1000cm pyramid-shaped monument. On the top of the monument, we can see carved eagle holding in its beak the laurel wreath, the symbol of victory, which was poured in Germany in 1927.

On the front side of the monument there is a shield with cross and ocili (fire-runs) and a Royal Crown, and next to it the date 18th August 1914 was inscribed. Below the coat of arms dedication "Your deeds are immortal" is fashioned. On the monuments postament, there are five tombstones with dedications. The one in the middle is dedicated to monuments revelling, and the remaining ones are dedicated to Duke Radomir Putnik, Duke Stepa Stepanovic, 28<sup>th</sup> Prague regiment and our soldiers. The monument was unveiled by King Alexandar I Karadjordjevic on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1928, also known as Vidovdan. On the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Cer, four busts were added to the complex. All of them are of the important Dukes, Duke Stepa Stepanović, Duke Radomir Putnik; Duke Zivojin Mišić and Duke Petar Bojović. When marking the anniversary of the Battle of Cer in 2014 busts of King Peter I Karadjordjević and King Alexander I Karadjordjević were also added to the monument complex and furthermore, the new exhibit called "The Battle of Cer" was set up.

Besides all previously mentioned localities, culture routes will also include monuments raised in honor of Duke Stepa Stepanovic high atop Loznica as well as the monument of Momcilo Gavrić which was raised in 2019.

# Suggestions for establishing and enriching the culture route "Young people on the road of history"

In order to include and form quality culture route, reconstruction and restoration of particular objects are necessary as well as their reactivation in touristic purposes. Firstly, it is necessary to set up the proper signalling system in order to connect all the objects of the culture route. It is also necessary to set up proper information boards which will draw visitors attention with its interesting content and provide them with all the required information about the object and all the relevant stories connected to it.

The theme of almost every culture route is complex in its character, and it is therefore insufficient to merely visit the sights and locations. It would be rather desirable to hire and include young volunteers who would re-enact historic scenes as accurately as possible. It would also be great to include plays and art performances on the localities in order to present the events in an interesting and faithful manner to the visitors. The target audience of the culture route could potentially be young people who would find out something more about their history and their own people. Besides them, visitors and culture tourists, who are naturally interested in culture and history, could also be given the opportunity to feel the spirit of the old times and get acquainted with the people from the area in a quite different and unique manner. Senior citizens mustn't be forgotten because they could share their knowledge with younger generations and visitors. It is a fantastic manner for them to be included in the promotion of the stories that might not be written in books but are nonetheless interesting.

Considering that culture route "Young on the roads of history" would connect locations which aren't that far apart from each other, but which are within one touristic region, in case of Loznica municipality, guests would stay on location for one or two days. Accommodation capacities of different types and categories, which exist on the Loznica territory, are most definitely well equipped for visitors and guests. In order to prolong their stay in the region, visitors should be offered additional content.

In that sense, Loznica with small towns next to it, like Tršić, monastery Tronoša, Banja Koviljača, and many other locations, definitely have an abundant and unique touristic offer.

A specific offer of cultural content on the Loznica territory is solid. However, when it comes to establishing the culture route the offer could be enriched. For instance, creating the event "Podrinje history school", which would become trade-mark of Loznica on a national and regional level, would most certainly be beneficial. That type of event would be of complex artistic, musical and drama character and it would include the entire city and local community in its realisation. Besides, organising a variety of different courses (which do exist to a certain extent) would also encourage raising awareness of culture to the young and overall population. Institutions and organisations which are engaged in cultural endeavors (museum, gallery, library) could be involved in creating different content, young population could also become a part of the endeavor in the following manner: participation in calligraphy workshops, souve-nir manufacturing, creating paintings and many different arts and crafts projects and making films which would all be used for the purposes of tourism.

Finally, including preschool and primary school children in as many cultural activities, workshops and visits to cultural heritage could play a significant role in developing the sense of beauty and encourage their personal development while teaching them about significant historic figures and events that left their mark on the history of the local area. Culture route "Young on the roads of history" could inspire children to become part of the local history by leaving their stamp on it.

A positive example of the established cultural route dedicated to the First World War is a cultural route "Rovereto, on the trail of history" in Italy. The "Rovereto, on the trail of history" cultural route presents trekking in battlefields, through the forts, trenches and tunnels of World War I. Walking along the Path of Peace in Trentino tourists will visit some symbolic places of the First World War, an event that changed the lives of millions of people.

The Path of Peace traverses scenes of war events, so that excursionists can see the scenario of World War in Trentino. This cultural route runs for three days and runs between March and December. Visitors visit the Italian War Museum for three days, the largest institution in the world dedicated to World War. Then Castel Veneto, a Venetian fortress that protected the city during the domination of the Republic of Venice. Tourists will see collections of weapons, relics, documents and testimonies of the war in Trentino, from armed conflicts to the heroic deeds of civilians interned in the faraway regions of the empire. Then tourists can pay homage to the fallen at the memorial of Castel Dante that houses the remains of over twenty thousand soldiers, which can be identified with the memorial-ossuary on the Gucevo mountain and the Memorial- complex in Tekeris. After that visitors will go through a short walk - marked with quotes by the great men of peace in Italian and international history. The next day, visitors climb the highest peaks of the mountain that follow the course of battles fought in this area and from there enjoy beautiful vistas. Ascending to the top of the mountain, tourists can visit some of the tunnels used by the Austrian army during the war. At sunset, tourists will be served by an excellent dinner with local produce, and in the morning they will wake up early in the heart of the mountain, where they can still see vestiges of war (https://www.visitrovereto.it/en/enjoy/cultural-routes/rovereto-on-the-trail-of-history/).

# **Benchmarking analysis**

Benchmarking is a technique of comparative analysis of one's business, which serves to improve the business of the company and is an indispensable technique in strategic management at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Čerović, 2009). This technique defines different ways that reflect the essence of this very useful technique in strategic tourism management. One definition is: Benchmarking is the continuous process of identifying, understanding, and adapting a company's best practice products, services, equipment, and practices to improve its business (Harrington, 1996).

In order to promote the potential of cultural route "Young people on the road of history", a concise analysis of the cultural route "Rovereto, on the trail of history" was made. The aim of the analysis is to show the utilization of the cultural potentials in order to find an appropriate model of tourism development of the cultural product of the cultural route, mentioned earlier in the paper.

Looking at both of these cultural routes, it is concluded that both have a lot in common and similar. Taking this as a good basis, there are some good examples of practice that could be adopted and used by the potential cultural route "Young Forward History" for its progress. Some examples of good practices that can be adopted are:

- Promotion at regional level;
- Designing a footpath with quotes from greats of our history
- Designing a traditional camping dinner to fully experience the spirit of times past;
- Marking a corner during a walking route to tell visitors at each corner an interesting story about an event from those areas.

# Conclusion

Everything that surrounds people, be that natural or anthropogenic factors can significantly influence personality, life, work and creative endeavours of individuals. In that sense man himself leaves his trace on nature which can be both positive and negative depending on the culture of the man. Modern man these days, in the majority of cases, isn't in the position in which he could express some sort of authenticity and dignity in what he does. However, that doesn't mean that we should give up on the battle for authenticity and dignity. It is precisely that struggle. that enabled the cultural heritage to be preserved for posterity and to resist the test of time. Cultural monuments, objects, institutions and different events are oftentimes connected to the lives of important people and great events that took place in the destination location. Establishing culture routs is one of the best ways to collect, renew and promote the heritage from the days and people gone by. Significant historical figures and events from Serbian history can find their rightful place within these routes and in that manner be permanently remembered.

However, this type of endeavour is impossible, without awareness and education about the significance of cultural heritage and support of both the public sector and local communities. We should also bear in mind that establishing the culture route "Young on the roads of history" is a long-term investment which would contribute to not only the local community but also the country itself and would, in the end, be fantastic for posterity.

Tourism is recognised as development chance of this part of Podrinje, however, its significance is still in its beginning stages and hence demands further growth. Tourism in this region has a long tradition, however, it is necessary to develop it further, by investing in its infrastructure, improving accommodation capacities, landscaping and furnishing of the touristic localities and developing new and attractive products. Establishing the "Young people on the road of history" route would be very significant in achieving those objectives.

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# POSSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY IN VOJVODINA

Jovana Miljković<sup>A\*</sup>, Tamara Božović<sup>A</sup>

# Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries today, which means there are innovations that need to be followed every day. Habsburg monarchy has a big part of European heritage, but also heritage on the territory of Vojvodina, Autonomous Province of Serbia. From 17. to 20. century Habsburg monarchy ruled in Vojvodina, which means it is a big part of the history in this area. There are numerous cultural objects today that need to be recognized from the local community and government as a valuable object for the development of cultural tourism. This would be a great chance for Vojvodina and Serbia to establish a cultural route for Habsburg monarchy, and someday to get included in part of certificated cultural routes of Council of Europe. There is certificated route "Via Habsburg", and Vojvodina has a great potential for becoming part of this route. An important part for the development of cultural tourism is the local community which needs to be included in every part of the route. The research of their attitudes and knowledge about Habsburg monarchy and cultural heritage from this period is the first step in the development of cultural tourism in Vojvodina. With this research and the presentation of cultural heritage, this becomes a basis for further research and development of cultural tourism and route. The aim of this paper is to determine the key values, to present cultural heritage in Vojvodina from the period of Habsburg monarchy and the results from the research of attitudes of the local community, as well to make the basis for the development of the cultural route of Habsburg monarchy in Vojvodina.

*Keywords:* Cultural route, Tourism, Cultural heritage, Habsburg monarchy, Vojvodina, History

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## Introduction

Cultural tourism is becoming a big part of tourism today. This means that cultural routes are a new way to promote cultural tourism and expand tourism product.

In Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, rich history and a lot of cultural heritage objects are preserved from the period of Habsburg monarchy and still used today as everyday objects like City Halls, Churches, Buildings and living spaces, etc. (Janjusevic, 2011).

Vojvodina could use a great example from the European Union, countries and cities that were under the rule of Habsburg Monarchy, how they have used historical sites, connected them and made a new cultural route, that today connects four different countries. One of the most significant cultural routes dedicated to the Habsburg Monarchy is one that is certified by the Council of Europe under the name Via Habsburg. The route has been certified since 2014. This route includes four countries (Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France), six regions, and 70 localities where visitors can learn about the long history of the Habsburg Monarchy in Europe. The cultural route is designed to be accessible by country or by the most important localities, but it is also offered to design your own itinerary depending on the localities you want to visit (https://www.coe.int/en/web / cultural-routes /via-habsburg).

The Via Habzburg Cultural Route consists of four trails. The first is called the "Habsburg Monarchy Power Centers" 724 km long. The second track includes 752 km tours of the Habsburg Castles and life in the court. The third trail, called "Churches, monasteries and abbeys," is 663 km long. The last trail covers natural entities, known as "Discovering the Land of Further Austria", and the total length is not shown, as each tourist can independently discover and adapt natural beauty to their wishes and needs (https://www.via-habsburg.at /php/4\_themed\_trails,3268.html). Using this example, Vojvodina could establish a cultural route where the most important cultural objects would be included.

Long history in the area of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is a good starting point for developing a tourism product that includes cultural route of Habsburg Monarchy. Vojvodina was under the rule of this Monarchy from 1687. till the end of World War I. One of the most important meetings in history was organized in the small town of Sremski Karlovci near Novi Sad, in 1699, where finally ended the Great War between Austria and Ottoman Empire. With this event, a great rule of Habsburg Monarchy started (Rauchensteiner, 2014).

Thanks to the long and rich history of the Habsburg Monarchy in the territory of present-day Vojvodina, buildings and monuments of great cultural and material value can be found here. The thematic route in Vojvodina could be designed to visit the most important cities where the cultural heritage of the Habsburg Monarchy remained. The tour would last three or four days, with departure from Novi Sad, and depending on the duration of the tour, the tour program could be adjusted. Localities to be visited are Novi Sad, Petrovaradin Fortress, Sremski Karlovci, Sombor, Subotica, Kikinda, Zrenjanin, and Vrsac. A large number of people travel on thematic routes, which implies great potential for creating the route of the Habsburg Monarchy and touring the heritage that was built during their rule in this region.

## Literature review

According to Law on cultural property in Serbia (1994.), Cultural heritage represents "Depending on physical, artistic, cultural and historical features, cultural assets are: cultural monuments, spatial cultural and historical entities, archeological sites and landmarks - immovable cultural property; art and history, archival material, film material and old and rare books - movable cultural property" (http://www.zurbnis.rs/zakoni/Zakon%200%20kulturnim%20 dobrima.pdf).

Cultural tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism in modern days. Short-term journeys, city-break travels, a lot more low-cost flights, more free time and more money that can be spent on tourism purposes, these are all things that allow people to travel more, to get to their desired destination faster, and to spend more time there (Pivac et al., 2016). Cultural tourism is an integral part of almost every aspect of tourism, since visits to the old town centers, visits to monasteries and churches, archeological sites, historical sites, individual monuments can be considered as involvement in cultural tourist movements.

Cultural routes present great challenges, but at the same time an opportunity for tourism, culture and the economy of some of the areas, which can be found in certain territories, can establish a destination brand. Today, the brand guarantees quality. Thanks to the brand, tourists can rest assured that any stopover on their journey will be an encounter with a piece of local heritage. The result is that the route will be better positioned in the tourism market, and therefore all those who participate directly in the route (Graf, 2013).

In Europe, the importance of cultural tourism has been improved by the projects European Capital of Culture (https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture\_en), that gives the possibility for smaller cities, not just capitals to be included in wider tourism offers and to be recognized by tourists.

According to the Council of Europe, that created routes, Cultural routes provide a better understanding of history and memories of different periods of history. The Cultural Routes program includes 38 certified routes covering 70 countries worldwide (https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes).

According to a 2011 Council of Europe survey, entitled "Impact Study of European Cultural Routes". The main objective of the research was to better understand the reality and potential of the Council of Europe after two decades since the start of the European Cultural Routes program. One of the conclusions is that designed cultural routes ensure the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage, promote common European values, but also benefit the products of small and medium-sized enterprises, thus contributing to the development of the local community through tourism revenue. Small and medium enterprisers also involved in providing services for a given route, in the form of trade and services. Many of these businesses are directly or indirectly engaged in tourism, such as hotels, restaurants, wine producers (Kovanova Rubikondo et al., 2011).

One of the projects of the Council of Europe is the Via Habsburg cultural route linking Austria, Switzerland, Germany, and France. Although the route is of an international character, one of them could be used as an example for the formation of a route in Vojvodina. On the first, blue, track, called the "Hubs of Habsburg Monarchy", the starting point is the Hof Castle in the east of Austria, near the border with Slovakia. The next point is a small town in the west of Austria, Hal in Tirol, which was used as a salt mine. This place is followed by the city of Innsbruck, which is only 10 km away. In this city, there is another one of the courts used by the Habsburgs, called Ambras. The next castle on this route is called Feldkirch, which belonged to the Habsburg family. The state border crosses and the track enters Switzerland, and the next tour point is Baden and the castle of Stein, which has existed since the 10th century but later came into the possession of the Habsburg Monarchy. The next section of the trail makes a circle, so tourists can choose which side to take. The first point is Basel, a town that the Habsburgs have by no means managed to make their place of residence. From Basel,

one can head west through France, where there is another point - the city of Ensisheim, or east through Germany, where there are two points - Freiburg im Breisgau, known for its silver excavations, and Breisach, located on the border between France and Germany, has always been an important strategic place (https://mapservices.eu/nefos\_app/frontend/page/viahabsburg/en?-catId[o]=4615#overview,4615).

The main conclusion reached by the researchers is that the development of cultural tourism is the next logical step in the development of cultural routes of the Council of Europe because this type of tourism builds the uniqueness of remote destinations, local knowledge and skills, as well as the preservation of heritage and traditions. Cultural routes offer a large number of different products and services to those interested. They attract more visitors, thus increasing the demand for cultural goods along the route, as well as the need for additional services (Kovanova Rubikondo, 2012).

Thanks to this study, it is concluded that it is necessary to invest in cultural routes, as this extends the tourist offer and increases the attractiveness of a particular destination, but also prolongs the average length of stay at the destination.

#### **History of Habsburg Monarchy**

The Habsburg Monarchy, also known as the Habsburg Empire, the Austrian Monarchy and the Danube Monarchy, is divided into two periods by historians. The first period was between 1526 and 1780, when this monarchy was ruled by the Habsburg dynasty, and the second from 1780 to 1918, when the Habsburg-Lorraine ruled. Since 1867, the Habsburg Monarchy was united with the Hungarians, and they were known collectively as the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Ingrao, 2014).

The capital of the Monarchy was Vienna, from its founding, until the fall of the Empire, except between 1583 and 1611, when the capital was Prague (McCartney, 1969).

In the beginning there were a lot of attempts to centralize the rule of Habsburg Monarchy, but soon started a lot of revolutions around the Empire, because some of the ethnic groups had more privileges. For this reason, but also, because of the attempts to centralize state based in Vienna, the period of revolutions was long. After the revolution in 1848. and 1849. The Kingdom of Hungary was separated as a separate state and divided into several provinces. In the following decades, during the two wars of 1859 and 1866, the Habsburg Monarchy was defeated and, after a second defeat, the decision to centralize power was rejected (Udelhofen, 2015).

After the war, Austria was weakened, both politically inland and abroad. There was a withdrawal of the decision on centralized power based in Vienna, as well as a compromise between Austria and Hungary, during which a dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy was established in 1867 (Udelhofen, 2015).

Many ethnic groups lived in the Austro-Hungarian state. Thanks to the rights they were granted, the state had some stability. Germans and Hungarians had the privileges of voting and participating in politics. In this way, they controlled minorities with the help of police forces. The imposition of Hungarians on the territories where the Southern Slavs lived, led to increased tensions in the Balkans, which led to the outbreak of World War I, when in Bosnia in 1914 Gavrilo Princip killed Prince Franz Ferdinand (Rauchensteiner, 2014).

The First World War ended with Austro-Hungary signing the peace treaty, and this state was officially dissolved in September 1919 (Knebel, 2015).

### Habsburg Monarchy in Vojvodina

Period of rule of Habsburg Monarchy in Vojvodina can be divided into 4 periods The first unit dates from the period when the Habsburg Monarchy began to conquer this territory and fight against the Turks, between 1687 and 1740, when Empress Maria Theresa came to power (Srbulovic, 2000). The second period covers the period from 1740 to 1792, when the Serbs were granted bigger rights, free royal cities, it was invested in infrastructure, education, and generally better living conditions in these areas (Arsenyev, A. 2010). The third whole is between 1792 and 1849, from the suspension of the rights of the Serb population in the monarchy to the great revolution that engulfed it, in which many of our people and cities were destroyed (Gavrilovic, 1994). The last period covers the period from the revolution to the end of World War I in 1918, which began in Sarajevo in 1914 (Gavrilovic, 1994).

## Culural heritage from the period of Habsburg Monarchy in Vojvodina

In present-day Vojvodina, there are a lot of cultural heritage objects that are used today as everyday objects. City Halls are still being used for the same, original purpose, churches are in good condition, renovated and preserved, old city centers are being renovated and these places are used in everyday life. There are some objects that stand out, as Petrovaradin Fortress, City Hall in Novi Sad, Sombor and Subotica, catholic churches in Kikinda, Subotica and Church dedicated to Holly Mary in Novi Sad, Palace in Zrenjanin that is today used as a Court building, are just some of the cultural places and objects that need to be included in possible cultural route of Habsburg Monarchy (Tomic, 2002).

It is important to work on improving every object, place, and city individually, in order for them to be in its best condition and independent tourism product.

#### **Methods**

The quantitative-qualitative method is a method of comparison that uses qualitative or quantitative terms to express tourist value. This method evaluates the values of certain destination qualifiers. During the assessment, five indicators are analyzed: tourist-geographical location, natural values, tourist value of the environment, built and equipped space and incorporation into tourist wealth (Košić, 2013).

In this research, some indicators have been added to give a more complete picture. There are eight indicators and eight localities that are included in the research.

For each of these elements, the valuation is performed as follows:

- grade 1 (poor quality),
- grade 2 (quality meets),
- grade 3 (good quality),
- grade 4 (very good quality),
- grade 5 (excellent quality).

The respondents were sent an online questionnaire via e-mail, to which they replied anonymously. Respondents were selected employees of institutions of interest - local travel agencies, cultural institutions, tourism organizations, those who were considered to be able to participate directly or contribute to the establishment of the route or the protection of the cultural heritage of interest. Anonymous respondents completed online assessments based on their subjective opinion and the assessment was completed by ten respondents. The first part of the research concerned the level of education and place of current employment. These are employees of professional institutions closely related to culture and tourism, tourism organizations, as well as local tourist agencies. Next part of the research included all the localities that needed to be rated by the indicators. Finally, the last part of the research included open answers where respondents were asked to give their suggestion of how to preserve cultural heritage, how to include it in the touristic offer and the possibility of making a cultural route of Habsburg Monarchy.

# A qualitative and quantitative analysis and discussion

The sites selected for the tour have preserved cultural heritage objects from the Habsburg Monarchy period and can be best integrated into the unity. Thanks to the ability to compare these places with each other, in similar ways of construction, to architecture, the sites can be represented as a whole through the cultural route of the Habsburg Monarchy. This way of presenting the cultural and historical heritage allows interested parties to see more than one city in the same territorial area in a short time.

Eight indicators and eight localities were selected for which subjects were required to give subjective ratings of 1-5. The sites were selected for the localities where much of the cultural heritage of the Habsburg Monarchy has been preserved today, including the City Houses, religious sites, monuments, as well as houses where significant people lived, that are still in use today.

A tabular summary of indicators, localities and survey results presented with average scores will be shown below.

Location	Tourist- geographical position	Touristic value of the ambience	Construction and equipment of the premises	Incorporation in tourism wealth	Tourist attractiveness and recognition	Online promotion	Media promotion	Offer in tourist agency arrangements	Average rating of the tourist site
Petrovaradin fortress	4.70	4,80	3,90	4,60	4,80	4,40	4,00	4,20	4,43
Novi Sad	4.70	4,60	4,10	4,40	4,70	4,60	4,50	4,40	4,50
Sremski Karlovci	4,80	4,70	3,90	4,60	4,60	4,10	3,80	4,20	4,34
Sombor	3,90	4,30	3,40	4,20	3,30	3,10	3,20	3,00	3,55
Subotica	4,40	4,30	3,50	4,30	3,70	3,80	3,40	3,30	3,84
Kikinda	3,30	3,50	3,00	3,40	2,80	2,70	2,90	2,60	3,03
Zrenjanin	3,50	3,70	3,00	3,40	2,90	3,10	2,90	2,80	3,16
Vrsac	4,80	3,50	3,10	3,60	2,80	2,90	2,90	3,00	3,33
Average rating of the indicators	4,26	4,18	3,49	4,06	3,70	3,59	3,45	3,44	-

Table 1. Survey results with average scores

In table 1 are presented localities that could be included in the cultural route of Habsburg Monarchy. The respondents rated the localities with grades 1-5, according to the given indicators and their subjective opinions.

The results presented in the table were obtained by calculating the average of all scores obtained by ten respondents, for each locality and indicator individually, and after that, for each indicator the average grade was calculated, as well as for each locality. Thanks to the average scores obtained, it is possible to see which indicators, but also the locality, need to be improved, which can be the basis for the preparation of the cultural route.

The best grades are given for city Novi Sad, and locality Petrovaradin fortress, that would be first and last stop in the Habsburg Monarchy cultural route. The lowest average grade was given to the city of Kikinda, that is not well promoted, or included in offers of tourist agencies. The highest average rate of indicators was given to indicators Tourist-geographical position and Touristic value of the ambiance, with scores 4,26 and 4,18. Indicator Incorporation in tourism wealth with average grade 4,06 is the third indicator with a higher score of the grade 4,00. The high ratings of these indicators indicate that the cities represented in Vojvodina have great potential and potential for the development of cultural tourism and the cultural route of the Habsburg Monarchy, due to the good geographical and tourist position, the proximity of the main roads, and the fact that it is in transit between Western and Eastern Europe.

Of the indicators offered, those related to the equipment of the premises for tourist visits, promotion and participation in the offers of travel agencies received the lowest marks. This shows that even employees that are directly involved in culture and tourism consider that there is not enough investment in the promotion and preparation of sites for tourist visits, but also that travel agency must pay special attention to the promotion of domestic tourism and the inclusion of smaller cities in tourist offer.

In the last part of the survey, respondents were asked to make their suggestions for forming a cultural route. Most of the responses included the need for greater investment in marketing and promotion, raising the awareness of the local population about the importance of cultural wealth, designing thematic walking tours of the sites, as well as the necessary recognition by the state and greater investment at the state level. One of the broadest answers was given by a respondent who works at a travel agency that organizes domestic tours. This answer reads: "Considering the historical significance of the Habsburg monarchy, both at the level of Novi Sad and in the mentioned places, it is evident that this topic is not emphasized in the tourist offer, and it is not used enough. Novi Sad as a developed center with tourist offer and recognizability on the tourist map, it does not use its potential and the importance of the Habsburgs. Every potential, based on a well-planned project and a good tourist product, should be used, for example, by designing thematic nights, organizing balls, an evening with eg. Maria Theresa (fortress, Leopold Hotel), restoring the spirit of old times ... Habsburg and that story. Unfortunately, all other places are still underdeveloped in tourism. The advantage should be given to Novi Sad, with the title of European Capital of Culture 2021, and then to connect other cities into one tourist product."

Thanks to this research and the comparison of the respondents' opinions, it can be concluded that large investments, financial as well as investments in education and human resources, are needed to improve the tourist offer and organize cultural routes.

#### Proposal for the cultural route of the Habsburg Monarchy

Cultural routes are today becoming more popular because this is one of the best ways to present a cultural and historical entity. With the rich history of Habsburg Monarchy and Europe, Vojvodina should be included in these routes. But first, Vojvodina should develop cultural route independently, and then try to become part of European routes. In Vojvodina, there are main points that had a great role in Habsburg Monarchy. Most important places would be included in the cultural route. It should be designed that way that tourists have enough time to see all the main places. This could be designed as a three or four days-tour. In this route, localities that would be included are Novi Sad, Petrovaradin Fortress and Sremski Karlovci, that could be possibly seen in one day. The second day would be the visit of cities Sombor and Subotica, and for the third day would be the visit of cities Kikinda, Zrenjanin and Vrsac. These are the most important places that should be included as part of the tour, but the more important thing is a story that should be told to visitors.

Thanks to the Council of Europe, and the fact that cultural routes are recognized as very important in the development of tourism and cultural tourism, great potential exists in Vojvodina for the development of cultural routes, and in the future for inclusion in the certified routes of the Council of Europe. The most important thing for the development of tourism is that the importance and the good things that it can bring are recognized by local and national institutions, as well as by the local population. By investing in the redevelopment of localities and building tourist facilities, and finally, good promotion should be the key to the development of this cultural route, the cultural route of the Habsburg Monarchy would have great potential for further development.

By branding the destination, cultural routes are able to position themselves in the tourism market. In this way, the whole economy is included in a chain that connects different products and services. It is also a good base for small businesses to produce souvenirs, increase the employment of local people, support the development of local gastronomic products that fit the thematic route (Graf, 2013). Due to the cultural heritage of the Habsburg Monarchy, which still exists in Vojvodina today, there is a basis for forming a cultural route, and therefore for branding the destination and presenting it in the tourist market. The formation of the route would create opportunities for smaller places in Vojvodina, to be involved in tourist events, to involve more locals and to give them an opportunity for a better life.

Complex tourism products, such as cultural routes, require the involvement of various institutions (engaged in the field of culture, education), public associations and various organizations. All this should enhance the life of the local community and population as well as the tourist offer along the route. To get positive results, cooperation at different levels of institutions is required (Terzic, et al., 2016).

# Conclusion

In Vojvodina, there is great potential for the development of the cultural route of the Habsburg Monarchy, thanks to its long history and tradition, as well as preserved sites from the period of the monarchy. By presenting the history of the Habsburg Monarchy and the role of Vojvodina in this country, the starting points for the development of the cultural route were presented. Thanks to the conducted research, opinions of people who are among the most important for the reconstruction of the site, employees of cultural institutions and tourism organizations, as well as for the development and promotion of the route, both in Serbia and abroad, were obtained. According to the results, it can be concluded that the respondents believe that there is great potential, but due to poor promotion, as well as insufficient involvement in the offer of travel agencies, the locals and tourists are not sufficiently aware of the possibilities of using these sites for tourist purposes. By involving the local population and investing in their education to improve the representation of tourist sites, opportunities for the development of society and individuals providing tourist services, as well as potential financial profits, a network of people directly involved in the development of the cultural route is expanding. To start the development, it is necessary to set the main goal, and after that to prepare in detail all the steps that will lead to the achievement of the goal, because each step is extremely important for the tourism product to succeed.

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# ATTITUDES OF LOCAL POPULATION IN SREMSKA MITROVICA TOWARDS SIRMIUM CULTURAL TOURISM AND HERITAGE

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#### Abstract

Cultural tourism presents the movement of people caused by the cultural attractions outside their usual place of residence, with the intention to collect new information and experience in order to satisfy their cultural needs. As such, the cultural tourism is one of the selective types of tourism, and is directed to meeting the specific needs related to tourist culture. Sremska Mitrovica was built on the former site of Sirmium, one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire. This paper will be based on tourist movements of local people which are focused on the cultural sites and objects and historical heritage of their hometown. We assume that a small percentage of the local population visited sites and objects of cultural and historical heritage and cultural institutions in Sremska Mitrovica. The aim of the paper is to encourage local residents to visit museum, gallery, theater, more frequently, as well as other sites and objects of cultural and historical heritage in Sremska Mitrovica. The survey was conducted through an electronic survey. The research methodology is based on the descriptive and statistical processing and data analysis using SPSS 20 software.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, Sremska Mitrovica, Sirmium, local people

# Introduction

The World Tourism Organization has defined cultural tourism as trips originating primarily from cultural motives, which usually include educational tours, art, cultural tours, trips to festivals, visits to historical sites and monuments, folklore and religious trips (WTO, 2005; Božić, 2016).

Sirmium was a developed, urban-designed city centre. It was surrounded by walls and contained forums, temples, administration buildings, granaries, thermal baths, theatres, an amphitheater, paved streets, water supply, sewage, palaces, villas, imperial spas, and necrop-

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olises around the walls. Sirmium had a weapons factory (Prica et al. 1969). Today, most of the buildings of the former capital of the Roman Empire lie beneath the streets and buildings in Sremska Mitrovica.

Heritage has been deemed as an important tourism resource for tourism development all over the world. Heritage tourism is one kind of prevalent special interest tourism and usually related to the domains of cultural and urban tourism. Like other types of tourism, the success of heritage and cultural tourism relies upon not only uniqueness, attractive heritage resources, sustainability and a successful tourism policy, but also on residents' support for tourism development (Ching-Fu and Pei-Chun, 2010).

The rich cultural and historical heritage represents one of the most important tourist attractions of today's tourism in the city. Sremska Mitrovica is a kind of open-air museum. The central squares with the surrounding streets represent the period of the Military Border, the period of the 18th and 19th centuries. Visitors to a relatively small area, walking through the city centre, at the same time can enjoy representative buildings from the Austro-Hungarian period and discovered archaeological excavations of the Roman metropolis of Sirmium. In the Visitor Center "Imperial Palace" it is possible to see the remains of a monumental ancient palace, and space is often the host of various events. The visit to the Museum of Srem completes the knowledge related to the era of the ancient Sirmium and the history of the city in general. Within the permanent exhibition of the Museum, visitors are presented with valuable objects and monuments unique to our country (Pjevac, 2014). Sremska Mitrovica, the character of the present city, bears the stamp of the architectural heritage of different emperors. Some visible or tangible link between the ancient and modern city can only be found today in the remains of the walls of Sirmium, presented either under the "open sky" or in archeological crypts (Jeremić, 2016), while the most recognizable image is spread during many festival nights on the Žitni trg in combination with the preserved buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries.

# Theoretical background and contemporary significance of cultural heritage in Sremska Mitrovica

For the success of cultural tourism and its sustainability, it is important to understand heritage residents' attitudes towards tourism impacts and support for tourism development in their community, and to investigate the factors affecting their support (Ching-Fu and Pei-Chun, 2010).

Residents play a vital role in developing sustainable tourism, as they are the cultural agents and the social group in which tourism is delivered (Gonzales et al., 2017). Residents have gained importance in the tourism equation, as their perceptions indicate tourism's outlook regarding sustainability. Their goodwill is considered crucial to the success and sustainability of any tourism development (Bimonte and Punzo, 2016; Gonzales et al., 2017).

The remains of a monumental structure, which in the 4th century AD represented the seat of Roman emperors who stayed longer or shorter in Sirmium, are located in the heart of today's Sremska Mitrovica. They were first discovered in 1957, preparing the ground for the construction of residential building. The works were temporarily and then permanently suspended when the remains of the heating system, drainage ducts and floor mosaics were found. Further archaeological excavations in the 1960s revealed the remains of a space with a marble wall fountain, wall murals and mosaic floors. Also, a Roman circus for two-wheeled racing was

discovered near the palace, as well as parts of the auditorium (cavea) with a racetrack (arena) and a barrier wall in the middle (spina) (Werner, 2009).

The Serbian Home was built in 1895, the building is built in classic style, with very harmonious proportions. The premises of the Reading Room were moved to this building. Until the World War I, the Reading Room was the most important Serbian cultural institution in the city. In the fire of 1914, the building was partially burned. After World War I, the building of the Serbian Home was restored. Today, this building occupies the "Gligorije Vozarović" City Library and the "Dobrica Milutinović" Theater in Ćira Milekić Square.

The Historical archive "Srem" is located on Vuk Karadžić Street, in a building that was built in the second half of the 18th century for accommodation of the "Main Guard" of the 9th Petrovaradin Border Regiment. The Historical archive "Srem" moved into this building in 1965. After several restorations, the building was given today's look, which basically does not deviate from the architectural concept of the time in which it was built. The building was proclaimed a cultural property in 1966 (Historical archive "Srem").

One of the most characteristic buildings fits at the corner of St. Sava Street and Vuk Karadžić Street. First it was a lieutenant colonel's apartment, later it had different purposes, and after the professional restoration in 1965 it belongs to Museum. The building is one-sto-rey, rectangular in plan, with strict lines, simple facade without decoration. The internal layout was modified, but the object as a whole remained authentic (Prica et al., 1969). In November 1946, the City Museum was rebuilt. Two years later, the first permanent museum exhibition was opened in St. Stephen's Square, in the house of the Bajić family, a civic house from the late 18th and early 19th century, which is a typical representative of civic architecture. The front of the facade is very simple with five rectangular windows on the ground floor and seven upstairs. The Center for Archeological Research and Documentation of Sirmium was later located there, as well as the permanent display of exhibits until the 14th century (Lemajić, 2008).

On the west side of the supposed forum (Roman Square), a large trapezoidal structure, defined as a public town market or "Žitni trg" (grain square), is fully revealed. Most of the buildings on the square date from the 4th century AD, although parts of the individual walls discovered date from the 1st and 2nd centuries. The site is intersected by a wide Roman street with preserved sewage, pedestrian passage-ways with porticus, preserved only in the bases of columns bearing arches (Milošević and Prica, 2001). The project for the conservation, reconstruction and presentation of the archaeological site was initiated by the Institute for the Protection of Monuments. Official work began in mid-October 2017 and was completed in late June 2018.

#### Methodology

The survey was conducted in the period from June to August, 2019, through an online survey on a sample of 144 respondents. The questionnaire consists of 21 closed, open and mixed-type of questions. The aim of the research is to determine the attitudes of the local population regarding the interest in cultural tourism and the rich historical heritage of Sremska Mitrovica. Survey analysis is done using SPSS 20 software.

#### **Results and Discussion**

The important aim of this research is to encourage the locals to become more involved in the cultural life of the city in which they live, and also to encourage all those employees at the sites and objects of cultural and historical heritage and cultural institutions in Sremska Mitrovica to work more to preserve and protect the cultural properties that this city possess.

Including the total number of respondents, the largest part is made up of the female population with 63.2%. If we look at the age division among the respondents, over half are members of the group 21-40 age, and just behind them with twice less participation in the survey are respondents up to 20 years. The majority of respondents have completed university education (45.1%) and high school education (38.9%), and the ratio of socio-economic status is divided by percentage, so that half of the respondents are employed (52.8%), while behind them with a smaller proportion are university students (19.4%) and high school students (18.1%).

Crucially important for the awareness and any further development progress in the field of tourism is the 100% agrees of respondents that "their" city has a rich cultural and historical heritage. As it is stated by Stamenković et al., 2013, the role of the local population is very important for the process of building a tourist brand, although the city is already recognizable and stands on the foundations of the old Sirmium. Every further progress and expansion of the role, require an awareness that the respondents confirm. In this way, they act as local brand ambassadors, while on the other hand, residents can also be treated as external actors (such as domestic tourists, consumers).

Respondents mostly (84.7%) answered positively that they visit sites and objects of cultural and historical heritage and cultural institutions, but the intensity of these visits is different. Those are mostly visiting up to several times a year (43.1%), once a year (20.1%), but the total share of 29.8% should not be ignored since it consists of visitors with relatively regular visits from once per month or once a week to several times weekly.

There are different motives for visiting cultural institutions among the respondents. Education and information (24.3%) and socializing with friends and family (22.2%) are almost equally important as the main motives and initiators of visits, while 19.4% of the respondents are interested in culture and heritage.

In addition to the motives which are the main triggers within the visitors themselves, promotion and information of various events are very important so that the local population, as well as all interested person, can be informed about similar events and activities. The largest number of respondents receives the main information on cultural events by social media (48.61%). Other channels of information, such as personal visits, watching TV, through mutual contacts and by going to the official sites of individual institutions, include a smaller share of

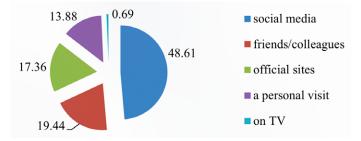


Figure 1. The mst important sources of information for cultural events Source: Authors research, SPSS

respondents. Such data is not surprising, given that the respondents are mostly members of the younger age category, as well as the world trend that social networks have including their global importance. Perhaps it represents the main starting point for further development in the promotion of greater visits among cultural institutions. It would involve greater engagement of cultural institutions, tourist agencies, tourism organizations, local governments, City Youth Office and different societies all in the spreading of advertising, information and organization of various events, activities, workshops of cultural importance. Certainly, other social groups and members of the older generations should not be ignored, providing culture to everyone and making it accessible to all age categories.

Having knowledge of local history according to the results obtained among the respondents is highly appreciated. Respondents generally knew to name at least one Roman emperor who was born in Sirmium, 72.9% of the respondents answered correctly this question. Some less knowledge was shown about the emperor who brought the vine to the slopes of Fruška Gora. Only 60.4% answered correctly between offered answers that it was the Prob. The growing importance of the spreading of grapevines in these areas is indicated by the increasing presence in vineyard plantations, as well as the recently started construction of the Wine Temple and the Probus vineyards in the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica within the hills of Fruška Gora (www.tosmomi.rs).

Cultural institution	Frequency of visit	Std. Deviation
Museum of Srem	a few times in a few years	1.024
Gallery "Lazar Vozarević"	a few times in a few years	1.084
Library "Gligorije Vozarović"	once a year	1.229
Theater "Dobrica Milutinović"	once a year	1.065
Archeological site "Carska palata" (Imperial palace)	once a year	1.101
Memorial cemetery park	once a month	1.267
Archeological site "Žitni trg" (Grain square)	once a week	.861
Historical archive of Srem	Never (no visit)	.887

#### Table 1. Frequency of visits to cultural institutions

Source: Authors research, SPSS

In the case of direct visits and intensity of visits to cultural institutions, we can conclude that the respondents visit the archaeological site Žitni trg with 54.2% once a week, while in the second place they visit Memorial Cemetery Park (32.6%) once a month and 37.1% once a week. Such data is not surprising since both complexes are open-air sites. Various events, concerts, ceremonial gatherings take place throughout the Žitni trg area, and it is arranged as an amphitheatre for seating and attracts a large number of locals during daily walks and breaks. The answers that the respondents agreed the most were precisely related to the visit to Žitni trg (.861) and the Archive of Srem (.887), with the most visits once a week and no visits. The Archive of Srem is an institution mostly visited by professionals and is not intended for exhibitions or cultural shows of any type and does not attract tourists and visitors, so this is not surprising.

Talking about availability and concerning the adaptation of content and events to different social groups (old, young, children, foreigners, people with disabilities), Žitni trg was the best rated, and right behind the Imperial Palace. These are the objects that attract the most visitors and whose contents are the most accessible to all ages. Both sites are of recent date or have been reconstructed, so their availability is the easiest. In addition to the Archive of Srem, which due to its specificity and lower attractiveness, is more experts and professionals oriented, the same rating was given to the Museum of Srem (mean 2.88). Organizers of museum exhibitions should pay more attention to the content in order to attract as large and diverse a part of the audience as possible to ensure their continued interest in their visits.

		Museum of Srem	Gallery "Lazar Vozarević"	Archeological site "Imperial palace"	Memorial cemetery park
	Pearson Correlation	1	.595**	.530**	.050
Museum of Srem	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.550
Siem	Ν	144	144	144	144

Table 2. Correlation between frequency of visits to cultural institutions

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

Source: Authors research, SPSS

As it is shown in Table 2, the highest and the most noticeable correlation is among visitors to the Museum of Srem, Gallery and Imperial Palace. However, the insignificant correlation is directed towards visits to the Memorial cemetery park, which shows us that visitors to this complex still belong to different groups. Considering the importance of this complex and its surface, this site could provide a large number of contents to its locals in cooperation with local authorities and organizations. Certainly it is necessary to "listen" the local population more, which is recognized by this questionnaire as very accessible, but that more attention should be paid to the tidiness of the complex, to be cleaner, with more benches and with special emphasis that it is without manifestations. The results of the survey show that the locals are more interested in outdoor activities and festivities, so some cultural content could be directed to this complex as well. This is certainly in favour of the crowds in the city central park during the manifestation of the Wine Park, Sirmium Imperial City and festivals in Žitni trg.

If we look at the responses of respondents who did not visit institutions of cultural importance and their reasons, we might find the motivation that would improve visits. Most respondents complain about not enough free time. However, responses based on boring and insufficiently interesting content are frequent, without the need to visit two or more times, including not flexible working time of institutions towards the visitors.

The practical suggestions of the respondents certainly play a very important role, because they are the ones who make up this city and participate in the preservation of the local heritage and culture. The biggest objection on the part of the respondents was directed at promotion. Greater public awareness is needed, especially through social networks, "cultural" info boards, billboards and advertisements. An interesting proposal is the creation of a portal linking all institutions of cultural importance with the common calendar of cultural events. Respondents see great importance in many manifestations of different types and with better and more contemporary contents that would attract visitors, old and new. According to the respondents, one of the key reasons is the local government and insufficient financial resources for culture. A small number of respondents focused their attention on children and school children, although education and the spread of cultural awareness among children is very important. Very interesting is the observation of a small number of respondents who pay attention to the lack of hotels in the city. In recent years, Sremska Mitrovica has been left without the largest hotel accommodation, and such a reflection has directly affected the number of tourists who come in large groups (today's capacity: hotel "Srem" 25 beds; hotel "Wood" 13 beds) (www. hotelwood.rs; www.tosmomi.rs).

The current state of tourism shows that intensive work is being done to develop the supply, conservation and restoration of cultural objects and, in general, to protect sites that are significant for tourism, but still not sufficiently. The tradition and multiculturalism of this region is exactly what can set it apart from other competitors in the tourist market, and it is necessary to work intensively on their nurturing and preservation. Thanks to the connection with the Danube (along the Sava river), tourists are allowed to arrive by river in the framework of cruise trips and to get acquainted with the City. As part of the Cultural Route "The Road of the Roman Emperors" and "The Danube Wine Road" it is developing as a quality tourist destination, and the number of tourists on its territory is increasing. Thanks to its rich history and attractive promotion, it has also become part of the routes Fruška Gora Wine Road and Serbian Wine Roads (Gnjatović, 2018).

# Conclusion

The importance of this research is reflected in the obtained information on the attitudes of local population in Sremska Mitrovica. With this work and the survey, an attempt was made, to encourage people to start thinking about the culture of their own city, and going to the cultural sites and objects and historical heritage of their hometown. At the beginning of research, it was assumed that a small number of locals visiting cultural sites and institutions to a greater extent, the survey results show that they still visit cultural institutions, but not often, most of them visit cultural institutions a couple of times a year.

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# THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WINE TOURISM AS A SPECIFIC FORM OF THE TOURIST OFFER OF HERZEGOVINA

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#### Abstract

The unique local and regional intangible cultural heritage gradually becomes one of the key elements in attracting tourists and creating new tourist offers - products. An important place in this is the gastronomic tourism, not only because food and drinks are of central importance to any tourist experience, but also that the concept of gastronomic tourism has developed to cover its cultural aspects and connect with local culture. As a key component of gastronomic tourism, wine tourism is distinguished, providing new and more complete tourist destinations, in which tourists can experience the culture and way of life of destinations, while at the same time promoting sustainable tourism development (Georgia Declaration on Wine Tourism, 2016). Wine tourism is present in the world's most famous winegrowing regions. Wine roads of Herzegovina are little known to foreign tourists, primarily due to the lack of general tourist propaganda, which would be aimed at presenting all elements of the integrated tourism products, i.e. their attractiveness, as well as insufficient knowledge of the employees in the tourism sector about this form of tourist offer. In this paper, the authors will give an overview of the state and development of viticulture and wine growing in the world and the development of wine growing in Herzegovina, the consideration of natural-geographical conditions and factors that favour the cultivation of vines and wine production in Herzegovina. In the first part, the historical development of viticulture and wine making will be demonstrated through the examination of the history of certain wineries and the preservation of old cellars, as well as consideration of their readiness to adapt to tourist demand that is to visit tourists, as well as to develop tourist events dedicated to wine. The aim of this paper is to analyse potentials for the development of wine tourism in Herzegovina and recommendations for improving the existing tourism offer of wine tourism. With the selection of vineyards as a special tourist product, the possibility of extending the tourist season, since wine tourism does not depend on the seasons and is current throughout the year, the number of visitors would increase and the demand for autochthonous wine varieties would expand. In this paper, we will point out the

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need for a strategic positioning of wine tourism as a specific form of tourism in the integrated tourism offer of Herzegovina.

Keywords: Wine tourism, Herzegovina, development, tourism, tourist offer.

# Introduction

In addition to the classic satisfaction of tourists' needs for travel and discovering new continents, tourists are increasingly in need of characteristic food and drink of a certain space. One of the specific products is wine tourism. Especially in Herzegovina, which has natural predispositions and tradition of grapevine cultivation and wine production, there is the possibility of developing wine tourism and enriching the tourist offer of that region. Tourists, seeking authentic and unique experiences when visiting a particular tourist destination where grapevines are grown and wine consumption is organized, make direct contact with the host winemakers, which contribute to a better understanding of local authentic products, which, in addition to offering different varieties of wine, enable a fuller gastronomy offer. At the same time, by exchanging different life experiences, tourists are introduced to the social, political and cultural life of the local population, which increases the attractiveness and overall value of that tourist destination. The development of wine tourism contributes to the positioning and recognition of a particular tourist area and creates a competitive advantage (Hall, 2003). Wine tourism, as an important component of gastronomic tourism, has developed into a key element for new and more complete tourist destinations, in which tourists can experience the culture and lifestyle of tourist destinations. Various products that can be supported as a tourism development priority in Herzegovina include wine tourism for several reasons. First, there is a long tradition of vine growing and wine production in Herzegovina, which has been steadily increasing in recent years. It is in the interest of tourism to preserve local tradition and economically sustainable development. Second, winemakers have already invested in the development of basic infrastructure that can accommodate visitors, and with modest public sector assistance, this product can reach high market positions very quickly. Third, wine tourism is seen as a product that is in line with current market demand in the sense that tourists are increasingly looking for an authentic and unique experience at a tourist destination. Local food and wine creates an opportunity for tourists to get to know the people who make these products. This makes it possible to satisfy the needs of tourists for the authenticity and experience they want to learn through wine tourism (Razović, 2015). Wine is often associated with the specific characteristics and taste of a tourist destination, and business activities in wine tourism are a prerequisite for an attractive destination image (Carlsen and Charters, 2006). The first UNWTO Global Wine Tourism Conference organized by World Tourism was held in September 2016 in Georgia. The two-day event brought together more than 200 participants, including representatives of tourism ministries, representatives of destination management organizations, representatives of the academic community, national tourism organizations, tour operators and other tourism professionals from nearly 50 countries. While laying down the basics around wine tourism, the conference agreed, among other things, that: wine tourism is a fundamental part of Gastronomy Tourism; wine tourism can contribute to fostering sustainable tourism by promoting both the tangible and intangible heritage of the destination; wine tourism is capable of generating substantial economic and social benefits for key players of each destination, in addition to playing an important role in terms of cultural and natural resource preservation; wine tourism facilitates the linking of destinations around the common goal of providing unique and innovative tourism products, whereby maximizing synergies in tourism development, surpassing traditional tourism subsectors; wine tourism provides an opportunity for underdeveloped tourism destinations, in most cases rural areas, to mature alongside established destinations and enhance the economic and social impact of tourism on a local community; wine tourism provides an innovative way to experience a destination's culture and lifestyle, responding to consumers' evolving needs and expectations; wine tourism's potential will be heightened if implemented appropriately through a public-private collaboration strategy, promoted through an effective communication across different sectors and involving the local community (Georgia Declaration on Wine Tourism, 2016). The aim of this paper is to analyze wine tourism in Herzegovina and to recommend the improvement of the existing tourist offer. Also, the aim of the paper is to find ways to improve and better present the potential of Herzegovina's vineyards, encouraging the development of tourism, which will enable tourist representative tourist attractions to be placed on the market and to achieve positive economic results. The research methods we use in this paper are:

- Field research (observation method, interview with winery owners);
- Historical method (literature, statistics, written documents, research of results);
- Analysis method based on performed survey.

#### Herzegovina as a wine tourism region

Hall (2003) states that the term "tourist area" is used for the wine region, which describes the combination of physical, cultural and natural environment, which gives each region a certain attraction as a destination for wine tourism. At this point it is important to explain that in this paper the territory of Herzegovina, which is regarded as a tourist area, encompasses low Herzegovina. The Adriatic coastline extends to low or Mediterranean Herzegovina, which extends into the hinterland of central and southeastern Dalmatia. Low Herzegovina is also referred to as Adriatic Herzegovina and Lower Herzegovina, as opposed to Upper Herzegovina, Highland or Mountain Herzegovina. Low Herzegovina covers land around the lower Neretva, its tributaries Trebizat and Bregava and the large karst filed - Popovo polje (Popovo field). It stretches between Mostar, Ljubuski, Metkovic, Trebinje and Bileca. That is, in the immediate hinterland of the Makarska (Biokovo) and Dubrovnik coasts (Marković, 1980). Mediterranean Herzegovina is low in climate, soil, vegetation, type of settlements and houses, coastal area, as well as arable region, while high (mountainous) Herzegovina is livestock region. Low Herzegovina is mostly built of cretaceous limestones. Flysch oases or belts are found in several places in this area (Markovic, 1980). The most significant fluvial form of low Herzegovina is the lower Neretva valley, which is more extensively extended in the Mostar basin. The canyon valleys cut with the Neretva and Bregva rivers meet in this area (Markovic, 1980). Holokras in low - Herzegovina is characterized by typical karst fields. The limestone surface is drilled by numerous sinkholes, bays, fields, pits and caves. Low Herzegovina is rich in underground karst forms. The largest and most famous of them is the Vjetrenica Cave, near the village of Zavala, in Popovo polje. Low Herzegovina is characterized by the Adriatic climate, altered Mediterranean climate. Summers in this area are warm and rain free. Due to their proximity to the sea and low altitude, low Herzegovina fields have Adriatic climate with high summer temperatures, summer droughts and rainy autumns. The mean January temperatures in this area are nowhere below o°C while the average July temperatures reach 27°C. In the zone that extends around the Herzegovina coast, temperatures above 10°C last up to 260 days per year

and temperatures above 20°C up to 120 days per year. The highest rainfall in the low Herzegovina region is in November and December, with an average of 230 and 221 mm, and lowest is about 50 mm in July. The average annual rainfall in this area is 1600 mm. Frosts in the low Herzegovina are very rare, while the North wind (bura) blows for days. During the year in the low Herzegovina, the annual sunshine is everywhere in excess of 2000 hours, ranging from 6.1 hours per day to 8.1 hours per day. By analyzing these climatic factors as decisive for the cultivation of grapevines, the area of low Herzegovina can be assessed as extremely suitable for the development of grapevines. The hydrography of low (Mediterranean) Herzegovina is more diverse than numerous. In low Herzegovina by the sea there are normal rivers (Neretva), sinkholes (Trebisnjica), strong springs (Buna), surface and underground lakes, muds, etc. (lakes and muds in the lower Neretva, Hutovo mud, cave lakes in Vjetrenica, Lake Bileća - artificial lake on the river Trebišnjica) (Marković, 1980).

#### Herzegovina - Cultural and Historical Heritage as a Tourist Attraction

Herzegovina has an abundance of cultural assets that are a tourist product in itself, and which may be complementary to some other type of tourism. The cultural assets of this area, viewed through cultural and historical monuments, ethnographic and archeological values, settlements and artistic achievements, contribute to a richer and more meaningful stay of tourists. Low Herzegovina is a Mediterranean region, which differs significantly from other parts of the Adriatic area in terms of urban physiognomy. In it, the Turkish rule left numerous eastern traces, especially in the types of settlements (Mostar, Stolac, Ljubuski), as well as in the way of life. Most of the rural settlements in low Herzegovina are of broken type. The urban settlements of the Adriatic Herzegovina are old, built mostly in Turkish times - Mostar, Ljubuski, Pocitelj, Capljina, Trebinje and Stolac (Marković, 1980). Mostar is the largest city of the low and entire Herzegovina. It is its economic, cultural and political center. It was named after the bridge on the Neretva River, around which it developed. The famous 30m long and 20m high stone bridge was erected in 1566. The Old Bridge in Mostar is a UNESCO World Heritage Site Mostar was founded by the Turks where the old trade route from the hinterland to the sea passed through the Neretva. The poet Aleksa Santic and the writer Svetozar Corovic were born in Mostar. Capljina is located in the south of Herzegovina where the rivers Trebizat, Bregava and Krupa merge with the Neretva. Due to its geographical position, Capljina is at an important crossroads of roads, two regional roads intersect in Capljina, two main roads, railways and 5C highway. Its location, richness of water, fertile land and mild climate attracted people who have lived in these areas since the Bronze Age. Living in this area, they built habitats that are today significant cultural and historical monuments. Pocitelj and Blagaj are medieval large and important settlements. Počitelj is located on the left bank of the Neretva River, on the main road from Mostar to Metkovic, in the north of the town of Capljina. Its historic urban center dates from XIV century and is a protected national monument of BiH. Just 12 km from Mostar on the Buna River lies the magical town of Blagaj, the medieval town of the Hum state from which modern-day Herzegovina originated in the mid-15th century. From the ruins of the old town or the tower of Herceg Stjepan (ruler of these areas before the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in 1465), which is strategically located on the cliffs above the source of the Buna River, there is a beautiful panorama of the Neretva valley. On the right bank of the river, in the beautiful setting that nature can create, is Tekija, the house of a XVI century dervish, which seems to hover between rock and water; for centuries it has been a place of prayer and meditation. Stolac is an old town on Bregava, with stone towers, a fortress, narrow streets and lots of greenery. Stolac area attracted people from ancient times with

its Mediterranean charm, good water, gentle scenery and harmony of natural beauties. Illyrians and Greek sailors, Roman patricians, Eastern Gothic and Ottoman conquerors, Slavic dignitaries, Venetian warlords, Austro-Hungarian governors, and many devotees of the sun, left their mark here: graves, names on the boards — messages for those who will come after them. Not far from Stolac, on the way to Capljina, there is a large medieval *cemetery* in Radimlja with 133 tombstones (stećak), where the members of the Miloradovic-Hrabren family, the founders of the Žitomislic monastery, were buried. Trebinje is a Herzegovinian town in Trebinje field, beneath the ornate mountain Leotar, located near the Montenegro border. This old settlement existed in Roman times as the region and town of Terbunia, and in the Middle Ages it was the center of Travunia (Markovic, 1980). Trebinje is located in the basin of the river Trebišnjica, between Bileca, Ljubinje, Ravno, Herceg Novi and Dubrovnik. The city is located on the border of two tourist regions on the Adriatic, where the regions of Dubrovnik and Montenegro border. In Trebinje there are cultural values from different epochs, viewed through cultural and historical monuments, ethnographic and archeological values, settlements, works of art and cultural institutions (Vukojević, 2013). The diversity of cultural heritage is something that distinguishes Herzegovina as a richer region when it comes to the tourism market. We can talk about true wine tourism and wine routes only if they are offered along with rich cultural heritage in the tourist offer (Pivac at al, 2016).

#### History and development of viticulture and winemaking in Herzegovina

The vine (Vitis vinifera) is probably the most described and the most sung of all plants. In Herzegovina it has been grown since prehistoric times. It is known that it came to our territories through the Greeks and Romans and has a tradition of two millennia. From the coast of the Adriatic, the grapevine was expanded inland by the Greeks, and Illyrian tribes began to grow the vine and produce wine. The Illyrian Daorsi tribe, whose headquarters were in the fortified town of Daorson near Stolac, cultivated the vines long before the Romans occupied these areas. Remains of wine amphorae were found in Daorson, which was evidence of wine trade. Other Illyrian tribes living in the area of present-day Herzegovina were also involved in the cultivation of grapevines, so that the Illyrians became producers, according to historical sources and large consumers of wine (Federal Agro-Mediterranean Institute Mostar, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, Universities) in Mostar, 2018). The Romans were erecting large rural estates - rustic villas (villae rusticae) which were centers of agricultural production. These villas had all the facilities they needed for the modern economy of the time. Archaeological investigations in Herzegovina so far have established the existence of at least four such agricultural assets: in Mogorjelo and Visici near Capljina, Panic near Bileća and Bihovo near Trebinje (Śkegro, 2004). The remains of a large cellar were found in Mogorjelo, indicating that there were large areas under the vines. The grapevine in this area was an important part of agricultural production, as indicated by the relief on the entry portal, showing the grapevines and grapes (Federal Agro-Mediterranean Institute Mostar, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, University of Mostar, 2018). Land-owners and monasteries had particular merits for the expansion and promotion of viticulture in the early Middle Ages. Viticulture, grapevines and wine in the areas of Zahumlje and Bosnia, before the arrival of the Ottomans, were mentioned in several charters and documents. Among them are the charter of Prince Miroslav from XII century, King Stjepan Tomašević from 1461 (Mulić, 2010). But the most famous of these is the charter issued by ban, and later by King Tvrtko I Kotromanić 1353 near present-day Citluk, where ban and his entourage were honored with Herzegovina wine. This charter is still used today in Herzegovina as a trademark of the famous wines of Herzegovina. At that time, wine was the most popular drink in the Balkans (Federal Agro-Mediterranean Institute Mostar, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, University of Mostar, 2018). During the Austro-Hungarian rule, fruit and wine-growing stations were established, modeled on agricultural ones, and their task was to work on the improvement of fruit-growing and viticulture. These stations also had their own nurseries, so the varietal vine was planted. In Mostar, such a station was established in 1888, in Lastva near Trebinje in 1893, as a large vineyard area (Ćerimagić, 2014). Since viticulture required the training of workers, several vincilar families from Austria and Hungary moved to Lastva, who, under the direction of the station manager, worked together with domestic workers. After training the native workers, these vincilar residents would return to their home countries. The station in Lastva had 38x4 ha of vineyards, 5 ha of orchards, and the rest of the area was buildings. Of the grape varieties, the most planted were those for white wine: white Burgundy, Green Silvanus, Riesling, Semillon, Zilavka, Balant, Plemenka, yellow Muscat, and for black were grown: Karmenet, blue Portigizac, Alicante-Boushet, Shkodarka and Blatina. For the development of viticulture and winemaking, the lecturers, who were mostly station managers, played an important role. The course and practical exercises in viticulture were organized several times in Lastva, and the managers gave lectures in Stolac, Ljubuski and other places. Participation in international competitions was of great importance for export to foreign countries. Thus, in 1896, at the 'Millennium Exhibition' in Budapest, wine from Lastva was presented along with other products (vineyard and cellar devices, grape harvesters, presses, crushes, bananas, and potatoes) (Jarak, 1956). Regarding export, the government then, through two export companies from Berlin and Budapest, organized the export of Herzegovinian wines to a foreign market. Often, wine exhibitions and competitions were organized in Austria and beyond, so at the competition in 1909, in Vienna, with 1500 wine samples, the winery station from Lastva received the "Silver State Medal", which was a confirmation of the quality of wine from this region (Jarak, 1956). Today, viticulture is an extremely important branch of industry in Herzegovina, from which the processing industry, winemaking and hospitality industry has developed. In Herzegovina, more than 100,000 inhabitants live from this activity (Federal Agro-Mediterranean Institute Mostar, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, University of Mostar, 2018). For small Herzegovina growers, the vineyard is not only part of the economy, the economic wealth, the vineyard is woven into the culture of living.

# Good practice examples of established winegrowing areas in the world

Today, wine is produced around the world, from the famous and proven French vineyards to the latest wineries in Australia and South America. Each region has its own characteristics that influence the taste and style of the product (Pivac, 2012). Based on the presented wine-growing regions, the level of wine tourism development and the wine routes formed, we can see what the current state of wine tourism in Herzegovina is and what its future development prospects are. The following examples show a positive example that can be applied to wine tourism in Herzegovina.

#### France

France is an example of one of the best wine regions, producing excellent wines, with top oenological characteristics. Based on tradition of the centuries-old secrets of wine production by Christian monks, todays' wine production enables France to be at the top of the world's

producers (Pivac, 2012). The wine regions of France, specialized in the production of different types of wine are: Alsace, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champage, Corsica, Languedoc Roussillon, Loire Valley, Cotes du Rhone, Provance, South West of France (Pivac, 2012). Wine production in France dates from the Roman period. In France, wine tourism began to develop in the 1980s. Since then, the number of new vineyards opened to the public, wine routes and of course the level of tourism infrastructure has increased. Wine producers throughout France use two basic types of strategy to develop wine tourism infrastructure and tourist attraction: significant involvement of individual producers in tourism infrastructure, such as wine museums, research centers, art galleries, exhibition centers, wine routes, restaurants and accommodation; creating an unofficial network of associations and clubs, such as the Great Wine Club at Languedoc Castle, or the Bone Young Wine Professionals Association, whose joint work contributes to tourism development and joint entry into the tourism market. French wineries are not open all the time and visits must always be arranged through travel agencies or a personal call (Pivac, 2012). One of the most developed wine regions is the region of the city of Bordeaux, located near the Atlantic coast, in southwestern France. The Bordeaux wine region includes Gironde as the administrative area of the Aquitaine region. The Bordeaux wine region has an area of 60 miles (10.725 km2). The area under the vineyards is 120,000 hectares. Bordeaux is certainly the most famous, largest and oldest wine region in Europe and the world. It produces 1/3 of quality French wine, or 850 million bottles. There are about 7,000 chateaux in this region, and almost every castle is known for its wine production. There are about 13,000 wine producers (http://www.terroir-france.com/wine/bordeaux\_winemaking.htm).

#### Portugal

Portuguese wines are extremely strong, and they do not have fruit taste as the wines of other regions. Portuguese wines are produced from a very large variety of grape varieties, so for example there are as many as 18 varieties of porto. Portugal has two wine regions that are protected by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites: Duro Valley - the Douro Valley Wine Region (Douro Vinhateiro) - 2001 and Pico Island - Pico Island Wine Region (Ilha do Pico Vinhateira) - 2004. The first wine region in the world to be defined as such is the Duro Valley, which was done as early as 1756 (http://www.intowine.com/douro-valley-portugals-best-known-wine-region). It is a place where porto is produced, but also excellent, though less well known, red wines. Many quintas (farms) are open to tourists, and it is possible to taste Porto - most-ly white Porto, brown, black, but the best place is for sure the Vintage House Hotel in Pinhão. There is also a Wine Academy where tastings of every kind are organized, from beginner to specialist options (Pivac, 2012).

# Wine tourism in Herzegovina

Viticulture is a very important branch of agriculture in Herzegovina, because the development of the vine is especially affected by the climate of low Herzegovina. The best quality type of vine is the "Zilavka", which grows best in the vicinity of Mostar. *Zilavka* is mixed with other white wines (*Krkasija and Ben*) and produces excellent white wine. Mostar environment has the strongest wine-growing tradition. Notable are the Dubravsko and Ljubuško vineyards, which, in addition to white wine, give the famous red wine "Blatina". Herzegovinian Zilavka has won prizes at many international wine exhibitions, as well as *Blatina*. This vine has been

transferred to California, where it is grown under the same name. In Herzegovina, areas under vineyards occupy 3,426.82 ha (FAO, 2012). The backbone of wine tourism development in Herzegovina consists of wineries and wine cellars registered as a limited liability company (d.o.o), that is, wineries involved in the wine tourism development project in Bosnia and Herzegovina-Wine Roads of Herzegovina. The Herzegovina Wine Road project is a relatively young type of tourist valorization of the Herzegovina area, launched in 2007 under the slogan "With Wine through Time". The project includes 34 wineries and wine cellars from the municipalities of Ljubuski, Mostar, Trebinje, Capljina, Stolac and Citluk. For the purposes of this paper, we conducted field research (interview with winery owners) and a closed questionnaire in July 2019. The survey was conducted in the municipalities of Mostar, Trebinje, Capljina and Ljubuski, where the top quality wines of Herzegovina are produced. The main objective of this research is the profile of wineries and their current tourism offer, services, as well as the joint cooperation of winemakers and the tourism sector in the promotion and improvement of wine tourism in Herzegovina. Also in July 2019, a survey was conducted on the motivation of tourists to visit the wine region of Herzegovina. The aim of this research is determination of the number of visitors, recognizability of Herzegovina as a wine tourism destination in the world and satisfaction with the offer. Out of the total of 34 wineries involved in the Herzegovina Wine Road project, a complete survey was carried out in 17 wineries meeting a representative sample of 50%. In terms of surveys conducted on the motivation of tourists to visit Herzegovina as a wine tourism destination, surveys were conducted in Mostar and Trebinje, and the survey was conducted on a sample of 100 surveyed tourists. The most of the surveyed tourists were foreign tourists. The analysis of the obtained research results in the region of Herzegovina as a wine tourism region provides reliable information on the current state and recommendations for the development and improvement of wine tourism as an important element of Herzegovinian tourism offer.

# **Research results**

The survey results indicate that most wineries are located in vineyards located near the tourist reception and wine tasting facilities. Most wineries do not offer accommodation as part of their offer, but only a reception area for tourists who taste wine (86%), while 14% of wineries offer accommodation to tourists. In addition, 85.7% of wineries have a wine cellar, while 15% of wineries do not have a wine cellar. In the largest percentage of 85.8%, the winery primary function is to sell wine. Some wineries offer traditional food, 60% of them, while 40% of respondents do not offer traditional food. Also, 70% of the winery managers surveyed said that they were working on organizing events dedicated to wine and that an increased number of visits to their winery was noticed. When it comes to signaling, 57.14% of respondents believe that there is adequate signaling and that it is easy to get to the winery, 28% of respondents believe that signaling is not satisfactory and that the arrival of tourists is hampered by poor traffic infrastructure. Winery information is available online and through tour guides and on the tourist map. When it comes to cooperation with other wineries and involvement in networks, 71.5% of wineries responded that they were a member or partner of certain association of winemakers and that they cooperated most within Bosnia and Herzegovina (72%), Serbia (42.8%), Montenegro (28.57%) and Croatia (28.6%). None of the wineries surveyed has collaboration with wineries in Europe. When asked about following good practices in wine tourism and familiarity with the Vinest Network, 28% of respondents answered positively, while 72% of wineries

did not follow good practices and were not familiar with the Vinest Network. All interviewees agreed that it was necessary to improve the offer of wine tourism in Herzegovina. For the purposes of this paper, we conducted a survey with tourists about the motives and satisfaction of visiting Herzegovina. We conducted the survey in Mostar and Trebinje, as centers where the most developed material base is tourism. The largest numbers of surveyed tourists are foreign tourists (Netherlands, Iceland, Norway, Italy, Turkey, Portugal, France, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Canada, China and Malaysia) and a smaller number of domestic tourists. The research shows that the primary reason for their visit to Herzegovina is cultural tourism, and, also, visiting Herzegovina vineyards, learning about Herzegovina wines and trying traditional dishes. Only 30% of tourists surveyed said that their reason for visiting Herzegovina was to stay in a rural area, to visit vineyards and wine manifestations. During their stay in Herzegovina, 51% of tourists surveyed visited Herzegovina vineyards and tasted local food and wine. About 49% of surveyed tourists were informed about Herzegovina wineries through tourist guides and the Internet, while 48% of surveyed tourists were not informed about wineries and wine tourism in Herzegovina, and 41% of tourists said that Herzegovina was known as a wine region in their country. The largest numbers of surveyed tourists were located in the city in accommodation units not located near vineyards (75%), while only 17% of surveyed tourists were located near vineyards. During their stay in Herzegovina tourists stated that they had opportunity to consume local wine every day. The largest number of tourists, 63%, said it was necessary to improve the offer of wine tourism in Herzegovina. When it comes to satisfaction with the offer, 2.33% of tourists rated the service as poor, 9.30% as sufficient, 25.58% as good, 34.88% as very good and 15.68% rated the service excellent. In order to improve the tourist offer of wine tourism in Herzegovina, the research points to the necessity to educate winemakers about the concept of wine tourism. One of the elementary entrepreneurial activities in wine tourism is to increase the quality of space and create an atmosphere of hospitality for the reception of tourists, especially accommodation facilities, and to improve the offer in own winery with a focus on ethno-gastronomic offer. Research has highlighted the need for better business connectivity with winemakers and partners from Europe and the adoption of good practices in order to create a recognizable wine destination in the tourism market. In Herzegovina, wine should become the basis for organizing cultural and entertainment events with greater involvement of tourists in these events.

# Conclusion

Herzegovina has a tradition and culture of grapevine cultivation and wine production that should be applied in the model of wine tourism development. It is an area where there is a long tradition in vine growing and wine production and where wine tourism is in its infancy. In the region and beyond Herzegovina is perceived as a cultural specificity of BiH and the Western Balkans. However, not only natural and anthropogenic comparative advantages are enough to catch and keep up with the tourism market. Market challenges and tourism products need to be created. These challenges, according to the experiences of other numerous destinations, begin with their total openness to all. In the case of Herzegovina, this practically means that the portfolio of its tourist offer starts dispersing on all four sides of the world attracting tourists from all continents. Wine and tourism in Herzegovina have not been sufficiently complemented in their development so far. There are few examples of wine being the primary motive for visiting Herzegovina. The research results indicate that a much greater degree of cooperation between the tourism sector and Herzegovina wine producers is needed. It is necessary to improve the existing tourist offer based on the examples of good practice in developed winegrowing regions in the world, and in a strategic sense to position wine tourism through the integral tourist offer of Herzegovina. It is necessary to affirm the area as a wine tourism region that will be recognized internationally. Winemakers and the tourism sector can only together create a special form of tourism offering that will have wine as a cultural experience and gastronomic pleasure, and will be the primary motive for tourists to come. There are numerous economic and social benefits from wine tourism in the wine region. It is certain that wine tourism can significantly contribute to the increase of competitiveness, and also, with the better valorisation of natural and traditional values, it can contribute to the current problem of depopulation of rural areas in Herzegovina.

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# INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM -A CASE STUDY OF SOKOBANJA

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#### Abstract

Tourism is a phenomenon that has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The impact of tourism is extremely versatile. Tourism, on the one hand, has a positive impact on socio-economic development, and on the other hand it can produce some negative impacts on the environment, culture and way of life of the local population. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the sustainable development of the tourist destination. This paper will present the results of the application of comparative indicators of EU for sustainable tourism on the example of Sokobanja. Sokobanja, which is affirmed spa center of Serbia, deserves planned development of tourism in all fields, in order to become more friendly oriented to the nature, local culture and way of life of the residents. Due to the lack of information that is necessary for measuring sustainable tourism according to EU criteria, some indicators have not been implemented, but the author's opinion about them has been given. The results showed that Sokobanja tourism is developing without a concrete plan, and it is necessary to take steps as soon as possible, so that tourism will have no negative impact on nature and society.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, indicators of EU for sustainable tourism, Sokobanja

### Introduction

The globalization of capitalism, population migrations, the advancement of transport and communication technologies in the 20th century, have made tourism one of the world's leading industries. Tourism is a phenomenon that directly and indirectly affects employment growth (Coccossis, 2008), contributes to numerous benefits for both tourists and locals, and also mediates cultural exchange (Besculides et al., 2002). Tourism affects other socio-economic sectors, thereby promoting the improvement of infrastructure and public services (Fletcher, 2008). In addition to positive impacts, tourism also produces negative effects that are reflected in environmental degradation and negative socio-cultural impact. The unplanned growth of tourism has brought many damages to the natural and cultural-social environment of many tourist destinations (Choi andSirakaya, 2006). All this has indicated that more attention is paid to development planning in general and tourism development in particular. The World

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Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) has released the first sustainability report called "Our Common Future", which has been supported by several international organizations, and has defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (WCED, 1987). The notion of sustainable tourism emerged in the late 1980s and became firmly established in tourism policy and development strategy for many tourism destinations (Hall, 2011). The World Tourism Organization - WTO (1993) defines sustainable tourism as an activity that focuses on resource management in a way that meets all economic, social and aesthetic needs, while respecting cultural integrity, basic ecological processes, biological diversity and lifestyles. Jovičić (2000) gives his concept of sustainable tourism, which means respecting and meeting the needs of tourists on the one hand and tourist destinations on the other, without jeopardizing the possibility of achieving these goals in the future at the same or higher level. Sustainable tourism development requires a detailed plan. However, the plan itself is not sufficient if it is not properly implemented. One of the main activities of following the sustainable development of tourism is monitoring, apropos measuring sustainability. Measuring the sustainability of tourism development in a tourist destination is a very important element of development. This is especially important for destinations that have started to develop tourism or that tourism is developing intensively from year to year (Petrosillo et al., 2006; 2007). Achieving sustainable tourism involves continuous monitoring of impacts and proposing solutions and corrective measures whenever necessary (UNWTO, 2016). Today, sustainability is one of the factors of competitiveness of tourist destinations (ECORYS, 2009; WEF, 2015).

#### Description of the research area

The Sokobanja basin is located in the central part of eastern Serbia. It covers an area of 525.5 km<sup>2</sup>. The Sokobanja basin is a part of the mountain-basin-valley macro-region, that is, the eastern Serbia mesoregion (Markovićand Pavlović, 1995). It is surrounded by mountains of medi-



Map 1. Geographic location of the municipality of Sokobanja within the borders of Serbia Source: www.sokobanja.com (modificated)

um height. The Sokobanja Basin is located between the Moravian Basin in the west and Timocki in the east (Radivojević et al., 2010).

Rich natural environment is a good basis for tourism development in the Sokobanja region. The abundance and diversity of natural tourist values is a major feature of the area. Anthropogenic tourist values that are represented on the territory of Sokobanja municipality by archeological, ethnographic and monumental tourist values are of great importance for the development of rural tourism and represent complementary tourist values (Radivojević and Dimitrijević, 2005).

#### Methodology

Many scientists have given their views on measuring the sustainability of tourism, and they have proposed methods for measuring this phenomenon (Castellani and Sala, 2010; Blancas et al., 2010; Torres-Delgado and Palomeque, 2014). Measurement is most often based on the application of a multidimensional concept. This concept usually measures 3 areas. These are the impact of tourism on the economy, the environment and socio-cultural impact (Blancas et al., 2010; Lozano et al., 2009; Paracchini et al., 2011; Tanguay et al., 2010). However, not every model is applicable to a particular destination. Destinations differ on the basis of attractive and dominant motives, so it is necessary to devise a more universal model for measuring sustainability in order to compare the results obtained with destinations that are similarly in motives.

Sustainable tourism indicators are defined as "a set of measures that provide the necessary information to better understand the link between the impact of tourism on the cultural and natural environment in which it takes place and on which it strongly depends" (WTO, 1996). Indicators allow measuring and describing the reality of the observed phenomenon in terms of obtaining objective parameters. These parameters should provide a simplified and comparable view of a complex phenomenon and facilitate the understanding of processes and elements in a particular territory (Schernewski et al., 2014). Indicators can describe a situation and monitor its evolution, and thus identify weaknesses and strengths of the applied development model (Crabtree and Bayfield, 1998; Gahin, et al., 2003; James, 2004).

For the purposes of this research, many papers on sustainable tourism and sustainable development have been analyzed. This paper will present the results obtained by applying the EU Sustainable Tourism Indicators in the Sokobanja. EU indicators are presented in detail by Jovičić (2000). Economic, environmental, social, cultural and tourist satisfaction indicators were measured. Each of these major indicators has its own sub-indicators. Based on the obtained results, limit values for each indicator are formed. The results are evaluated as critical, tolerable or viable. The coding system introduces 3 zones. The red zone indicates a critical situation that requires immediate corrective action. The yellow zone signifies a tolerable situation, but also a fear of a progressive growth of tourism in the coming period that would impair sustainability. The green zone signifies a sustainable development of tourism in a certain area as a result of quality tourism management.

Indicator type	Indicator	Interpretation
	Seasonal traffic pattern: % of high season visits (3 months)	< 40% green zone 40-50% yellow zone >50% red zone
Economic indicators	The ratio between overnights and accommodation	> 150 green zone 120-150 yellow zone < 120 red zone
	Local tourist multiplier coefficient	not yet determined
Tourist satisfaction	Repeated Visits:% of repeat visits over a 5 year period	>50% green zone 30-50% yellow zone <30% red zone
Cultural indicators	The ratio between accommodation capacity and local population	<1,1:1 green zone 1,1-1,5:1 yellow zone >1,6:1 red zone
Cultural indicators	Tourism intensity: number of nights (000) by number of inhabitants (00)	<1,1:1 green zone 1,1-1,5:1 yellow zone >1,6:1 red zone
	Participation of tourism in the local net social product	should be compared with the share of tourism in local employment
Social indicators	% of tourists who do not come through a tour operator	>70% green zone 50-70% yellow zone <50% red zone
	Land -% of land on which construction is permitted but not realized	< 10% green zone 10-20% yellow zone >20% red zone
Environmental Indicators	Land use and occupation:% change in area construction over 5 years	not yet determined
	Traffic:% arrival of tourists who do not use a private car	>20% green zone 10-20% yellow zone < 10% red zone

Table 1. EU Sustainable Tourism Comparative Indicators

Source: Jovičić (2000)

# **Economic indicators**

Economic indicators show the economic effects of tourism in a destination, area or region. These include: the seasonal character of tourist traffic, the ratio of tourist nights and accommodations and the coefficient of tourist increase.

#### Seasonal character of tourist traffic

The seasonal character of tourist traffic is shown in Table 2. Monthly tourist turnover for a period of 5 years was measured. Based on the table we can conclude that most of the tourist traffic takes place during the summer season (June, July and August). According to EU indicators, tourist turnover is measured in the 3 busiest months. In this case it is june, july and august. On average, 63.48% is realized in this period, while in the other 9 months 36.52% of turnover is realized. Based on these data, it can be concluded that the measured indicator is in the red zone, it indicates an alarming state. The stressed concentration over a full season

brings increased pressure on the natural and social elements of the offer. In order to distribute the traffic more evenly throughout the year, it is necessary to develop forms of tourism that are not strictly seasonal. Developing congress, eco-tourism, geo-tourism, student and youth tourism would alleviate the pressure during the season.

	2018	В.	201	7.	201	6.	201	5.	2014	4.	average
	number of tourists	%									
January	6049	5,97	1633	3,02	1736	3,78	1788	4,29	1698	4	4,21%
February	1945	1,92	84	0,15	125	0,27	98	0,23	87	0,2	0,55%
March	3048	3,01	154	0,28	1113	2,42	325	0,77	651	1,53	1,60%
April	6105	6,03	3247	6,02	2602	5,66	1359	3,26	1564	3,68	4,93%
May	11097	10,96	6214	11,52	5945	12,94	5678	13,62	5741	13,52	12,51%
Jun	15412	15,23	9012	16,71	7784	16,95	6988	16,76	6778	15,97	16,32%
July	19169	19,01	11547	21,47	9047	19,70	9007	21,61	9545	22,49	20,85%
August	23167	22,89	14845	27,53	11661	25,39	11254	27	12213	28,77	26,31%
September	8084	7,99	5654	10,48	3987	8,68	3414	8,19	2414	5,68	8,2%
October	2048	2,02	212	0,39	317	0,69	133	0,31	199	0,46	0,77%
November	1019	1	159	0,29	114	0,24	78	0,18	101	0,23	0,39%
December	4024	3,97	1154	2,14	1487	3,23	1554	3,72	1447	3,40	3,29%
Total	101.167	100	53.915	100	45918	100	41676	100	42438	100	100%

Table 2. Number of tourists per month during the year

*Source: Tourist organisation of municipality of Sokobanja (TOOS)* 

# The ratio of tourist nights to accommodation

The ratio of tourist nights accommodation shows the turnover that is made in the destination. The Catering Act (Zakonom o ugostiteljstvu) stipulates that the categorization of facilities is carried out every 3 years, it is valid for 3 years (Zakon o ugostiteljstvu: 17/2019-34), after which it is necessary to renew the categorization. For the purposes of this paper, categorization includes hotel facilities, apartments, rooms and studios, as well as categorized farm households. It should be mentioned that in Sokobanja, there are about 30% of non-categorized accommodation establishments that are engaged in tourism. We will not take this number for the purposes of this research. We also did not count the former giants of Sokobanja tourism (Zdravljak Hotel and Tourist Hotel) that are in the process of privatization and facilities are not operational.

Year	2018.	2017.	2016	2015.	2014.
No. of overnight	535.616,0	268.710,0	226.235,0	306.836,0	170.006,0
No. of beds	5.931,0	5.647,0	5.313,0	5.397,0	5.354,0
Ratio of overnights to number of beds	90,3	47,5	42,5	56,8	31,7

**Table 3.** The ratio between number of nights and number of beds

Source: TOOS

According to EU experts, the ratio of these factors should not be less than 120 nights per bed per year. Any result above 120 nights is acceptable and a score above 150 is considered sustainable. In our case, the number of nights in 2018, which has the highest number of overnights in the observed period, is 90.3 nights per bed per year. This result is below the required minimum and is considered the red zone, that is, the critical zone. If we look at other periods, we will see that the results are well below the optimum, which requires a better conceptualized tourist offer, in order to increase the profitability threshold. This indicator should be viewed with caution. In the case of sustainability, capacity occupancy would be between 30-50%, which is certainly contrary to the economic aspect.

#### The coefficient of local tourist multiplier

The coefficient of local tourist multiplier shows all direct and indirect impacts that tourism consumption and employment have on the local economy. It is already known that primary tourism consumption induces a whole range of further consumption and this has a positive effect on the economy of the destination and the wider environment. Sokobanja has a long tradition of organized tourism, and is a logical subordination of the Sokobanja economy to tourism.

#### **Tourist satisfaction**

Tourist satisfaction is measured by repeated visits of tourists over a 5 year period. According to EU indicators, if the percentage of tourists who visit a certain destination again within a period of 5 years is between 30-50%, it can be said that the destination is attractive. The destination provides pleasure to tourists and with its facilities it makes repeated tourist visits. This indicator requires surveying tourists over a long period of time, which is time consuming. For the purposes of this research, we will take a survey by the TOOS, which was conducted in August 2018. on a sample of 954 guests in Sokobanja. One of the items measured is the desire to visit it again in the coming (2019) year. Survey results showed that 85% of respondents would repeat their visit next year, 11% of respondents were not sure that they would repeat the visit in the next year, and 4% of respondents did not plan to visit again in the near future. These results are not in line with the EU indicator that measures repeat tourist visits over a 5-year period, but it does provide some results.

### **Cultural indicators**

#### The ratio of accommodation capacity and local population

An indicator of the relationship between accommodation capacity and local population indicates the impact of tourism on architecture, over- or under-construction. The local community is under great pressure when the number of beds is 1.6 times higher than the population, and this situation is considered unfavorable. A ratio of 1.5: 1 or less is more acceptable to the local community, and tourism then exerts less pressure. If we take the year 2018, the ratio of accommodation capacity to local population is 0.4: 1 at the municipal level. If we look only at Sokobanja then this ratio is 0.75: 1. In both cases, this indicator is positive, it is in the green zone. This means that tourism is sustainable according to the aforementioned indicator and does not have a negative impact on the cultural identity of the local community. It can be concluded that there was no saturation of the tourist area.

#### Intensity of tourism

The tourism intensity indicator represents the degree of cultural saturation of the local environment. The high intensity of tourism has a negative impact on the local community, damaging its cultural identity and reducing the quality of the tourist experience. This indicator is expressed by the ratio of the annual number of tourist nights (expressed in thousands "ooo") and the number of domicile population (expressed in hundreds "oo"). It is very difficult to follow this indicator and provide accurate data, since it is also necessary to calculate the number of day trips that also influence the cultural influence and saturation of space. If we take 2018 as a benchmark, we get a 6.7: 1 ratio, well above the allowable range and entering the red zone of the indicator. However, this proportion depends on the type of destination and should be treated with caution.

# Social indicators

#### Tourism participation in the local net social product

The participation of tourism in the local net social product shows the extent to which the local community benefits from tourism development. The participation of tourism in a social product varies by destination type, and in most cases it should be presented as the level of employment of the local population in tourism (Jovičić, 2000). Given that some businesses have direct links with tourism and some indirect ones, it is very difficult to determine the number of locals employed in tourism in a tourist destination. There are also seasonal fluctuations in the number of direct and indirect workers in tourism during the year due to the pronounced seasonal nature of tourism. For the purposes of the survey, we were unable to obtain data on the number of locals employed in tourism, since such records are not kept anywhere.

#### Independence of the local tourism industry

An indicator of the usefulness of tourism to a local community or the independence of the local tourism industry shows the relationship between the percentage of tourist visits made through direct booking and the percentage of visitors arriving through foreign or outbound tour operators (Jovičić, 2000). This indicator can be more clearly displayed in the places that generate the highest number of tourists, mainly coastal and mountain places. In the spa resorts, the role of the intermediary is slightly less represented, so the participation of the intermediary or tour operator is much lower. In Sokobanja, in particular, there is not a single tour operator operating in this destination, but the locals are directed to directly contact potential tourists. We can conclude that Sokobanja as a tourist destination is in the green zone, that is, based on this indicator, sustainable tourism development is taking place(TOOS).

# **Environmental Indicators**

Environmental indicators include land use for construction, changes in land use intentions and tourist arrivals by type of transport. The indicator of land use for tourism construction is the ratio of the surface of land for tourist construction and its part on which construction has already been realized. The indicator of change in land use purpose is the percentage of change in agricultural land use over a period of time, usually 5 years (Jovičić, 2000). The spatial plan of the municipality of Sokobanja from 2014. did not take more seriously the measurement of the surface intended for tourist construction and the part of the land on which the construction has already been realized. Without this information, it is not possible to rate this parameter. We can say the same for the indicator of change in land use.

An indicator measuring tourists' arrivals by type of transport indicates the potential for traffic congestion, parking problems, noise levels and air quality in a particular area. For the purposes of this research, we will use the number of paid parking tickets through the SMS service organized in Sokobanja. Sokobanja has 460 designated parking spaces, and a very big problem occurs during the 3 impact months when more than 2000 vehicles pass through Sokobanja daily.

Month/Year	2016.	2017.	2018.	2019.
January	722	3720	2167	2130
February	1162	691	2336	2020
March	1646	1111	2319	3246
April	3102	2654	2864	3354
May	3998	4009	4361	6810
Jun	3797	2939	5971	6412
July	4897	4502	10612	17693
August	8005	5574	15283	
September	3012	3994	10680	
October	1263	1370	1241	
November	2766	1024	3233	
December	1512	4381	4490	

Source: JKP Napredak Sokobanja

Based on the table (Table 4), it can be concluded that high traffic pressures occur in the 3 most visited months during the year. About 50% of paid parking tickets occur in June, July and August. In those months, the greatest traffic congestion and parking problem were present. Increased concentration of the car leads to increased noise and air pollution. Since the marked parking spaces are located around the center of Sokobanja, traffic jams are disturbing not only locals but tourists as well. One solution is to reduce the number of parking spaces around the city center and distribute it to the peripheral parts of the city, to reduce traffic pressures in the center.

#### Other environmental indicators

Other environmental indicators include the amount of energy consumed, the consumption and purification of water, the generation of solid waste... It is rare that a destination in Serbia measures these parameters, so it is difficult to provide accurate data on these indicators. What can be recommended is that each individual should rationally treat the resources that are necessary in daily life in order to keep the environment at a satisfactory level. This refers to the use of electricity, drinking water, solid and liquid waste, etc.

As an indicator of the state of the environment, we will use water consumption throughout the year. In Sokobanja, 95% of the territory is covered by a water supply network. The annual drinking water flow is more than 1,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>. The main problem with water supply is losses occurring in the network. Losses occurring from water stations to end users are between 45% -50%. The main reason for this is outdated secondary water pipes that are over 30 years old. A big problem arises during the summer months when pressures on the water network are greatest. Some parts of Sokobanja remain without drinking water for several days during the tourist season, which is unacceptable for a spa tourist place. This is a burning problem that has not been solved for the last 30 years. Water scarcity is a big negative advertisement for a tourist place which is one of the most visited in Serbia. The discontent of the locals and tourists is noticeable due to the inability to meet basic living needs. The basic task would be to renovate the existing water supply network and minimize losses.

month/year	2016.	2017.	2018.
January	42513	45001	43124
February	43357	46512	46021
March	47007	47208	48716
April	51363	52418	53798
May	53366	58243	59937
Jun	70684	79331	77917
July	76355	81564	83919
August	83698	88457	91168
September	59739	61024	63478
October	51937	50246	52151
November	43587	44561	43912
December	58316	58512	56876

Source: JKP Napredak Sokobanja

It can be observed that the water consumption is much higher in the summer months (Table 5). In the three months of the high tourist season (June, July, August), about 40% of water is consumed in relation to annual consumption. In August, consumption doubled over the off-season period. This can be justified by the increased concentration of tourists during this period.

# Conclusion

Sustainable development of tourism should aim to improve the quality of life of residents by optimizing local economic benefits, protecting the natural and built environment and providing a quality visitor experience. The sustainable development of a tourist destination should ensure a long-term economic link between the destination communities and industries. It should also minimize the negative effects of tourism on the environment and improve the socio-cultural well-being of communities (Choi andSirakaya, 2006). It is very difficult to achieve sustain tourism development. But in addition, it is a great challenge to respond to acceptable sustainability limits. Certainly it is the task of all stakeholders in tourism to pay attention and contribute to the sustainable development of the tourist destination, so that tourism can develop smoothly in the future. Based on the research conducted in this paper, it is concluded that Sokobanja does not develop sustainable tourism. The resources and other elements that make up the tourist offer are used irrationally. This can lead to problems in further development. Tourism organized in this way can have lasting consequences on the nature and society of the tourist destination. The absence of specific data to be used in this research makes the results of this paper limited. Although no data were provided for all the above parameters, an image can be created about the sustainable development of tourism in the Sokobanja municipality. This work may provide an incentive to start more serious environmental monitoring in the future in order to understand and remedy a potential problem in the future. Sustainable development would enable a long-term environmentally friendly tourism development process. That is why it is necessary to put the theory into practice as soon as possible. Long-term and moderate tourism development will bring positive things to all tourism stakeholders in a particular destination.

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# SIGNIFICANCE OF THEATER TOURISM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM OFFER IN SERBIA

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# Abstract

The need for opening a discussion on this subject arises, above all, from the increasing interest in culture and selective forms of tourism, especially tourism related to theater and film. As a relatively new type of tourism, theater tourism is not fully recognized in all parts of the world, although its impact is increasingly evident. Only a few decades ago, countries that are financially stable were among the first to effectively connect tourism with the theater offer. In order to be able to promote the theater tourism in one state, it is necessary to have a significant number of theaters and that the economic and political situation in that country are at a high level. The aim of this paper is to show the extent to which this form of tourism has been developed globally and to compare it with the theater tourism in European countries and then with the theater tourism in the larger cities of Serbia. Serbia, with its rich history, cultural offer and traffic connections, is a country very favorable for the development of theater tourism. With a long history and recognizable theaters, Serbia has the necessary potential to develop and improve this offer. Expansion of theater and cultural tourism can influence the increase in traffic of tourists and the various influences (economic, psychological, social, cultural etc.) on the development of the tourism destination in which the theater is located. Tourists who participate in the theater tourism usually experience other forms of tourism that are characteristic of a certain destination. Theater tourism can be defined as a kind of connector of similar cultural contents of one destination. The paper is based on the collection and processing of data from domestic and foreign literature, as well as data from official websites. In addition, descriptive and statistical method, comparison, qualitative and quantitative analysis will be used.

Keywords: Theatre tourism, Cultural tourism, Tourism offer, Improvement, Serbia.

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### Introduction

Theater or playhouse is a stage art event in which communication between actors and the audience takes place. Theater is a collaborative art form that utilizes live performers, typically actors and actresses, to present live the experience of a real or imagined event in front of an audience in a particular place, often on stage. Performers can communicate this experience to the audience through a combination of gesture, speech, song, music and dance. Elements of art such as scenery and performing arts such as lighting are used to enhance the physical, present and immediate experience. A specific place of performance is called "theater", which is a word derived from the ancient Greek word théatron, (a place to look). Unlike arts such as painting, film or sculpture, which have their material form regardless of time and space, theater is closely related to the space and time in which a particular theater piece is being performed, which is why the word theater is identified with both the space or the building in which the plays are performed and the group of people who make up the theater troupe (Brown, 2013). Today, there is a growing interest in culture and selective forms of tourism, especially tourism related to theater and film (Song and Cheung, 2012). This topic should cover a variety of areas and interests that are primarily educational and address the problem of culture and its cultivation, and should be accessible and receptive both to tourists already familiar with this form of tourism and those who are having the first encounter with content of this type.

It is important to show the extent to which this form of tourism is developed globally and to compare it with theatre tourism in European countries and then with theater tourism in the main cultural centers of Serbia. Also, it should be pointed out that theater tourism does not only have educational and cultural significance, but also affects the development of the economy in the destinations where it is present, as well as the development of the local economy, and certainly the social and psychological panoramas of the local population (Archer et al. 2003; Morrison, 2010).

As a relatively new form of cultural and selective tourism, theater tourism is not fully recognized in all parts of the world, although its impact is increasingly felt. Countries that are financially stable are among the first to begin developing this type of tourism, that is, effectively linking tourism with theater offer. For a country to be able to promote this type of tourism, it is necessary for the economic and political situation in the country to be stable. A very important factor is the attractiveness of a certain destination, which, apart from food and accommodation, is able to offer modern tourists an adequate program, in the form of excursions, cultural and educational lectures, theater and film institutions and entertainment and relaxation facilities (Ivanković, 2019).

#### Examples of world theater tourism

The increasing expansion of the tourism of theater in the world is greatly contributed by the increasing number of old, traditional and newly established theater festivals on every continent. These festivals are mostly present in North America, Europe and Australia, while in Africa this form of cultural tourism is still on the rise.



Figure 1. & 2. Popularization of both foreign and domestic theatres Source: Ivanković, 2019.

# The Impact of Broadway and the Broadway League on the US Economy and Tourism

Theater tourism, as a kind of variation on cultural tourism in the United States, can most certainly be tied to New York and Broadway. In addition to Times Square, this boulevard features many theaters. Broadway Theater, also known as Broadway, refers to theater performances that are performed in forty-one professional theaters, each with a capacity of five hundred or more seats, located in the Theater District and Lincoln Center along Broadway, New York. In addition to London's West End, Broadway represents the highest level of English speaking commercial theater. The Theater District is a popular tourist attraction in New York. Most people equate the professional theatre with the Broadway stage in New York City. However, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, had a severe dampening effect on theatre attendance. Business on Broadway plummeted more than 60 percent after 9-11. During the week following the attacks Kiss Me, Kate, for example grossed \$ 84, 766 in it abbreviated five performance schedule, out of an adjusted potential of \$ 518, 864. Even half – price ticket sales were down by more than 70% during that week (Archer et. al, 2003.)According to Broadway League statistics, for the 2017-2018 season (ending May 27, 2018), the total number of visits was 13,792,614, with gross revenue of \$1,697,458,795, with a 3.9% increase in visits and an increase in gross revenue of 17.1% (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway\_theatre).

Most Broadway shows are of a commercial nature intended to profit both producers and investors, and therefore have open series (the length of time the production plays), meaning that the length of their presentation is not set in advance, but depends on critical response, oral presentation and effective advertising of shows. And all of that determine ticket sales. Investing in a commercial production carries a different degree of financial risk. Performances do not immediately make a profit; if they made their "nut" (weekly operating costs), or lost money at a rate acceptable to producers, they could continue to operate in the expectation that they

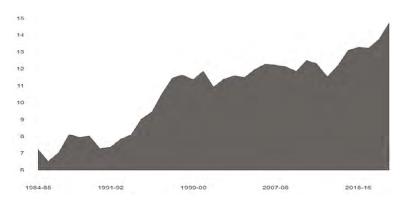


Figure 3. Broadway visitors per season, expressed in millions Source: www.broadwayleague.com/research/grosses-broadway-nyc/

would eventually return to their initial costs and become profitable. In some borderline situations, producers may demand that copyrights be temporarily reduced or declined, or even that performers - with the permission of their unions - take reduced wages to prevent the show from closing. Theater owners, who are generally not involved in most productions, can give up or reduce their rents, or even borrow the show money to keep it running (www.broadway.org/ broadway-theatres).

Although there are exceptions, permanent repertoire theaters usually have evening performances Tuesday through Saturday. Afternoon performances, so-called matinees are at 14:00 on Wednesdays and Saturdays and at 15:00 on Sundays. This rounds out the week with eight performances. Based on this schedule, most plays are not played on Monday. The cast and crew of these shows consider Sunday night through Monday night as their holiday weekend. Also, the Tony Award Ceremony is usually held Sunday evening in June to fit this schedule (www. broadway.org/broadway-theatres).

In recent years, some theaters have shifted the showtime on Tuesdays an hour earlier. The reason for this move was that fewer tourists come to theaters in the middle of the week, thus the capacity utilization is largely dependent on local audiences. An earlier curtain allows suburban visitors to return to their homes within a reasonable time after the performance is over. Some spectacles, especially those produced by Disney, change their performance schedules quite often depending on the season. This is done to maximize access to the target audience (www.broadway.org/broadway-theatres).

Both Broadway musicals and theaters often resort to hiring well-known film performers, assigning them leading roles to attract as many audiences or bring new audiences to the theater. Film and television actors often deal with the "revival" of some unsolicited Broadway shows or the replacement of actors leaving the project. However, there are still performers who are primarily actors, who spend most of their time "on the boards", and their jobs on television and film do not represent their primary source of income (www.broadway.org/broadway-theatres).

Going to Broadway theaters is a common tourist activity in New York. Authorized TKTS ticket sellers on their booths sell tickets on the same day (and, in some cases, tickets for the next matinees) for many Broadway events at a discount of 20 percent to 50 percent. TKTS stands are located in Times Square, Lower Manhattan, and Lincoln Center. This service is sponsored by the Theater Development Fund. Many Broadway theaters also offer special student rates, "last-minute deals", "lottery" tickets, or stand-up tickets so that their theaters are always filled and their income is, of course, higher. According to the Broadway League, Broad-

way total attendance was 14.77 million in the 2018-2019 season, compared to 13.79 million in the 2017-2018 season. The Broadway League also reports that about 66% of all tickets were purchased by tourists in the 2012-2013 season, an increase of three percent from 2011. By comparison, London's West End Theater reported a total of 14.3 million viewers for major commercial events in central London for 2009 (www.broadway.org/broadway-theatres).

After or even during successful performances in Broadway theaters, producers often "refresh" their productions with a new cast and crew preparing for a national Broadway tour, which travels to theaters in major cities across the country. Sometimes, when a show ceases to run, the entire production, with most, if not all, of the original lineup, presents its project by going on a nation-wide tour (hence the name "Broadway National Tour"). The rights to some plays can be bought from multiple companies for other theaters outside Broadway, whether or not the performance is still being performed in New York. Smaller cities can attract national tourism companies, but for shorter periods of time. These are diminutive versions of larger, national touring productions, which have historically been given their names because the actors mostly traveled by bus and not by plane, while kits and equipment were transported by truck. Tours of this type, which often have reduced physical production to accommodate smaller spaces and stricter schedules, often take weeks rather than months. Production values are usually less lavish than typical Broadway national tours or national tour productions, and actors, while still members of the actors' union, are compensated under a different, less lucrative, union contract.

Broadway productions and artists have the chance to earn the privilege of the annual Antoinette Perry Award (commonly referred to as the "Tony Award", or "Tony"), sponsored by organizations such as the American Theater Wing and The Broadway league, first introduced in 1947. Tony is the most prestigious award for Broadway theater productions, which can be compared to the Hollywood Academy Awards. Their importance has increased since 1967 when the awards ceremony began to air on national television. For the sake of improving television ratings, celebrities are often chosen to host the festivities (www.broadway.org/broadway-theatres).

# The intersection of tourism and culture and their significance for Nigeria and the Nigerian State of the River

Tourism and theater are compatible businesses. Not only do they entertain and attract audiences, they also make enormous contributions to the national economy. Although the two industries can exist and operate independently, the combination of their functions brings together more people in one place. A well-developed tourism industry can be presented in the theater with all its beauty and the benefits of a country. Similarly, theater productions are the "strings" on which effective tourism can rest. The two industries seem to be facing a common problem, especially in Nigeria. In the first place, there is the condemnation of some members of the next generation of churches who see tourism and other cultural and theatrical activities as dishonorable and "devilish."Secondly, tourism is viewed negatively as a way of promoting immorality. These attitudes seriously affect the development of tourism and theater, and must be opposed from the professional and cultural side (Bell-Gam, 2009).

Like tourism, theater has astounding potential for state development. First of all, it possesses pedagogical qualities that design teaching and learning as fun, and it enlightens society, while also providing some form of comfort. Theater is reforming society and creating an ideal environment that is at the service of enriching humanity. It is an agent of political agitation, social and economic reform. Theater has played a major role in eradicating apartheid in South Africa through performances by the Ipitombi Theater, which is still very fresh in people's memories. In Nigeria, Hubert Ogunde has effectively used theater to combat British colonization. In essence, two industries - tourism and theater are a compatible path for artistic expression with great potential for Nigeria's development. The Nigerian River State has an exciting cultural tradition and theatrical performances as major manifestations. There are two types of theater in the country:

- traditional/indigenous theater;
- modern traditional theater.

Traditional/indigenous theater includes performances that have mimetic characteristics, some elements of conflict, which have arisen from the cultural heritage of the people. The culture of the people is the main instrument by which it is communicated, be it dance, masquerade, various types of acrobatics, wrestling or music. Culture is a certain way of relating to time, objects, money, history and environment. It is the quality of relationships people develop between themselves. Given this definition of culture, the validity of the use of stories originating from myths and legends told to achieve theater goals is not in doubt (Bell-Gam, 2009).

The theater has several impacts on tourism that are important to mention. In one case, the theater sustains tourism through the qualities of leisure and entertainment. On the other hand, the theater provides cultural insights to visitors. Those in charge of Rivers culture and tourism advocate the following view -instead of explaining the culture of the city orally to tourists, tourists can first experience and then understand the Rivers native culture through costume, singing, acting, music, dance, stage, the beauty of the scenery and language. Finally, tourism is of political importance through theater. Much of politics can be communicated and propagated. As can be seen, political issues are the subject of most historical plays. In addition, the theater provides research materials, which provide knowledge about the environment, traditions and cultures of the Rivers people. On the other hand, theater enhances the interaction between tourists, artists and the audience. It also enhances the international image of the country. Finally, cashbacks, including sponsorship fees, improve the economy of EU countries (Ibhafidon, 2005).

Since it is clear that tourism and theater are vital tools for the economic, social and cultural growth of a nation, there is an absolute need to devise their profitable survival strategies. The following options are necessary to achieve these goals:

- The Rivers locals need to maintain and preserve their traditional cultural tourism with some adjustment to the realities of modern tourism.
- Acceptance of comfort as the main focus in tourism of every local.
- Employees should be encouraged to take vacations, as well as plan holidays that match the cultural calendar.
- It is essential to encourage the civilian population and private sector employees through adequate salaries that are in line with Nigeria's real economic situation.
- Creating employment opportunities for the unemployed.
- Requirements of the State of the River to empower the Ministry of Culture and Tourism by organizing an annual regatta and festivals that showcase the state's tourism potential, attract visitors, and encourage locals to participate in the creation of the tourist and cultural activities of the destination.
- Land, air and sea transportation must be safer, more comfortable and cheaper for tourists.

- The state police surveillance business should be aiming to empower Nigerian police through salaries and benefits in line with the profession. This will create a harmonious and friendly relationship between the police and the public, thus eliminating crime and violence and reasonably ensuring the safety of tourists in the country.
- Better use of environmental sanitation methods in the country and seriously ensuring a clean and attractive environment. Tourism cannot be effective in a polluted environment. Above all, government and the private sector are encouraged to adequately fund tourism.
- The hospitality industry (hotels) should improve its services and provide tourists with affordable accommodation and meals.
- The government and the private sector should encourage the construction and development of a functional theater in the country in order to adapt to the entertainment needs of the public.
- A cultural village that displays all aspects of River's cultural heritage is recommended (Keyinde, 1993).

### Tourism and theater expansion in China

Theatrical performances have developed rapidly in the Chinese tourism industry. The boom in theater is due to a large number of tourists arriving at a particular tourist destination, and the innovative form of cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture of the Chinese Government should also be noted. With the development of the Chinese economy, Chinese tourists are opting for both sightseeing, as well as a true tourism experience. The desire to expand cultural experiences and explore the subculture of different provinces in China is increasingly popular with modern tourists (Qiao et al., 2010).

The arts and tourism industries enjoy a certain kind of complementary relationship, and are mutually intertwined. In particular, art creates tourist attractions, while tourism provides additional audience for art. In China, theatrical performance is a joint creation of tourism and culture. Theaters generally "target" visits by foreign tourists. Many theater performances are therefore held in famous tourist attractions, and these cultural performances are central and key to the development of the local tourism industry. In general, performing arts include performances, musicals, opera, ballet, orchestral concerts, performances by singers, comedians, dancers as well as rock and pop concerts. The theater performance, however, contains many types of artistic styles, such as: dance, acrobatics, folk songs, sword fighting and horseback riding. One of the most innovative theatrical performances, Lee's Impressions, was the first event that was staged outdoors in a natural setting rather than a traditional indoor theater.

In addition, "The Legend of Kung Fu" is a performance exclusively aimed at Western tourists who are fascinated by Chinese martial arts, as well as many foreigners interested in Chinese culture. In a tourist context, theater plays represent a young area. The root of theater performance literature relies on theater and the theories of the performing arts (Song and Cheung, 2012).

Theater operators should establish a good relationship with travel agencies and tour guides, as from past experience, these partners contribute greatly to the profitability and success of theater performances. Tourists will receive excellent recommendations for specific theaters from travel agencies or local tour guides (Song and Cheung, 2012).

Developing a healthy strategy is the cornerstone of successful marketing. In addition to traditional marketing strategies such as newspaper advertising and promotion of travel agencies,



Figure 4. Performance at the Red Theater Source:www.redtheatre.cn/

there is a growing presence of e-commerce marketing implementation methods. Moreover, a professional marketing team contributes a great deal to the success of theater plays, even in times of economic crisis; the marketing team can directly sell and promote the product in different Chinese cities (Reid and Bojanic, 2010).

Investing in theater is huge, especially for outdoor performances, which have extremely high production costs. China's Central People's Government has also made foreign investments in the theater industry. Therefore, persuading foreign investors to fund domestic performances is an important segment in the success process. Long-term investments can be assured by the quality of production and performance teams, proper venue, good business and management, and excellent scenic facilities. In China, investment in theatrical performance generally comes from large enterprises or local governments (Swarbrooke, 2002).

The continuous redesign and correction of theater performances can entice visitors to watch one piece more than once. Improving the performance is highly dependent on two methods. The first, and vital, is learning from the experiences of western performances such as the Moulin Rouge and Circus of the Sun on Broadway, Las Vegas and Paris. The second involves feedback and evaluations from tourists. Some theater operators evaluate the quality by conducting a survey on tourists and, after the results are obtained, they endeavor to improve their offer. The operators of the Song Dynasty Romance, for example, regularly conduct surveys to get tourists' feedback and opinions. Offering new activities and "refreshed" ones can lead to a constant increase in client interest and it can allow repeated visits (Morrison, 2010).

#### West End theaters as the biggest landmark in the culture of London

Westend Theater is a colloquial term for and associated facilities and institutions (acting agencies, theater troupes) based in the West End in central London. Together with Broadway theaters in New York, they are considered the most prestigious English-speaking theater institutions, and a visit to the shows there is one of the most popular tourist activities in London.

In the UK, for example, theater has an enormous economic impact, with around £2.6 billion a year. Taking London as an example, in the 2012/2013 season, more than 22 million people attended theaters in London, with the London Theater receiving £618.5 million at the box office only. There is a connection between theater and tourism in terms of the impact of theater on tourism, theater has become an important aspect of a tourist destination. In September 2012/2013 London had 241 theaters with more than 110,000 seats (Smith, 2014). Due to its diversity and spatial concentration, theater in London has become a tourist attraction. For example, 62% of the shows were attended by people who did not live in London (43% from London) the rest of the UK and 19% from abroad) in 2012/2013 (www.thestage.co.uk).

The theater attracts twice as many tourists to the UK than sports events do. About 2.8 million visits include going to theater, musicals, opera or ballet, compared to 1.3 million visits that include watching a sports event live. This represents 14% of all foreign visits (for theater) and 4% (for sports events). Theater tourists spend £2.7bn touring the UK and are targeted at above average consumers, with each tourist spending an average of £983, compared to the average tourist spending approximately £600 (www.thestage.co.uk).

The tourism industry (including transport operators) can be encouraged to sponsor arts events that will in turn encourage people to travel. An arts board or equivalent may contribute to joint familiarization tours for the media. Each sector may advertise or seek to be featured in the publications of the other and arts organizations can participate in travel trade fairs to directly reach the tourist trade. London theatres have (through SOLT) themselves organized a similar trade fair where theatres and the travel trade have been brought together to discuss potential but more importantly to provide an opportunity to undertake business with each other. SOLT also produces a manual aimed at the travel trade(Hughes, 2000).

# Multiculturalism of theaters in Switzerland

There are about 30 municipal theaters that have about 1.5 million visitors a year, while independent and alternative theaters have as many as 1.7 million visitors. Nearly 900 amateur groups have been reported across Switzerland, with an audience of 1.2 million. In Switzerland, therefore, not only large municipal theaters with secure financial support, but also alternative and independent troops are of significance. In addition to the independent scene, which reached its zenith in the 1970s, amateur theater has evolved especially in a way very specific to Switzerland (www.myswitzerland.com).

On the one hand, the vitality of the theatrical landscape is linked to federalism, which is zealously applied in Switzerland. It is also related to the multilingual nature of the country. Each region has its own theaters. Their repertoires and productions tend to turn more to foreign countries where the same language is spoken than to other Swiss regions. German-speaking Switzerland "targets" Germany and Austria, Ticino focuses on Italy, French-speaking refers to France (www.myswitzerland.com).

#### Theater tourism in Serbia and neighboring countries

When it comes to theater tourism and its presence in the Balkans, its impact is mostly felt in Croatia, which, in addition to its rich entertaining attractive tourist content, also has a diverse cultural and theatrical offer, which includes theater festivals across the country. In addition to the numerous theater festivals, the prestigious Pula Film Festival is also worth mentioning. When it comes to Serbian theaters and film festivals, it is clear that the primacy relates to Belgrade's FEST, Bitef Theater, and Sterija's Novi Sad Theater.

The term culture refers to the Serbian material as well as the intangible cultural heritage. In addition to the culture of the Serbian people, it encompasses the cultural influences of other states and peoples that have influenced the territory of Serbia. We can freely divide Serbia's culture by region because of the different actions of different ethnic groups. The Serbian lan-

guage, folklore and traditions are also part of the culture. A special part of the culture are the national holidays and customs associated with them. The theater workers who have marked the Serbian theater in recent decades include Bojan Stupica, Mira Trailović and Jovan Ćirilov, and writers Aleksandar Popović, Dušan Kovačević, Ljubomir Simović and Biljana Srbljanović (Ivanković, 2019).

As far as tourism theater in Serbia is concerned, it has not yet reached a satisfactory level. There are numerous reasons for this. Firstly, it is necessary for the locals to be more interested in theater performances in their city or cities in the country. Considering the purchasing power of the locals, the attendance at the theaters varies. One of the ways to "encourage" the population to visit the theater is certainly to give certain actions and discounts on the number of tickets purchased. This kind of promotion can be achieved with associates, as well as without them.

The theater should partner with local tourist agencies or with agencies in major Serbian cities of culture (if the agency is spatially located outside a big city). It is easier for tourists who live in a certain city that has all the appropriate cultural facilities to visit a theater center in their city than for those who have to travel to that theater from another city (Ivanković, 2019).

Such a problem can be solved by combining theaters, tourist agencies and cultural institutions (museums, schools, libraries). Frequent trips and excursions should be made in which going to the theater is certainly the main activity and motive for travelling. It is possible to reconcile cultural, entertaining and educational motives and visit other attractive places of a particular destination whereby we become direct participants in the theater of tourism (Ivanković, 2019).

When it comes to foreign tourists, their departure to the theater is often linked to a misunderstanding of the Serbian language and languages in the region. There are few theaters in Serbia that have the option of watching in multiple languages in their theaters. In some theaters, the performances are subtitled in English, but only if there is a prior announcement that a group from abroad would be visiting. A good example of a theater that performs not only in Serbian, but also in Hungarian, is certainly the Novi Sad Theater in Novi Sad (Ivanković, 2019).

However, in some theaters of the world that have a great tradition, the language barrier is generally not a problem. So, foreign tourists will definitely go to theaters across Asia, the United States, Africa even if they do not understand the language in which the play is being performed. The reason for this is authenticity. If a theater has been performing a piece for many years that is authentic only to the region, with unique costumes (a culture never seen before), tourists will certainly want to visit that theater, drawn by the desire to understand the new and investigated. Such unique events are the "adventurous spirit" in almost every tourist who visits this kind of performance (Ivanković, 2019).

The following simply implies that authenticity is what Serbian theater needs. The authenticity of the performance, the uniqueness of the activities that will precede the play itself, in the form of cultural buildings and information. Serbian theaters have adapted the texts of famous Serbian writers from centuries before us, but it is necessary to present this uniqueness in many ways. One is to play traditional pieces in the original, without tendencies towards the modern, and the other is just the opposite of "leaning" towards the modern, contemporary, European, with motifs from the traditional Serbian drama (Ivanković, 2019).

In addition to visiting the sights of the city before the performance, foreign tourists would certainly be intrigued by the tasting of original local recipes for both food and drinks. The government, the ministries of the aforementioned sectors, as well as local self-government, play an important role in the intertwining of tourism and theater. It is necessary to encourage theaters and tourism to cooperate by exhibiting certain public competitions. Working together on projects, employees in the tourism and theater industries would promote both parties equally, and that growth would be increasing more and more steadily. Establishing tourist agencies specializing only in theater tourism would greatly contribute to the expansion of this young form of cultural tourism. Establishing such departments with standard travel agencies and organizations would also contribute to the prosperity and development of theater tourism (Ivanković, 2019).

Holding international professional and amateur theater festivals is one of the reasons why we can conclude that theater tourism exists in Serbia. That is, it is gradually being "created". The cooperation of theaters and actors in the Balkans is increasing, especially in the cinema industry, where in recent years productions have joined forces on joint projects. In this way, organizations from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro are more likely to be noticed and to win certain awards at major European and world theater festivals. Needless to say, the pooling of productions from the Balkans also encourages tourism for both theater actors and audiences (Ivanković, 2019).

In order to have solid theater tourism in Serbia, strong organization and cooperation of all the sectors that make up the actors of such a promotion of a destination are required. With the growing financial situation and increasing purchasing power of the population, the interest in theater tourism is rising, which in the years to come will certainly be one of the most widespread forms of cultural tourism in the world and in our country (Ivanković, 2019).

### SWOT analysis of Theater Tourism development in Serbia

Based on the SWOT analysis of theater tourism development in Serbia and the connection between tourism and theater in general, it is concluded that Serbia, with its rich cultural history, rich cultural offer and transport connectivity, is an extremely favorable country for the development of theater tourism. With its long history and recognizable theater scene, Serbia has all the potential for the development and further expansion of theater tourism. Some of the weaknesses in the development of this form of cultural tourism are the insufficient existence of theaters in which the performances are done in several languages, the lack of connection between the cultural sector and the tourism sector. As far as the opportunity is concerned, they are reflected in the uniqueness and authenticity of the Serbian theater production, in the possible linking of tourist and theatrical nature with the good cooperation of theater organizations with the countries in the region. The threats are mainly related to the unstable political situation, economic stagnation, insufficient financing and encouragement of the cooperation between tourism and theaters by the government, insufficient education of foreign tourists about the culture of Serbia and low purchasing power of the local population (Ivanković, 2019).

#### Strengths

- Rich cultural and historical heritage;
- Hospitality of the local population;
- Educated acting, directing and dramaturgy staff;
- Theater as an institution with a rich tradition and history;
- Positive relationship with tourists;
- Presence of complementary tourist values in the vicinity of theaters;

- Good traffic connections;
- Frequent performance by the premiere/first night;
- Existence of bilingual theaters;
- Performances are at the level of major European achievements;
- Authenticity of Serbian theater, sense of dramaturgy, uniqueness of performances.

#### Weaknesses

- Insufficient theaters where performances are performed in multiple languages;
- Insufficient link between the cultural and tourism sectors;
- Lack of awareness of this form of tourism among the population;
- Existing installations and non-renovated infrastructure in individual theaters;
- Poor cooperation between the theater museums and the theaters themselves;
- Investing only in certain theater centers in major cities;
- Insufficient cooperation between the public and private sectors;
- Lack of agencies specialized in theater tourism;
- High ticket price for locals;
- Resale tickets;
- Insufficient and poor marketing of theater tourism.

#### **Opportunities**

- Opportunity to cooperate with European theater centers and festivals;
- Promoting theater by performing outside the home country;
- Increase in theater and tourism revenue;
- Existence of Serbian communities around the world to create potential visits for performances;
- Cooperation of countries in the region by organizing theater festivals;
- E-marketing;
- Connecting persons from tourism and theater;
- Competing for EU funded projects;
- Creating tours that, in addition to the sights of the city, including information and visits to the theaters.

#### Threats

- Unstable political situation;
- Economic stagnation;
- Low purchasing power of the local population;
- Interest of foreign tourists for theater due to misunderstanding of language;
- Underdeveloped cult and trend of theater;
- Insufficient funding for tourism and theater;
- Lack of incentives for government and local government;
- Insufficient education of foreign tourists.

### Conclusion

As a relatively new form of cultural and selective tourism, theater tourism is not fully recognized in all parts of the world, though its impact is increasingly felt. Hence the lack of literature that speaks to this form of tourism. The countries that are financially stable are among the first to start developing this type of tourism, that is, to effectively connect tourism with theatrical offer. For a country to be able to promote this type of tourism, it is necessary for the economic and political situation in the country to be stable.

The expansion of theater tourism and cultural tourism can influence the increase in tourist traffic and various influences (economic, psychological, social, cultural) on the tourism development of the destination of the theater. Also, there is an assumption that tourists who participate in the theater tourism destination usually experience other forms of tourism that are characteristic of the destination. Theater tourism can thus be called a kind of connector of similar cultural content of a destination.

Serbia with its rich cultural history, rich cultural offer and transport connectivity is a country extremely favorable for the development of theater tourism. With its long history and recognizable theater, Serbia has all the potential for the development and further expansion of theater tourism.

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# CONSERVATION METHODS IN TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF CONCENTRATION CAMP "12. FEBRUAR" IN NIŠ

Jelena Stanković<sup>A</sup>

### Abstract

The Second World War was a global conflict but officially military operations against Kingdom of Yugoslavia began on the 6th of April 1941 and lasted until 15th of September in 1945 (capital city of Belgrade was liberated on the 20th of October 1944). This war produced a big loss of capacities, not only when it comes to the number of people that died in the war but also it has affected on the moral loss of the society. Realizing the significance of such an event, it is really important, not to say obligatory to save a memory on this dark episode in our history. The best way to save a memory is by reminding people on the importance of World War II through the scientific discipline called or memory of culture. There were certain places where the concentration camps were organized and one of them was established in Niš, Eastern Serbia, by the name "12. februar" in the municipality Crveni krst. The concentration camp in Niš (ger. Anhaltelager Nisch) was situated in stables "Miloš Obilić" and it was formed in April 1941. as a temporary detention house for the prisoners of the Yugoslav Army. Since June 1941 this place becomes a prison commanded by the Natzi captain, Heinrich Brandt. Such an object that represents an evidence on those dark days that happened since 1941-1945 is important to safe as a witness on the loss that suffered this country. Understanding the importance of such a place, the Museum of Niš has displayed the history of the place through the museum exhibition that is placed in the original building of the camp. According to it, the survey about the people's awareness of this place has been done in order to analyse their familiarity with happenings that have made crucial changes in the society, so to try to conserve not only the buildings but the memory on this dark event.

Keywords: Second World War II, Nis, Concentration camp, Cultural memory, Conservation

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# Introduction

#### Geographical Position of the City of Niš and Concentration Camp "12. Februar"

The city of Niš is situated in a valley in Eastern Serbia on the surface of 597 km2 with a population of approximately 250,000 inhabitants, according to 2011 population Census. Through the city of Niš flows Nišava river and the valley is surrounded by the massif of Suva planina and Svirljiške planine. The geographical position of the city is very favorable which indicates that the city is connected with the major country routes (Štetić, 2007).

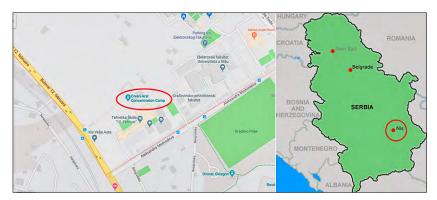


Figure 1. Geographical position of concentration camp in Niš Source: www.researchgate.net

For many centuries, during the Roman Empire, Niš has been a crossroads between East and West. First Christian emperor and founder of Constantinople was born here which represents big significance for this city. Though this represents a positive highlight in the history of the city of Niš, the negative one that marked a dark period of this city, will be covered through this paper.

A memory on the darkest event in the history of this city is located in the Museum "12. februar" in municipality Crveni Krst, in Niš. Very often this memorial complex is mentioned under the name of the district where the camp is situated, Crveni krst, so it appears more familiar to people using this term. The position of Museum is very convenient because it is located near the bus station which is pretty close to the center of the city.

#### History of the Concentration Camp "12. Februar" in Niš

The aggression powered by German forces was committed without previous warning on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1941 on the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. With no warning, people were surprised with bombs falling from the air, and Belgrade was captured very quickly, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April. Officially, German Gestapo entered in Niš on 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1941 and maintained its authority (Ozimić, 2012).

The concentration camp in Nis, named after the prisoners escape, "12. Februar", was situated in stables "Milos Obilić". The main building of the concentration camp was built in 1930 and before the war served as a military repository, but in September 1941 the building was adapted for forming the concentration camp (Ozimić, 2012). The concentration camp was spacious and the building was constructed as a house with three floors: ground floor, first floor and the loft. Each of this spaces had it service. Some of them served as rooms equipped for German soldiers but in some of them people were interrogated, tortured or murdered. As a remembrance on the suffering of the prisoners, still stand solitary confinements in the loft, covered with barbed wire (Ozimić, 2014).

There were four categories of prisoners. First category included arrested hostages who served for retaliation execution – for one killed German soldier 100 hostages were killed, and one wounded German soldier 50 hostages were killed. Second category were Jews who were brought to the concentration camp to be tortured physically and mentally just because they were observed as "non-Aryan" races. After their extermination, Roman people were brought in the camp. Third category were persons arrested under suspicion that are cooperating with National Liberation Movement, known as communists. Some of them were executed as hostages and some of them were interned in concentration camps in Germany and Norway. The fourth category of prisoners consisted of those who were arrested under the suspicion that are cooperating with Yugoslav Army in Homeland, commanded by Dragoljub Draža Mihailović (Ozimić, 2012).

In concentration camp of Niš, two prisoner escapes were organized. The first one happened on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1942 and it was remembered in history as a first escape of this kind in German's concentration camps. The second one happened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1942, and was less successful than the first one. Though there is not an official number of executed people it is believed that about 10 000 people were killed on the Bubanj hill. The concentration camp was closed in 1944 (Mitić, 2015).

Nowadays, we can be witnesses of that time by visiting the Museum "12. februar" in Niš which was opened in 1967. Since 1963 this building has been supervised by the Museum of Niš which helped in preservation of the memory on this happening, conserving objects, photos and personal things found in the camp. The first initiative of recollecting things that left after the prisoners and forming the database of documents connected with the camp was made in 1961. Finally, first exhibition was made in 1967 on 12th of February, opening the original building of the concentration camp for visitors (Ozimić, 2012). As the most significant objects found in the camp were police handcuffs and German's ladle used for serving food. Those two objects maybe have deeper meaning than just being an object. The first one was used for torturing people and the second one was for starving people because it is known that conditions in the camp were far form good (Ozimić, 2014). After all, personal documents, photos and letters were also exposed in the Museum. Over the years, the exhibition was updated, so the final update has been done on 12th of April 2013 by Nebojša Ozimić, Ivana Gruden and Nenad Petrović. Other conservation methods that were used for maintaining the memory were: making a movie about the concentration camp, publishing a book "Victims of Leaguer Niš" and organizing memorial events dedicated to this dark event.

#### Conservation methods applied in the Museum "12. februar"

In order to save our memories and never forget the routes that our ancestors passed, preservation of such an important thing should be recognized as a mandatory thing to be done. Applying the conservation methods especially in tourism offers big visibility to people who want to learn something about events that happened in the World War II.

Zoran Milentijević and Branko Nožica gave birth to the idea of opening a museum dedicated to victims from the concentration camp of Niš in 1961. First phase of this activity was accomplished in 1967 when the Museum was opened. The exhibition was updated in 2008,



Figure 2. A room in the Museum named "Daily life of the prisoners in the camp" Source: Jelena Stanković

2011, 2012 and the last update has been done in 2013 by Nebojša Ozmić, who also published a book *The Leaguer in Crveni Krst* in 2012 (*Leskovački zbornik 2015*, p. 291). Conservation methods that were done in this Museum will be covered in the following paragraph.

On the first floor of the main building that is open for tourist visits there are rooms with numbers 11, 12, 13, and 14 where the room with the number 12 has saved its authentic appearance. These rooms are equipped with documents, photos and personal things of the prisoners. On the second floor there are rooms with numbers 3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9. All of them are dedicated to some type of prisoners: women, transported prisoners, Jewish room, a room of the second escape, a room dedicated to victims that were executed on the Bubanj hill. In the loft are situated 20 solitary confinements that saved the authentic look.

Thanks to the Ministry of Culture, the auxiliary building in the yard has been updated and today is used as a room for projection.

Documentary movie about this leaguer was filmed by the historians Nebojša Ozimić and Aleksandar Dinčić and director Marija Krstić.

# Methodology

As a part of the cultural memory but with a purpose to see in what extent the conservation methods were applied in the Museum "12. februar", the short survey was done. The presented data was obtained by collecting historical, comparative and descriptive statistics, as well as analyzing the survey results.

One of the tasks of the paper was to do a survey about the familiarity of people with the concentration camp "12. februar" in Niš. The questionnaire was implemented on the group of students who are studying tourism and geography but it was also filled by other people who were able to find the questionnaire on the Internet. There were 152 answers given by different people's age and level of education so that fact was significant in order to confirm the familiarity with the concentration camp in Niš.

The survey included questions which referred to the historical background of the concentration camps as well as people's familiarity within the number of executed people and circumstances in which they suffered during the occupation. Descriptive statistics are applicable when it comes to analyzing a survey, mostly if the interviewer wants to find out to see how his results are descriptively interpreted. Other statistics, like *standard deviation and variance* are convenient when the distribution of each variable wants to be shown (Coakes, 2013).

Testing correlations means establishing a linear relationship between two variables. *Pearson product – moment coefficient* establishes correlation between two infinite variables and it can be done in SPSS program. Results can show basic correlation or partial correlation (Coakes, 2013).

#### **Research results and discussion**

Conservation in tourism within some objects can bring a lot of opportunities for the environment where the conservation has been done but only if it is recognized. Due to the time in which we live and sustain, it is obvious that many important things were dismissed, postponed for some better times, leaving the mandatory education outside schools and universities. Nowadays, we live in the era of Internet communication and availability but there is one question to be asked. What else than the truth has been served to our students over the Internet and what is the percentage of people that believe in some other things that can not be linked with truth.

Conserving our history from oblivion is a mandatory obligation for us (Krejaković, 2015). One way of conservation is exactly the way used for classifying Museum material which originates from the concentration camp of Niš. Museum "12. Februar" has been opened in 1967 and is still working under the control of Museum of Niš. When the decision to open a Museum in the building of the concentration camp was made in 1961, curators only had crude material which needed special treatment and conservation to be done in order to present it to a wider audience. Many years of patient work and a lot of received data led to opening the Museum "12. Februar" in 1967 and until today the exhibition has been updated many times.

With a purpose to investigate people's consciousness about this topic, a survey under the name "People's familiarity with concentration camp "12. Februar" in Niš" has been done. Questions were adjusted to the targeted group in order to get accurate information. The survey consisted of 14 questions and two descriptive questions that included the place of living of the respondent and other objects of dark tourism that are known to the respondent. Analyzing the results, respondents predominantly live in Novi Sad, Belgrade, Subotica, Sombor, Niš and Leskovac. For the other question that was named "What are the other objects of dark tourism that are familiar to you from the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia?", there were certain answers.

Respondents mostly wrote certain names of the concentration camps and execution fields on the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which are: concentration camp *Jasenovac*, concentration camp *Stara Gradiska*, memorial complex *Sumarice*, concentration camp *Sajmiste* and concentration camp *Banjica*. The answer that was given by most people is concentration camp *Jasenovac* which indicates that people are not very familiar with other objects of dark tourism. Analyzing the answers of the survey, a slight negative change in answers has been noted which means that people have put negative examples such as *Goli otok* or *Kuca cveca*.

Name of the Question	Standard Deviation	Valid Percent
How many people were murdered for every killed or wounded German soldier?	0.872	84.2
When the concentration camp in Nis was open?	0.785	65.1
Who was the first commander of the concentration camp?	0.79	57.2
What was the number of the victims in the concentration camp?	0.903	44.7
Where the prisoners were executed?	1.204	73.7
When the first prisoners escape happened?	0.659	67.8
What is the name of the famous director who was born in Nis concentration camp?	0.877	78.9
What is the symbol of "Three fists" on the Bubanj hill?	0.845	58.6
When the first exhibition the camp has been opened for tourist visits?	0.899	44.1

**Table 1.** List of the results of Standard deviation and Valid percent

Source: This table was made by author

As shown in Table 1, the standard deviation for the question "How many people were murdered for every killed or wounded German soldier?" is 0.872 and the amount of valid percent is 84.2, which means that people were pretty certain about their answers. This question was asked at the very beginning because this regulation that was carried by Gestapo was crucial for the number of victims in the camp. The next question "When the concentration camp in Nis was open?" takes out the standard deviation of 0.785 and valid percent is 65.1, so results connected to this question indicate that the oscillation on answering to the questions was not that big. People mainly know when the Second World War started in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia so answers were mainly uniformed. For the question "Who was the first commander of the concentration camp" the standard deviation is 0.79 and valid percent 57.2. As shown in the table, for the question "What was the number of victims" the standard deviation does not change its amount a lot nor the valid percent of the question, which is in this case 44.7. The exact number of victims was not stated and it was recognized between respondents but most of them were familiar with the correct answer. Observing next question that refers to the execution site of the prisoners, it is evident that the oscillation of standard deviation has been pretty changed and significant and its amount is 1.204 and valid percent is 73.7. Within the question, four answers were offered, and the answers referred to some historical places in Niš so is understandable that people who do not live in Niš made an error but is still not acceptable. The next question brings a little drop of the standard deviation with 0.659 and valid percent of 67.8. For the next three questions, it can barely be said that the standard deviation has a slight increase in its amount so it means that there were low oscillations in responses to questions. The valid percent changes for each of the last three questions so it is apparent that the highest valid percent in responses is shown within the question "What is the name of the famous director who was born in Nis concentration camp?".

1		Level of education	How many people were murdered for every killed or wounded German soldier?	When the concentration camp in Nis was open?	What was the number of the victims in the concentration camp?	When the first prisoners escape happened?	What is the name of the famous director who was born in Nis concentration camp?	What is the symbol of "Three fists" on the Bubanj hill?
2	What was the number of the victims in the concentration camp?			0.221**				
3	Where the prisoners were executed?				0.160*			
4	When the first prisoners escape happened?			0.288**				
5	What is the name of the famous director who was born in Nis concentration camp?		0.226•					
6	What is the symbol of "Three fists" on the Bubanj hill?	0.157*		0.184*				
7	When the first exhibiton in the camp has been opened for tourist visits?		0.164*			0.152*	0.178*	0.139*

**Table 2.** Correlations between the answers in the questionnaire

Source: This table was made by author

For testing the correlations between the answers in the questionnaire, Pearson's test has been used. Following correlations between continuous variables some significance has been shown in next answers. As law of the attraction is present in everything we do, it is believed that one answer to the question withdraws the other one and so the knowledge about some topic is formed. Some significant correlations were noticed applying the Pearson's test of correlations to the answered questions. As far as the respondents were educated there was a correlation with the familiarity of Three fists in the Bubanj hill. The symbolic meaning of Three fists can be interpreted in people's minds in different ways, though there is only one correct answer, all respondents recognized it as courage and unity. Also, significant correlation has been shown between the questions How many people were murdered for every killed or wounded German soldier and their familiarity with the famous director who was born in the camp and also with the opening date of the Museum. As far as people were familiar with the opening date of the concentration camp the answers strongly correlated with questions that refer on the number of victims, first escape from the camp and significance of Three fists on the Bubanj hill. Furthermore, as far as they were familiar with the number of victims they answered the question about the place where the prisoners were executed. The biggest correlation has been shown within the question When the first exhibition in the camp has been opened for tourist visits. As far as respondents were familiar with this question they gave answers to questions which refer to the regulation of how many people should be executed for every killed or wounded German soldier, as well as questions which refer to the first escape from the camp, director who was born in the camp and the symbolism of Three fists on the Bubanj hill. This could be connected with the exhibition that is installed in the Museum "12. Februar" because visiting the museum people could learn some new facts they did not know about the camp and its prisoners. Through posters, photos, personal documents and letters, a lot can be learned and this museum is supported by this kind of material.

# Conclusion

Cultural memory is the most convenient mode for saving our history from oblivion and cultural tourism is probably the most suitable channel to serve an interesting story for tourists. Applying the conservation methods in tourism, specifically in the Museum "12. februar", a lot has been done with a purpose to highlight some facts that were hidden for a long time.

Though some changes have been done, not much in our education system has changed. The results of the survey which was done in order to find out the familiarity of people with the existence of the concentration camp in Niš, has shown that there is a lack of information when it comes to this topic. In the era of Internet and not the era of truth, a lot of second-rated information are served. Learning how to recognize the truth and raising awareness about such an important period in our history is obligatory. Educators should also reconsider including this theme in their lectures in order to bring closer the truth to the students.

So, making the cultural routes that will bring you to the sites of dark tourism in Serbia can be a probable solution for this problem. People could get more accurate and true information from some curator or tourist guide than to pick it from the Internet so later on it would serve them in recognizing the truth in the environment they live in.

To sum up, a lot of young people are interested in this theme but there is a fear that not convenient channels are used to get the point. In order to make the truth visible to everyone, some new creative conservation methods should be applied with an intent to motivate people to visit places of dark tourism in Serbia. Setting people in motion to visit this kind of places is a demanding job for every tour guide, but it is worthwhile.

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# STARI SLANKAMEN - POTENTIAL DESTINATION FOR THE NAUTICAL TOURISM IN SERBIA

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### Abstract

Nautical tourism has a high trend of growth, and the highest growth trend is expected in eastern and south-eastern Europe. It is type of tourism that takes place on water or on the coastline. Nautical tourism in Serbia could include 3,500 km of waterways and 50 km of water surface on various types of lakes, using at least 6,000 km of coastline. Nautical tourism represents a great potential for AP Vojvodina and Serbia, and it is necessary that local governments, private sector and the state government work together on further development. Two international rivers, the Tisa and the Danube flow through several European countries and merge at place where Stari Slankamen is located. Stari Slankamen, as a settlement created at the mouth of two rivers, has great potential for the development of nautical tourism, both on the water and on the coastline. In this work, it will be presented all potentials factors for the development of Stari Slankamen as a future destination of nautical tourism in Serbia, as well as all kind of events and hospitality facilities. Furthermore, the attitudes of local residents towards tourism development were examined due to the great importance of support of local population for tourism development at the destination. SWOT analysis presented all strengths and opportunities for developing nautical tourism and weakness and threats as well. Finally, based on examination of observed potentials and residents' attitudes, it will be proposed guidelines and conclusions for the further development of nautical tourism in this part of Serbia.

Keywords: Nautical tourism, Danube, Vojvodina, Stari Slankamen, Local residents

### Introduction

Within the global tourism development in Serbia, special attention is given to nautical tourism. Experts have made analyzes of the natural and anthropogenic potentials of rivers and lakes in Serbia, which conclude that the rivers Danube, Sava and Tisa are particularly important for (Katić et al, 2010). Certainly, the most promising river for the development of nautical and other types of tourism is the Danube and the coasts of this river. As a renowned tourist sites in the Danube river banks are Kalemengdan, Petrovaradin and Golubac fortesses. Between Petrovaradin and Kalemegdan is the site of a village Stari Slankamen. Stari Slankamen is located

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opposite the mouth of the Tisa into the Danube, with mineral water springs, a medieval fortress, geological remains and historical sites. It attracts the attention of tourism agents, experts in the field of tourism, and ultimately tourists themselves. According to the Law on Tourism of the Republic of Serbia of 2005, "nautical activity includes providing nautical tourism services, receiving, servicing and renting nautical tourism vessels, organizing sports moto-nautical activities on water, tourist cruises, as well as providing other services for nautical tourism." For the purposes of this Act, objects of nautical tourism are reception and vessels of nautical tourism reception facilities and navigation facilities (Закон о туризму - "Службени гласник PC", 6poj 45/2005). Although a landlocked country, Serbia has many rivers and lakes that enable the development of nautical tourism. The Danube, as Europe's main river destination and most important river transport corridor (Pan-European Corridor 7), has the greatest potential for the development of nautical tourism (Dragin, 2010). In the former Yugoslavia, domestic tourism was based on the Adriatic coastal areas, which means that domestic tourists preferred seaside destinations over river areas. Today, domestic tourists still choose seaside destinations over some others. Tourists from Serbia travel most to the countries of the eastern Mediterranean which are in the near vicinity of Serbia (Dragin et al., 2011). According to the Tourism Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (MHCEF, 2005), nautical tourism is one of nine key tourist products of Serbia, mainly because of its potential and rapid development potential.

### Literature review regarding nautical tourism development

Scientific literature has provided numerous definitions of nautical tourism. Nautical tourism is a set of relationships and phenomena arising from travel to different waterways vessels and stay of tourists in certain places along the waterway flows (Katić et al, 2010). Nautical tourism is a set of relations and phenomena arising from travel to different waterways vessels and stay of tourists in certain places along the waterway flows (Katić et al, 2010). Nautical tourism can be considered as a navigation and staying of nautical tourists on their vessels and in nautical ports for the purpose of relaxation and recreation (Bartoluci and Cavlek, 1998). Nautical tourism is a sum of multifunctional activities and relations that are caused from the stay of nautical tourists inside or outside of the port and by the use vessels or other facilities related to the nautical and tourist activities for the purpose of recreation, sport, entertainment or other needs (Luković and Gržetić, 2007). Most of the nautical tourism activities are fast growing sectors and many of them have growth rates that are much higher than tourism as a whole. Nautical ecotourism is a rapidly evolving sector, especially when it comes to observing sea animals and their activities (Lück, 2007). Nautical tourism was viewed as a tourist stay and activities on and by the water, including the vessel (Dragin et al., 2011).

Depending on how the local population accepts the development of tourism as an economic activity in its place, it is possible to predict the performance of a particular tourism product. The attitudes of the local population may be different in the midst of the existence of different socio-demographic characteristics, place of residence and economic dependence on tourism. In addition, these attitudes can be positive and / or negative, which is caused primarily by the degree of involvement in tourism, but also the tradition of tourism development a certain place (Tepavčević et al, 2019). Nawjin and Mitas (2011) evaluated the association between observed impacts of tourism and subjective well-being in a mass tourist destination. Their results indicate a correlation of perceived tourism impacts by residents with life satisfaction. Gon, Osti and Pechlaner (2016) investigated the impact of leisure boat tourism on the local community in coastal areas. Their results indicate that residents consider this type of tourism to have a long tradition and that it has contributed to improving the community as a tourist destination. They divide local residents into three groups - supporters (51%), cautious (29%) and skeptics (20%).

#### Methodology

For the purposes of this research, a questionnaire was used, which was taken from the work of Tepavčević et al. (2019), who dealt with the survey of the attitudes of the local population in Vrbas (Tepavčević et al., 2019). The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of 6 questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, length of residence in Stari Slankamen, level of education, occupation and activity in the field of tourism). The second part of the questionnaire consisted of allegations of different aspects and causes of the attitudes of the local population towards tourism development in Stari Slankamen grouped into 4 factors - Positive effects of tourism development (6 statements), Negative effects of tourism development (5 statements), Support for tourism development (4 statements) and Tourism Development Potentials (3 statements). The examination was conducted by face-to-face technique, and a five-step Likert scale was used to express the degree of agreement of the respondents with the statements (1- completely disagree, 5 - completely agree). The research was conducted in the period from the 1st until 1oth of August 2019 in the territory of Stari Slankamen. A total of 91 respondents participated in the survey, but due to the invalidity of the survey questionnaires, 82 valid survey questionnaires were included in the data analysis. The research was aimed to respond to the question how local residents perceive tourism development and its positive and negative impacts.

Based on the review of relevant professional and scientific literature and the field research conducted, the following starting hypotheses were made:

- H1: There are no statistically significant differences in the perception of positive effects of tourism development in relation to the age of the respondents.
- H2: There are no statistically significant differences in the perception of negative effects of tourism development in relation to the age of the respondents.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Support for tourism development is statistically significantly different depending on the age of the respondents

#### **Sample Description**

The first part of the questionnaire relating to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Based on the analysis of data is noticeable domination of men (57.3%) than women (42.7%). In terms of age, most respondents older than 60 years (48.8%) and respondents who live in Stari Slankamen for more than 30 years (36.59%). As for the educational structure of the respondents, the majority of respondents with secondary education (70.7%). Also, the sample has the highest number of employees (40.2%), but most of them do not have a job in the field of tourism (86.6%), which sufficiently speaks about the tourism underdevelopment of Stari Slankamen.

# **Results and discussion**

This chapter will present the results of research. In addition to the descriptive statistical analysis (Table 1), was carried out using ANOVA (Table 2) to determine the existence of the difference between the dependent and independent variables (age respondents). The Positive Effects of Tourism Development factor has the highest mean value (4.82) while the Negative Tourism Development Effects factor has the lowest (4.27). Analyzing individual attitudes, it can be concluded that the economic impact that benefits the most noticeable, while the least perceived negative impact of tourism development on the quality of recreation and outdoor activities. For that reason, we can conclude that the local population expects economic benefits from tourism development in Stari Slankamen, and that the local population is largely in agreement with further investment in tourism development. On the other side, respondents showed concern towards the disruption of traffic quality and creating traffic problems in their communities.

Factors and questions	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Positive effects of tourism development (F1)	4.82	.249
The development of tourism would bring economic benefits to Stari Slankamen	4.94	.241
The development of tourism would improve the quality of life	4.87	.377
The development of tourism would make the place more attractive	4.87	.343
Built facilities for tourism could benefit residents of Stari Slankamen	4.83	.379
Tourism development would impact on unemployment	4.85	.356
I will have benefits from the development of tourism	4.61	.561
Negative effects of tourism development (F2)	4.27	.559
Tourism development can cause traffic problems	4.50	.689
Tourism development would increase property taxes	4.49	.653
Tourism development would increase crime rates	4.28	.790
Tourism development would reduce the quality of outdoor recreation	4.04	.823
Too many tourists would make noise and disturb local citizens	4.07	.843
Support for tourism development (F3)	4.56	.354
Better tourist propaganda of Stari Slankamen would make it an interesting tourist destination	4.67	.473
Local government should control the development of tourism	4.56	.499
Should increase taxes for tourists on accommodation in accommodation facilities	4.44	.687
Tourists should pay more ticket prices for tourist sites compared with local citizens.	4.56	.687
Potential for tourism development (F4)	4.63	.376
Stari Slankamen is an ideal place for tourism development	4.77	.425
Stari Slankamen has a wide range of tourist attractions	4.61	.515
The future of Stari Slankamen in terms of tourism looks good	4.52	.613

#### Table 1. Results of descriptive statistical analysis

ANOVA analysis was used to determine differences between the independent variable and age dependent variables (questions related to attitudes). Statistically significant differences were found for three factors. Statistically significant differences exist with Negative effects of tourism development (p<0.01), Support to tourism development (p<0.01) and Potentials for

tourism development (p<0.05). There are no significant differences with the positive effects of tourism development, thus confirming Hypothesis 1. In order to distinguish between which age groups there are statistically significant differences, LSD post-hoc test was applied. Within the factors Negative effects of tourism development, there are significant differences in the direction that respondents younger than 20 give statistically significantly lower scores than those in the age groups 41-60 and over 60. This can be explained by the fact that younger respondents are often unaware of the negative effects that tourism development brings and do not consider the phenomenon from all sides, while older respondents are more aware. This rejected Hypothesis 2, the assumption that all respondents equally perceived the negative effects of tourism development, regardless of their age. Respondents older than 60 gave a statistically significantly higher score than other factors in Supporting Tourism Development, thus confirming Hypothesis 3. Respondents who are younger than 20 give a statistically significantly higher rating to the Tourism Development Potential factor than respondents from groups 41-50 and over 60, which may explain that younger respondents are more optimistic about the future tourism development of Stari Slankamen.

Feeder	The age of respondents				F value		LSD
Factors	up to 20 years	21-40	41-60	over 60	Fvalue	Р	LSD
Positive effects of tourism development	4.9259	4.8750	4.8651	4.7708	1.490	.224	-
Negative effects of tourism development	3.6222	3.7667	4.3238	4.5500	16.989	.000**	1<3,4
Support for tourism development	4.1667	4.4375	4.5119	4.7063	8.377	.000**	4>1,2,3
Potential for tourism development	4.9630	4.6944	4.6190	4.5500	3.338	.024*	1>3,4

Table 2. Analyzes of ANOVA variance by age structure of respondents

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

#### SWOT analysis of Stari Slankamen as a tourist destination

One of the biggest problems of Stari Slankamen as a potential tourist destination is the lack of adequate tourist infrastructure. Info boards and propaganda materials in English language almost do not exist, and marketing activities of the competent tourist organizations are minimized. As the rest of the country, Stari Slankamen also faces the emigration of young people, so in that sense the perspective of tourism development in Stari Slankamen may be questionable in the coming decades.

What is the certainly opportunity for further development of nautical tourism in this part of Danube's banks is the cooperation of the Tourist Organization of Indjija with tourist organizations of neighboring cities and municipalities (Stara Pazova and Novi Sad) in order to create a unique tourism product. On the other side, there is also the Tisa river with the municipalities of Titel and Bečej, and in this direction a project should be developed for the tour of two rivers, whose shores from there are so far untapped potentials for the development of different types of tourism. Furthermore, there is ability to access European funds and apply for various financial resources in order to equip them with the necessary tourism infrastructure. A positive example is the affirmation of the Golubac Fortress on the other part of the Danube flow through our country. As a threaten for development of Stari Slankamen as a tourist destination, can be tourist affirmed fortresses, such as a Petrovaradin, Kalemegdan and Golubačka fortresses. This may be due to the lack of interest in international river cruisers for frequent landing on the coast. Also, there are a lot of problems in our country and the Balkan region, expressed through political and economic instability.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of Stari Slankamen as a tourist destination

<ul> <li>STRENGTH</li> <li>Positive geographical location</li> <li>Close to the city's urban centers</li> <li>Location on the Danube shore, close to the E-75 highway and close to the Belgrade-Budapest railway line</li> <li>Affirmed spa resort and opportunity to develop different types of tourism</li> <li>Different kind of special medical treatments in the Special Hospital "DR Borivoje Gnjatic"</li> <li>Close to cultural and historical monuments (Monument of the Battle of Slankamen and Monastery of Saint Mark from 2011)</li> <li>Close to amusement parks (Fashion Outlet Park and Pool Complex "Horizont")</li> <li>Less profile Stari Slankamen</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>WEAKNESS</li> <li>1. Lack of marketing strategy and promotional activities</li> <li>2. Lack of info boards in the English language in Stari</li> <li>Slankamen and lack of other tourist infrastructure</li> <li>3. The lack of hotels and other types of accommodation facilities</li> <li>4. The lack of young and educated local population that would give impetus to the development of tourism in this area</li> <li>5. Undeveloped asphalt road to the site of the Battle of Slankamen</li> <li>6. The poor condition of the house of Dr Djordje Natosevic</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>OPPORTUNITIES</li> <li>1. Collaboration with tourism organizations of neighboring municipalities in creating a unique tourism product and attracting tourists</li> <li>2. The connection of the Tisa and the Danube rivers and the ability to create program "Two rivers - the Danube and the Tisa rivers "</li> <li>3. The increase in amount of international cruisers flowing through our country and the possibility of their landing in Stari Slankamen</li> <li>4. Applying with international funds (eg IPA) to obtain the necessary funding to equip it with tourism infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>THREATS</li> <li>1. Existence of established destinations on the Danube coast (Bač, Smederevo, Golubac, Kladovo)</li> <li>2. Insufficient distance from Petrovaradin and Kalemegdan fortresses, and possible lack of tourists' interest for frequent stopping their vessels</li> <li>3. Political and economic instability in the country</li> </ul>

# Conclusion

Starting from the attitude of potential tourism demand, the development of nautical tourism in Stari Slankamen would move to the following:

- 1. planned tourism development during the summer and winter tourist season; tourists income during the winter season is as close as possible during the summer season;
- 2. maximum exploitation of the Danube throughout the year in order to attract tourists as much as possible. It is necessary for affirmation of additional facilities in Stari Slankamen that already exist;
- 3. construction of the necessary infrastructure for the arrival of foreign tourist ships and cruisers;
- 4. promotion of Stari Slankamen as a new and unexplored destination on the Danube coast; Active promotion by the Tourism Organization of the Municipality of Indjija and the Tourism Organization of Vojvodina is necessary;

5. cooperation with domestic and foreign tour operators in order to attract domestic and foreign tourists.

As a result of the statistical data processing in this work, we can point out that the local population has a positive attitude towards tourism development. In certain segments, there has been a negative attitude towards the development of tourism, especially in younger population. In this regard, local authorities should work more towards education of the local population and to explain potential positive effects of tourism development. Moreover, local authorities have invested some financial resources for the renewal of the communal infrastructure in Stari Slankamen in the past.

Considering the activities undertaken so far, it can be concluded that Stari Slankamen has great potential for the development of nautical tourism. We can conclude that Stari Slankamen is still an unexplored and completely un-established destination on the tourist map of Serbia. Supports for the development of nautical toursm in Stari Slankamen are various complementary activities, with their attractiveness, offer opportunities for potential development of other forms and types of tourism (spa, eco, rural, wine, picnic, hunting and fishing, etc.).

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# ATTITUDES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM ON ŠAR MOUNTAIN

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### Abstract

Understanding local residents' attitudes to tourism development is vital for the success and sustainability of any kind of tourism. On the other hand, tourism as a complex phenomenon has an influence on both positive (increasing employment, increasing revenues, improving infrastructure, etc.) and negative effects on the local community (different types of pollution, general security, rising prices of real estate, traffic overload, etc.). This paper analyzes the profile, attitudes and perceptions of the population towards the development of tourism on Šar mountain. The perception of the population on the development of tourism was measured by using 22 items presented through four factors, while their support for tourism development was determined by using 8 items grouped in two factors. Also, this study aims to examine the relationships between the sociodemographic characteristics of the local residents and their attitudes towards the sustainable development of tourism.

Keywords: Residents' attitudes, sustainable development, tourism, Brezovica, Šar mountain

### Introduction

Today, the importance of tourism is determined by the multiple roles it plays in any country (economic, social and cultural) and its ability to make a positive impact (employment, wealth, dynamics, increase in income, infrastructure, international friendship and movement of people and resources). Over the last few decades, the tourism sector has become a major factor of importance in global GDP due to its rapid growth and development which is often associated with the export industry. The tourism sector is often described as a "powerful force for change in the economy", mainly because of its positive economic impact on communities. The term "impact of tourism" has garnered great attention in the literature. This is the reason why the subject of numerous studies was examining the attitude/perception of residents to these impacts. The primary explanation behind this growing interest has been the thought

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that tourism brings positive effects, but also potentially negative effects at a local level (Lankford and Howard, 1994; Ko and Stewart, 2002).

The national park Šar mountain covers 390 km<sup>2</sup> or 35.4% of the total area of the Šar Mountain extends through the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. The altitude exceeds 2500 m.a.s.l. The Šar mountain, dominated by alpine and continental climates, is rich in diverse flora and fauna of which there are endemic species (Pinus heldreichii). Furthermore, due to the active glacial processes which are present on the highest points of Šar mountain, a large number of different sized glaciers and glacial basins have been created. Complex geomorphological processes than lead to the creation of glacial lakes, of which the most attractive are Livadičko (2173 m.a.s.l.) and Jažinačko lake (2180 m.a.s.l.). Almost the entire territory of the national park is intersected by the Lepenac river basins (mountainspiritvolunteers.wordpress.com)

This region has a great potential for tourism development due to its natural environment and landscapes (the possibility of ski tourism development, excursion tourism, hiking, biking) and due to various cultural tourist attractions (churches, traditions, etc.). Despite its rich natural and cultural heritage, the unstable political situation in this area has influenced the development of tourism activities. The problem for development is also the lack of a Tourism Development Strategy on Šar mountain and lack of studies on the negative impacts of tourism activities on biodiversity.

#### Literature review

The concept of sustainable tourism is becoming more and more prevalent, and it has emerged to meet three main components: environmental protection, socio-cultural and economic needs of the local population and communities involved. The local population is a key element in the process of tourism development, which is the important reason for examining the attitudes of the local population when designing a tourism development strategy in a particular area. Numerous authors have been researching the attitudes of the local population, which resulted in the development of several measurement instruments for examining local residents' attitudes. Lankford and Howard (1994) proposed a multiple-item scale which measured the influence of selected variables on residents' attitudes towards tourism development (TIAS). The scale consisted of 28 items. The influence of variables was summarized into two factors: Concern for Local Tourism (Factor 1) and Personal and Community Benefits (Factor 2). Ap and Crompton (1998) developed 35 items influence scale which better reflects perceived impacts. The authors verified social, economic and environmental domains, as well as crowding and congestion, services, taxes and community attitude. The measurement instrument developed by Kang et. al (1996) was focused on attitudes toward limited-stakes gambling as a tourism development strategy. The authors reported two-factor scale, Attitudes and Benefits, which is similar to factors reported by Lankford and Howard (1994). One of the best-known scales is Iridex Model, first developed by Doxey (1975) and described by Fridgen (1991). This scale is used for defining the attitudes of residents which are result of social impacts in a destination community. The authors defined 4 stages of resident's attitudes towards tourism development – euphoria, apathy, annoyance and antagonism. The SUS-TAS scale developed by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) was aimed to examine the attitudes of residents towards sustainable tourism development. The scale was composed of seven dimensions: social costs, environmental sustainability, long term planning, economic benefits, ensuring visitor satisfaction, community-based tourism and maximizing community participation.

McGehee and Andereck (2004) conducted a survey in Arizona and concluded that support for tourism development is closely related to the personal benefits of the local population. Local population consider tourism as a generator of job and improver of quality of life, which positively reflected in the local economy. In Uganda, local population support tourism development because it has an influence on generating incomes, increasing agricultural production and "good fortune" (Lepp, 2007). Although they perceived both positive and negative effects of tourism development, communities in Egypt supported tourism activity because consider positive effects stronger than negative (Eraqi, 2007). Support for tourism development is strongly related to personal benefits. Females are influenced by a cultural dimension which is expressed through the development of arts, crafts and household, while young population realized improvements in recreation and social life facilities (Wang and Pfister, 2008). Pham (2011) found a positive perception of tourism impact as well as the strong support of tourism development. This study indicated on the existence of differences of residents' socio-demographic characteristic and their level of support of tourism development. Ramseook-Munhurrun and Naido (2011) pointed out that tourism activities affect job creation and have an impact on the quality of life of the local population. They also found a positive correlation between economic and socio-cultural factors and support for tourism but at the same time a negative correlation between community support and the environment. The relationship between local population satisfaction and tourism development was analyzed by Zhang et al. (2012), which concluded that the level of satisfaction with tourism is not high, but if they consider it as promising for future city development, the locals support tourism development. Muresan et. al (2016) examining rural residents' perceptions of tourism development and the factors that influence the support for sustainable tourism development in the region of Nord-Vest in Romania. Their results indicated that tourism is a development factor from the perspective of residents. Blešić et al., (2014) used TIAS scale for examining attitudes of residents towards rural tourism development. Their results indicated that residents are aware of the benefits of tourism development brings as well as the problems caused by tourism in rural areas. Also, the results showed that residents expressed the highest level of agreement with statements related to the economic benefits that tourism development brings.

### Methodology

This research aimed to identify the perception of tourism development impacts on Šar mountain, in the region of Sirnićka district (Štrpce municipality) from the perspective of residents. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was related to socio-demographic characteristics and included questions about gender, age, education level, employment and relationship of their work with tourism. The second part of the questionnaire was questions related to the impacts of tourism development. For examining the attitudes of local residents towards tourism development on Šar mountain, was used the model of Muresan et. al (2016). Model is consisted of 22 items, divided into 4 factors. First factor (Environmental impacts) consisted of 8 items related to tourism development impacts on the environment. Items were related to pollution, overcrowding and negative impacts of tourism development on the environment. The second factor (Economic impacts) consisted of 7 items related to economic benefits of tourism development for the local community. The third factor (Social and Cultural Impacts) had 4 items which were related to the perceived positive impact on society as well as on culture. And finally, the fourth factor (Physical impacts) consisted of 3 items which were related to improving the infrastructure of the local community with tourism development. For expressing the level of agreement with items related to all types of impacts was used Likert's five-point scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (absolutely agree).

The research was conducted in August 2019 on the territory of Sirnićka district. A mixture of two techniques was used – face-to-face and an online survey. A total of 52 respondents were included in the research. All collected surveys were valid. During the research, the following hypothesis was set:

H1: There are differences towards the perception of impacts of tourism among respondents according to the relatedness of their work to tourism.

#### Sample description

The first part of the questionnaire was related to socio-demographic characteristics of residents. Regarding gender structure, men and women are equally represented (26 males and 26 females). The respondents from age group 15 - 24 years are the most dominant (27, 51,9%). There is equal representation of respondents from groups 25 - 34 and 35 - 44 (7, 13,5%). There were no respondents from age group Over 65 years. By analyzing the education level of respondents, it can be noticed that there are the most respondents who completed only high school (26, 50%) followed by respondents who graduated (11, 21,2%). Based on their work, almost half of respondents (46,2%) answered their work is not related to tourism, while the rest answered that their work is related to tourism indirectly (28,8%) or directly (25%).

#### **Results and discussion**

Table 1 presents the results of descriptive statistical analysis. Factor *Social and Cultural Impacts* got the highest score (4.31), while the lowest got factor *Environmental Impacts* (2.98). This could lead to the conclusion that residents the most notice cultural and social impacts of tourism, while environmental impacts do not notice sufficiently. It might be a reason for concern because, generally, the impact on the environment is greater and has serious consequences on the environment. The values of standard deviation for all factors do not exceed the value 1.

The highest score (4.44) got an item *"Tourism plays an important role in the economic development of the area"* which indicated that respondents are aware of the economic impacts that tourism development would bring. Awareness of economic impacts has identified in several studies (Lepp, 2007; Ramseook-Munhurrun and Naido, 2011; McGehee and Andereck, 2004). The lowest score (2.04) got item "Tourism development negatively affects the recreational facilities and entertainment" There are not many recreational facilities and entertainment, which resulted in a lower perception of impacts on these facilities. The highest value of standard deviation (1.401) has an item *"Development of tourism damage the natural environment and land-scape"*, while the lowest (.520) has an item *"Tourism provide incentives for restoration of traditional houses"*.

#### Table 1. Descriptive statistical analysis

FACTORS AND ITEMS	Arithmetic mean	Std. Deviation
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	2.98	.74601
Development of tourism damage natural environment and landscape.	3.13	1.401
Tourism cause overcrowding problems for residents.	2.83	1.324
Tourism increase the air pollution.	3.02	1.350
Tourists use too much water.	2.83	1.150
Tourism results in more litter in an area.	3.52	1.093
Tourism development negatively affects the recreational facilities and entertainment.	2.04	1.120
The construction of tourist facilities destroy the environment.	2.58	1.016
Increase traffic problems.	3.96	.656
ECONOMIC IMPACTS	3.95	.52537
Tourism plays an important role in the economic development of the area.	4.44	.777
Tourism improves locals standard of living.	4.35	.814
Tourism increases a community's tax revenue.	4.00	1.188
Tourism create new jobs for locals.	4.46	.727
Tourism diversifies the rural economy.	2.85	1.243
Tourism results in an increase in the cost of living.	3.13	1.121
Revenue from tourism taxes activity should be invested in future.	4.42	.572
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS	4.31	.46409
Tourism provide incentives for restoration of traditional houses.	4.35	.520
Interaction with tourists is a positive experience.	4.42	.572
Shopping and restaurants option is better as a result of tourism.	4.13	.841
Tourism development enhance more recreational opportunities for locals.	4.35	.590
PHYSICAL IMPACTS	3.90	.76849
Improves traffic network.	4.02	.828
Improves living utilities infrastructure (supply of water, sewage, electric etc.)	3.62	1.087
Quality of public services in better.	4.06	.850

Analysis of variance ANOVA was applied to examine whether between the independent variable (Work related to tourism) and dependent variables (factors and items) exists a significant correlation. The results (Table 2) showed that there are significant differences in responses only within Factor Social and Cultural impacts. To determine between which groups differences exist, LSD post-hoc test was applied. The results showed that respondents whose work is not related to tourism gave significantly lower ratings than respondents whose work is directly or indirectly related to tourism. Based on the results of analysis, it can be concluded that respondents whose work is not related to tourism, are less aware of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development. The possible explanation of this can be lack of interest in tourism, as well as political turmoil in the last 20 years, which resulted in the stagnation of tourism development on Šar mountain and impossibility to see how tourism affects the environment and the local population. By applying ANOVA, the hypothesis was confirmed, i.e., it is showed that there are differences towards the perception of impacts of tourism among respondents according to the relatedness of their work to tourism.

	w	ork related to to			LSD post-	
FACTORS	Directly (group 1)	Indirectly (group 2)	Not related to tourism (group 3)	F value	Р	hoc
Environmental Impacts	2.8077	3.1917	2.9583	.956	.391	-
Economic Impacts	4.0549	3.9524	3.8929	.392	.678	-
Social and Cultural Impacts	4.5192	4.4833	4.0938	5.934	.005*	3<1,2
Physical Impacts	4.0513	3.8222	3.8611	.350	.706	-

 Table 2. analysis of variance ANOVA according to relation of work to tourism

\*p<0,05

# Conclusion

The research objectives were to investigate residents' attitudes towards sustainable development of tourism impact variables and to explore their influence on the support of future sustainable tourism development. The results of this study show that residents have positive attitudes about the significant impact of tourism on the local economy, while answers on questions about the negative impact of tourism on the environment are rated lower. The reason for this can be found in the local government of the municipality, which focuses primarily on economic importance, without putting too much attention to the negative impact of tourism on natural and cultural assets. Although the tourist turnover in this area is not too high, research and results should be presented to the local population.

For residents, tourism is seen as an opportunity to enhance the wellbeing of the community in general, and particularly their own. The local community is willing to support sustainable tourism development if the personal benefits perceived are important. The greater the perceived economical, socio-cultural and infrastructure benefits, the higher the support is from the local community in building future tourism strategies.

An interesting fact about this research is that the respondents who have currently changed their place of residence on the question "Would the development of tourism on the Šar mountain have an effect on their return" answered positively and 68,4% respondents answered that tourism would have an effect on their return in Sirnićka district. This percentage consists mostly of students aged between 15 to 24 years. This means that young people see the prospect of living in the investigated area with the development of tourism, employment opportunity, first of all, because the research showed an awareness of the economic importance of tourism for the entire municipality.

The fact that the Šar mountain has been declared a national park in 1986 year speaks about the tourist and natural values of the area. Also, there are churches dating back to the 17th century in the municipality of Štrpce. The vicinity of the town of Prizren, which lies on the river Bistrica, and in which the town of the Serbian Emperor Dušan Nemanjić is located, as well as the monasteries Visoki Dečani, Pec Patriarchate and Gračanica, are another reason for tourist arrival.

However, these values alone cannot attract tourists sufficiently. To improve the development of tourism, it is necessary to build a tourist information centre, tourist maps, tourist signalization, provide professional staff, and all this requires a good strategy and development plan.

However, this study has several limitations. First of all is the number of respondents, as well as a short period of time spent on surveying. Also, the unequal representation of all age

groups in the sample reduces the possibility of making general conclusions about the attitudes of the residents towards the impacts of tourism development. The recommendation for future research is to expand a sample by examining different age structure respondents, in the aim of getting an insight into the real situation and their perception of tourism development impact.

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# BARE BOAT CHARTER IN CROATIA DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FAMILY BUSINESS PROJECT

Luka Ćurin<sup>A</sup>, Srećko Favro<sup>B</sup>

# Abstract

The great revenues a tourist receptive country might achieve through nautical tourism, as well as the big development potential that is offered by this branch of tourism, attracted a large number of investors into founding charter companies – a global trend that affected Croatia, as well. At the end of the 20th century, a steady increase in the number of nautical tourists was accompanied by a steady increase in the number of chartered vessels, while at the beginning of the 21st century, the decreasing growth in the number of tourists was accompanied by a quadruple increase in the number of vessels. Such sudden and abrupt growth and development caused an excessive saturation of the market, decreased the quality of service and generally lowered the competitiveness of Croatia as a nautical tourism destination. Taking this into consideration, the author conducts a comparative analysis of Croatia and its major competitors on the European nautical tourism market, and analyses the current global trends in nautical tourism. On the basis of the results obtained, this paper studies the current situation of this type of tourism in Croatia and, consequently, offers a detailed business plan for a competitive, profitable and successful charter company. By observation and description methods, the author analyses the location of the eastern Adriatic coast, for the purpose of selecting the most suitable location for establishing a charter. Furthermore, through the analysis of local competition, the author defines the investment and determines the business income and expenditures. Finally, by analysing the break-even point, the author examines the profitability of a business venture and comes to important conclusions about the way of running the company. While following trends and responding to demand's requests, the company would generate revenue throughout the year and with its sophisticated business approach and provide a good example for the whole the industry. Such company, by offering new, alternative ways to improve its booking, would refine the monotonous basic charter offer with a multitude of added value.

Keywords: Nautical tourism, Croatia, Bare boat, Charter, Business plan

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# Introduction

The nautical tourism trade has had a significant influence on tourism in the Republic of Croatia in the last forty years. The development of nautical tourism, and the increase in its share in the country's tourist offer, can greatly contribute to the diversification of the monotonous "sun and sea" tourism offer in Croatia.

High development potential of this type of tourism lies not only in the excellent sea quality and the aquatorium which is ideal for this type of industry, but also in the often undervalued cultural and eno-gastronomic offer of the Adriatic islands. Since the 1960s nautical tourism has attracted a number of investors, but the fastest development occurred at the beginning of the 21st century, which disrupted the stable growth achieved throughout the 20th century. This sudden and chaotic expansion made Croatia the fastest growing charter destination, with as much as 40% of the world's charter fleet being located in Croatia. By taking the basic laws of economics into consideration, or just by using common sense, it is easy to conclude that the growth in competition should be accompanied by the diversification of the offer so that companies could survive. However, this was not the case with the Croatian nautical tourism market. The vast majority of the offer consists of the so-called "bare boat" charters, that is, yacht rental without skippers, a commodity that does not include any added value. All this considered, this paper offers a detailed business plan for a competitive and sustainable charter company, which guides the reader through the process of making business decisions, from the location analysis, to the act of investment type determination and business revenues and expenditures analysis. Such company generates revenues throughout the year, uses a sophisticated business approach which sets an example to all stakeholders on the supply side, and does not perceive the afore-mentioned market instability as threat, but as an opportunity.

#### Situation on Croatian nautical tourism market

Apart from the anomaly during the economic crisis in 2009, interest in Croatia as a nautical tourism destination has been steadily increasing since the establishment of the industry in this region. However, the highest growth was noted after 2010, when the number of vessels in the charter fleet grew by nearly 400%. Today, with as much as 40% of the world fleet, Croatia should represent a powerhouse on the nautical tourism market, but the lack of investment funds, together with the uncontrolled development of the industry, made Croatia one of the nautical destinations with the smallest revenue per chartered vessel. Despite the growth in the number of tourist arrivals, rentals and overnight stays in the last 10 years, a significant decline in the quality of Croatia's nautical tourism offer is evident. This problem mainly has to do with the unfavourable manner of fighting competition. Instead of attempting to stand out by increasing the quality of the offer, charters tend to lower the prices as a response to the growing competition (and the consequent growth of the last minute offer). Naturally, the business policy of lowering the prices at unchanged or even increased fixed cost leads to the decrease in the quality of the offer and eventually to the bankruptcy of many businesses. By neglecting one of the highest quality branches of tourism in Croatia, with perhaps the greatest growth potential, and by using the so-called "laissez faire" approach, it is difficult to get quality results. Croatia's offer is further jeopardized by its biggest competitors, Greece and Turkey, increasing their share on the nautical tourism market and taking over guests from Croatia. To conclude, the nautical tourism of Croatia is a balloon that is growing and getting close to cracking. Only rigorous changes in the guidance of the industry and significant growth in quality can revitalize the market and bolster its growth within the framework of sustainability.

### Nautical Tourism Trends in Charter

One of the main trends in yachting tourism in the world is the rise in the quality of supply and the adaptation of vessels to the elderly population. Unfortunately, Croatia cannot keep up with the competition in the quality of the offer. Most charters offer only older vessels which are 10-14 meters long, of lower quality and selling price per week rental. Furthermore, the trend of environmentally responsible business, namely the development of "clean technologies", is not acknowledged in the nautical tourism of the Republic of Croatia. One of the most banal examples includes the lack of boat wastewater treatment system. In most competitor states, marinas have to be equipped with pumps for pumping black and grey waters which are later further disposed of. In Croatia, the wastewater from the boats is legally discharged into the Adriatic Sea, which not only has a negative impact on tourism, but harms the entire ecosystem. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the trend of the rise in demand for berths for vessels greater than 12 meters and mega-yachts (24 m +), as well as the increase in the number of the yacht crew members<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the number of the transit arrivals at marinas is also rising, as well as the demand for catering and other services in marinas. These trends indicate the growth of demand for more luxurious vessels and all-inclusive offer. Lastly, it is important to emphasise the growth of demand from the eastern and northern European markets.



**Figure 1.** Marinas in Croatia. Source: http://www.croatia-yachting.hr/AboutCroatia\_MarinasInCroatia.asp

#### **Investor's Business Plan**

#### Location Analysis

The main purpose of the location analysis is to determine whether the location represents a restrictive, neutral, or possibly stimulating factor. The simplest and most efficient way to conduct such an analysis implies two types of factors. The first important factor has to do with the general characteristics, and analyses the purity of the sea, the indebtedness of the coastline,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Horak, S., Marušić, Z., Carić, H., Sever, I.: Akcijski plan razvoja nautičkog turizma, Institut za turizam, Zagreb 2015.

climate conditions, etc. The other factor implies special characteristics, such as the availability of the ports, safety of navigation, equipment of nautical ports, prices, etc.<sup>2</sup> A more detailed analysis of the location of the ACI Marina Split, the marina in which the investor decided to perform the charter activity is indicated below.

The city of Split is the largest city in Dalmatia, and the second largest city in the Republic of Croatia. Charters rent vessels for travels that rarely last more than one or two weeks, which makes Split an excellent charter trip starting point. Its location in central Dalmatia makes it possible to visit all the major tourist locations on the Adriatic coast, such as the city of Dubrovnik in the south, but also a number of popular places in the North (Cres, Pag, Lošinj, etc.).

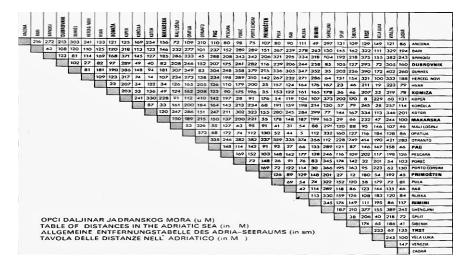
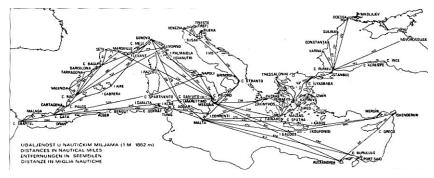


Figure 2. Table of distances in the Adriatic sea.

Source: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod "Miroslav Krleža": Nautički vodič Jadrana, Zagreb, May 1990.



**Figure 3.** Distances in nautical miles Source: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod "Miroslav Krleža": Nautički vodič Jadrana, Zagreb, May 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Dundović, Č., Kovačić, M., Badurina-Tomić, P.: Prilog istraživanju postojećeg stanja i tendencije razvitka nautičkog turizma u Republici Hrvatskoj, Rijeka, 2015.

#### General characteristics

The indented coastline, as well as the rich cultural, historical and gastronomic offer, makes the middle Adriatic one of the most attractive destinations for nautical tourists. It has a Mediterranean climate, characterized by dry and hot summers and chilly, but moderate and moist winters. The average air temperature of the hottest month is higher than 22 °C and the coldest is higher than 4 °C<sup>3</sup>.

#### Special characteristics

While analysing the second group of factors, it is crucial to mention an excellent connection between the city of Split and the emissive markets. The city of Split has an international airport in its vicinity, and the largest passenger port in the country is located in the city centre. The city has a great road connection, which consists of the A1 motorway, the state road D1 (Macelj-Split), and the state road D8 (the so-called Adriatic Highway).In terms of safety, the Republic of Croatia is known as a safe destination, and the situation is the same while navigating the Adriatic. The level of equipment of the nautical ports is satisfactory, and the only thing to emphasize is the lack of the aforementioned wastewater treatment systems. Prices are generally acceptable for the average nautical tourist, apart from the rare anomalies in the well-known tourist destinations such as Hvar, Vis, Komiža, etc.

#### **Competition Analysis**

When analysing the competition, it is important to emphasise the competition in the immediate environment of the location where the investor plans to start his charter company, the Split-Dalmatia county. In the said county, 51 "charter" companies were registered, and for the purposes of this work it is useful to underline some of them, such as:

*BavAdria Yacht Charter* – Charter company with the central office in Kaštel Gomilica marina, whose offer consists mostly of *Bavaria* sailboats (14 of them), and 4 *Sun Odyssey* sailing yachts and one motor boat. Eventhough they offer some higher-end, luxurious vessels, almost all of them are mediocrity equipped, older, cheaper sailboats.

*Ultra Sailing* – Charter company with the main office in Split, and bases throughout Split-Dalmatia County. It specializes in renting *Beneteau* sailboats and *FountainePajot* catamarans, and owns 50 of such vessels. Even though it has a couple of lower end sailboats for tourists of lower purchasing power, this company mostly targets wealthier guests with its spacious and luxurious sailing yachts and catamarans. In the off-season, the *UltraSailing* team also offers a sailing school and skipper training, which provides them with a significant influx of funds outside the main season.

*Sail Croatia* – A charter company, which also acts as a broker for the booking of other charters' vessels. They own 10 yachts, 5 of which are rented for guided tours for young people (the so-called "under 35 Tour") from June to September. The other 5 yachts, together with the other vessels they manage, create a big fleet of vessels which are rented to tourists in their personal arrangement, or as a part of one of the tours the charter offers ("Private yacht Tour", "Libertine special", etc.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The location of Split. Available on: https://visitsplit.com/hr/1232/polozaj . Accessed on 29. June 2019.



Figure 4. Map of Croatia's charter marinas Source: S. Favro lecture, Faculty of economics, Split

# Defining the investment type

The investor decided to invest in a new yacht, a sailboat of the Bavaria C57 brand. The yacht was first presented at a boat show in the German city of Düsseldorf in 2017. It is 57 feet long (16.75 m) and 5.28 meters wide. The investor has considered several versions of the yacht that bind several different price categories. Among different yacht layouts, the investor has opted for the two stern cabin and one large bow cabin version (aka "Owner's Version"). Also, the investor plans to invest more in the additional equipment, with a view to increase the comfort of living on the yacht itself (e.g. generator for electricity production, air conditioning in all cabins and the saloon, adjustable tables in the cockpit with the possibility of turning them into sun beds, etc.), but also, to increase the appearance of the interior and exterior of the yacht (teak flooring on the entire deck of the ship, higher-end furniture made of walnut, etc.).

It is evident that the investor's main plan is to fill the market niche created by the lack of offered boats with the comparative advantages of sailing yachts (economy, possibility of sailing, intimacy), combined with the advantages of motor yachts (luxury, spaciousness, the experience of a "floating house"). With this business venture the investor would surely enrich and expand Croatia's nautical tourism offer. Also, a more sophisticated approach in conducting with wealthier and more demanding guests would create an example of a quality, sustainable business from which the stakeholders could and should learn.

In the table below the base yacht price is indicated, which, after including the additional equipment price and the broker discount, gives the final price of the investment.



Figure 5. Vessel layout Source: https://www.google.com/ search?q=bavaria+c57&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi30u3bjaXjAhVMtIsKHb1RD4EQ\_ AUIECgB&biw=1536&bih=754#imgrc=Tep7Q\_kL\_TozmM:

BASE PRICE	406.900€
TOTAL	662.720€
BROKER DISCOUNT (15%)	-99.408€
FINAL PRICE	563.312€

Table 1. Yacht final price calculation

Source: made by the author

# **Defining the revenues**

The investor's business income should come from two sources. The first source is, of course, yacht chartering for tourism purposes. Given that the investor would run his business personally, the first step would be connecting with the booking agencies. The easiest way to do that is through one of the booking platforms. Booking platforms are pieces of software that are easily accessible (simply downloaded from the Internet), fairly easy to use for users who are dealing with this type of work for the first time, and are generally very useful. The way they function implies the boat owner importing all the relevant yacht data (length, draft, number of cabins, yacht equipment, etc.), uploading pictures he thinks depict the boat best, and setting weekly prices. Soon after the investor finishes his part of work, this data is transmitted to the agencies on whose websites the yacht will soon appear. Some of the more famous booking platforms are "Booking Manager", "Nausys", "Yachtsys", etc. Apart from managing the aforementioned part of the charter business, booking platforms offer support for the routine jobs in charters' daily work, such as issuing of final invoices and invoices for advance payments, revenue management, production of crew lists, etc. Also, it is advisable to create promotional material, as an attempt to create stronger connections with some of the most influential agencies.

As a second source of income, the investor would cooperate with the maritime personnel education Institution, Kliper D.O.O., a company which would use the investor's vessel to work on requalification of students, mainly educating chefs and hostesses in a nautical environment.

		High season	Middle season	Off season			
Season period		01.06-09.09	01.0431.05	01.1031.03			
Number of weeks	21	13	5	3			
Weekly price (13% VAT included)		9800	8000	6800			
Expected revenue		127.400,00	40.000,00	20.400,00			
Agency discount	5%	6.370,00	2.000,00	1.020,00			
VAT	13%	13.923,81	4.371,68	2.229,56			
Agency commission	15%	18.154,50	5.700,00	2.907,00			
Charter base commission	0%	0,00	0,00	0,00			
Expected revenues after variable costs		88.951,69	27.928,32	14.243,44			
Total expected revenue after variable costs	131.123,46						
Revenue from cooperation with Kliper ltd. company	20.000						
Total	151.123,46						

Figure 7. Expected revenues after the variable costs calculation.

Source: made by the author

# **Expenses**

Since the investor decided to run the business by himself, he can expect high material and other costs. The biggest will, of course, be the loan instalment cost, but he can also expect high services costs, taking into account the high prices of annual berth for the vessel of such length, together with high insurance and registration expenses. Staff costs should also be taken into consideration. Since the investor plans to permanently employ one person to clean the yacht, and another one for assistance in peak periods, these expenses should reach a high value. The material costs are slightly lower, and include the cost of fuel in the said business venture of the hostess' and the chef's requalification, and other costs (administration costs, spare parts, etc.).

Table 3. Total costs calculation	Table	3. To	otal co	sts cal	culation
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Costs	Value in HRK
Material costs	33.500
Services costs	138.040
Personnel costs	74.500
Loan instalments costs	630.000
Total	876.040

Source: made by the author

#### **Break-even point**

To calculate the break-even point, it is first important to analyse variable and fixed costs the investor should expect.

Since the investor's company owns only one yacht, for which the costs of use (fuel, electricity, water, etc.) are taken care of by the guests while the boat is in their lease, variable costs will be reduced to zero. Fixed costs include all of the costs in the table above, and the calculation of the break-even point follows:

Break event point =  $\frac{\text{fixed costs}}{\text{selling price - variable costs}}$ Break even point =  $\frac{876040}{61500}$  = 14.24

The calculation shows that the yacht should be leased for approximately 14 weeks per year in order to cover the costs, at an average price of €8,200 or 61,500 HRK. Since this figure is not so easy to reach, especially in terms of very prominent seasonality in Croatia's nautical tourism, it is important to face the risks and find a solution which would enable the company's stable growth and make it sustainable.

As the investor is new to the charter business, the main risk he might face is the difficulty in reaching the guests when entering the market. In the beginning of his venture, the investor has very few business connections, and in an environment where everything goes through the booking agencies, the investor might find it quite hard to reach the customers and increase the market share. Consequently, there is a high risk of not reaching the break-even point and having to face financial loss at the end of the fiscal year.

In view of the above, the investor has two options to choose from when entering the market. The first option implies financial strategies, such as reducing the weekly price of the boat and/ or increasing agencies' commission. Reducing the price for a weekly lease can in some cases save the investor and his investment, but this strategy leads to a larger number of rented weeks at a lower price, which accelerates the depreciation of the vessel and represents a poor business strategy in the long term. Also, if the need for the increase in agencies' commissions arises, the financial result at the end of the fiscal year will not look promising. The second strategy the investor could undertake implies the designing of alternative solutions for increasing the booking. This can be achieved by improving of quality and diversification of the offer. One of the ways in which the investor could enrich his offer and attract nautical tourists without reducing the profits, is indicated below.

Based on the analyses on the global level, changes in nautical tourist's desires and ambitions are evident. Recently, in global tourism, a decline in demand for the so-called "3 s" offer – sun, sand, sea – and the growing demand for other forms of tourism, predominantly cultural, is noted. Similar phenomenon occurs in nautical tourism.Even though this occurrence may seem unexpected, the fact is that nautical tourists increasingly undertake trips in which they seek to get acquainted with the culture of the state, local gastronomy, experiences in general, and not just to enjoy Croatia's pure sea and its warm climate.There lies the opportunity for the investor to enrich its offer, diversify it, and generate higher revenues. One of the ways to achieve this is to organize special routes in the middle Adriatic.Apart from the relaxation through swimming and sunbathing, the guests would be able to explore the entire history of the central Adriatic Islands, from ancient ruins in Starigrad, through the medieval town of Korčula, to the World War II infrastructure tour on Vis. This is merely a simple example of a tour which, with a quality organization, could represent a more sustainable, and maybe even an optimal way of reaching higher sales and revenues on the described market.

#### Conclusion

The nautical tourism offer currently represents one of the best commodities Croatia can offer. An aquatorium perfect for this type of tourism, and a pleasant Mediterranean climate give this branch of tourism a great growth potential that is unfortunately poorly exploited, primarily because of the neglecting of global trends and not adapting the offer to the market demand. Building on this, the author of this paper, after analysing the situation on the local nautical tourism market and its environment, offers a business plan that, not only helps in forming of a successful and sustainable, long term business, but offers a good benchmarking sample for other charter companies, and, in the long term, increases competitiveness in its environment.

The analysis of location and competition showed good results, and after determining business revenues and expenditures, the investment has proved to be profitable and sustainable in the long term.

Despite the constant growth in the number of stakeholders on the offer side in nautical tourism, charter is still a profitable business. Considering that the market is quite saturated, when entering it, it is necessary to form a strong business strategy and a good idea, which will place the charter on the desired market position as soon as possible. Leasing a vessel as a basic charter offer, provides very little added value, and is not enough for the investment of this

type to live. Also, it is necessary to design a backup plan which will emphasize investor's offer on the saturated market, help him establish a guest base and thus bypass the agencies and the additional costs they bring. When deciding on an investment, the poor level of market development should not be perceived as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to create a stronger market performance.

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# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE IN ENRICHING THE TOURIST OFFER

Mijalche Gjorgievski<sup>A\*</sup>, Ace Milenkovski<sup>A</sup>, Dejan Nakovski<sup>A</sup>, Tatjana Janeva<sup>A</sup>

# Abstract

Tourism as a social and economic phenomenon, the last two decades has grown into one of the fastest growing industries in today's society, along with its alternative forms. They are created to direct the movement of humans generally in the direction of maintaining the environment around him and the natural rarities of the Earth, because the human being in this natural museum represents only one unit of the whole universe, limited by time and space.

On the other hand, tourism is the result of the achieved level of cultural development in the world, which is considered the outcome of all human changes, processes and a set of works, enriching the material and spiritual treasures of mankind. The goal of man is to preserve, increase freedom and motivation for creation, by extending human imagery.

Each community and location should present their special strategic approach to the development of tourism, in order to exploit the overall tourism potential of nature and what man has created. This is because people travel around the world stimulated by different goals and motives, which means that tourists are not uniform. Someone enjoys climbing mountain peaks, while others want to travel through time, seeking mystique and unknown history, and this helps in initiating tourist movements that reflect human needs.

In modern tourism, especially in areas that have no facilities with religious buildings that have tremendous attractive power for tourists, a combination with natural heritage must be made and together an attractive and competitive tourist offer has to be created. And precisely the feature of modern tourism consists of a mixture of many forms of tourism that complement one another.

For people who want to travel in time they do not need a time machine, today with the advancement of technology and life in industrialized societies, tourism has the power to move back into history, where tourists will feel that they are living thousands of years ago in history and vice versa, through futuristic elements to transfer us into the future.

Keywords: tourism, natural heritage, religious heritage, history, religion

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## Introduction

Tourism is a complex phenomenon placed in human consciousness as an indispensable human need in the 20th and 21st centuries, and although it is a feature of today due to advanced technology and industrialization, religious tourism still has ancient beginnings. Tourism is an increasingly massive industry today, whose movements must be monitored and controlled in a way that it also protects the values that are being visited, their authenticity, security, and even the people themselves.

It testifies that tourism has no spatial boundaries for expansion. The reasons for the expansion of tourism in certain areas are the result of the social and economic conditions in the world. Investment capital in tourism follows today's global trends, focusing more on markets that can be advanced, and expanding on looking to a better future with a shortened period of return on the invested funds. As a result, new tourist and more attractive outlets on the market are taking up places in traditional tourist destinations. One such example is China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia etc. In 1980, China was ranked nineteenth on the list of the most popular receptive destinations in the world, climbing to twelfth in 1990 to take fifth place in 1996 (Costas, 2011).

The globalization of tourism is primarily the result of the continued growth of international tourist flows that first spread to the oldest tourist destinations (Western and Mediterranean Europe) to new destinations, from the center to the outskirts, almost worldwide.

In 1968, the world had a population of about 3.5 billion, with 130 million participating in foreign tourist movements, while in 2006 of over 6 billion worldwide population, 842 million took part in foreign tourist flows. Today, over 1 billion people out of a population of 7 billion are involved in tourism movements, and thus tourism has grown into a new dimension of our "free civilization". Tourism is a key sector of the world economy and accounts for nearly 10% (1 billion) of world GDP, 6% of total exports and one out of every eleven jobs worldwide (Christopher, 2002).

Tourism has become a social phenomenon that has led to the economic enrichment of industrialized societies and social progress. Since ancient times, travelling for fervor and religious devotion purposes have been present in humanity. In this way, religious tourism starts from the moment people begin a journey due to a question of belief. It begins with a religious manifestation—the pilgrimage—where the pilgrim is considered a tourist of religious motivation (Digance 2003; Turner 1973; Turner and Turner 1978).

#### **Religious tourism**

Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourist travel, and today it is a very important sector of global tourism. Religious tourism is the departure of a person from a country of residence for a period of no more than six months in order to visit holy places and centers of religion. On the other hand, this concept can be viewed as an activity aimed at providing services to the tourists travelling for religious purposes (Chumarina, Fakhrutdinova and Eidelman 2016).

Generally, religious tourism is classified in the following way: - the pilgrimage tourism; - the religious tourism of excursion - cognitive focus (Fakhrutdinova et al. 2017).

It has to be said that there are several definitions or rather more views on religious tourism. They are characterized by not contradicting each other, not excluding, but complementing each other, in order to more precisely understand the term religious tourism. Religious travel / tourism - in the narrow sense of the word, it is a journey and visit whose primary purpose is religious experience (pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Mecca, Lourdes).

- Religious tourism (German - Religionsbedingter Tourismus) - is a set of relationships and service activities that satisfy primarily the spiritual but also the cultural and social needs of believers arising from their religious determination, depending on the strength of their religious needs, feelings, or obligations.

The problem lies in finding an empirically verifiable definition. Religion is defined by the characteristic of religions i.e. that religion is a system of beliefs such as:

- Humanity (supernatural)
- Belief in supernatural beings (gods)
- Difference between the sacred and the ordinary
- Ritual acts focused on sacral objects
- A moral code by the gods
- Social group bound together through common beliefs

Today, many religions are spread throughout the world, from monotheistic to polytheistic. Of the 7.3 billion people living on the planet, about 2.3 billion, or 31%, are declared Christians. The second largest religion in the world is Islam, with about 1.8 billion believers, or 24.1%. About 1.2 billion people declared themselves non-religious, while Hindus declared 1.1 billion, or 15.1%. Buddhists are 500 million, or 6.9%, Judaists about 15 million, while traditional religions number 400 million, or 5.7% of the total population. The category "other religions" comprises about 100 million people.

The organization of religious tourism mostly depends on the type of religion - the religious institutions, the time in which certain customs are performed, the way they are conducted, the clergy, the religious objects of interest to visit, and so on. Religious tourism, sometimes called spiritual tourism, has played a huge role all over the world. Because of its initial component, pilgrimage is often considered the oldest form of tourism dating back thousands of years. Journeys to ancient sacred places did not always have a logical explanation, but they had the same human motivation: faith. This faith, at times extreme, was the basis for shaping religions. The diversity and complexity of religions can be justified through human typology, the environment in which their followers live, culture and, last but not least, the stage of development of society. The world is an interesting religious puzzle: it can be interesting for both religious tourists and curious travelers.

In medieval Europe, the church acted as a stimulator of all kinds of population movements because it wanted to attach people to it in a way that could more easily and powerfully influence their lives and keep them under control. That is why the church only encouraged religious movements and helped make pilgrimage, and the Catholic Church has a particularly rich history of pilgrimage. During the Renaissance era, interest in this type of travel diminished dramatically to revive it in the twentieth century.

Global trends in the tourism market indicate a change in tourist preferences, which opens up the possibility of developing new segments of the tourism offer that are not related to mass tourism, but rather correspond to alternative forms of tourism. Although mass tourism still holds the primacy of distributing tourism traffic globally, shifts in the direction of the increasing actualization of alternative forms of tourism, including religious tourism, are evident (Hrabovski-Tomic, 2008). Religious tourism is a type of tourism where people travel individually or in group for pilgrimage, missionary or other religious purposes. Believers or religious tourists are the second most important link in the organization of religious tourism. Their involvement in travel, motivation, mobility and religious affiliation create the dimensions of this type of tourism.

#### Relationship between religious and natural environment

Religious motivated tourist movements have become more massive in the last few decades, with no problem we can plan tourist routes, regardless of time intervals, where our goal is, even if it is on another continent. Today this type of tourism is undoubtedly the most developed form of alternative form that directs the movements toward the sacredness: the Vatican, Santiago de Compostela, Mecca, Medina, Fatima, Atos, Meteori, Calvary, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Lourdes ... including the Mass people as well as putting into operation all kinds of vehicles followed by service activities (Jovičić and Ivanović 2008). But religious sites are not always visited by primary religious tourists. Depending on their location and the natural environment that is a priority for attracting tourists, the religious sites located at such destinations increase their attendance thanks to those on the road or secondary tourists. That is why we have many examples where such religious sites are much more visited, though they have less historical, artistic, or architectural value than other religious attractions that are of much greater value but lack complementarity with their natural surroundings.

In order to confirm this thesis as a case study we will analyze the Matka Canyon area near Skopje, a space that has both natural and religious tourism potentials.

The richness of natural and cultural values make Matka Canyon one of the most representative nature sites in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. The mosaic of various geological, geomorphological, hydrological, floristic and faunistic features contribute to the Matka Canyon being one of the most important protected areas in our country. The Matka Canyon Protected Area is located along the lower course of the Treska River about 15 km southwest of Skopje. The area in the east is connected to the city of Skopje by asphalt road up to the Matka-1 hydroelectric dam. On the west side the connection is via asphalt road Skopje - Pusto Breznica - dam of the Matka-2 hydro power plant. The protected area border Matka Canyon is surrounded by terrain on both sides of the Treska River.

The Treska River Canyon covers an area of approximately 50 km2 that is naturally accreted or delineated by the Suva Mountain to the south, Osoj Mountain to the west and the Karsjak Mountain to the east. The entire terrain within the boundaries of the Matka Canyon Protected Area has particular features of a lower mountain area with the highest peak Krstec (1401m) at the northwestern point. As a Preserved Natural Geographical Entity, the Matka Canyon is home to a large number of rare and endemic plants and animals, beautiful landscapes, a wealth of cave objects, especially caves, unique wildlife, cultural and spiritual riches. Apart from the above mentioned natural values, the area also has several medieval churches and monasteries such as St. Nicholas (1345), St. Andrew (1389) and Holy Mother of God (mid-4th century). These monasteries are one of the many medieval monasteries in the country and beyond but do not stand out with any particularity that would stand out from the rest. There are monasteries of much greater historical, architectural, and artistic value in Macedonia, such as St. Panteleimon and St. George in Kurbinovo, dating from the early twentieth century and discovering the oldest frescoes, followed by St. John Bigorski, which has one of the most beautiful artwork expressed in the form of iconostasis. But when they look at the statistical indicators, they lag behind the number of visitors compared to those in the Matka Canyon area.

The tourism and recreation facilities available to visitors to the Matka Protected Area are mainly located in the Lower Matka area. As far as the number of visitors is concerned, on average 100-120 visitors pass on weekdays, on average there are about 1500-2000 visitors during the weekends, and the maximum attendance is on holidays, when 4000 - 5,000 visitors gather. Cumulatively gathering all visitors yields a flow of between 12,000 and 150,000 visitors annually (State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia 2017). Although precise statistics are not maintained, it is thought that every fourth tourist visiting the area also visits some of the religious sites already mentioned. For comparison's sake, St. Panteleimon (in the village of Gorno Nerezi) is visited by only 7,000 tourists a year, and St. George's Church in Kurbinovo is almost never open to visitors. Other religious facilities in the Republic of Northern Macedonia also feature such low attendance.

# Conclusion

Based on the potential performance of tourism potential content, the valuation of those relevant elements as potential tourism opportunities is approached. The goal is to highlight the potential tourism, the ultimate power of absorption and commercial cooperation. Based on the results of the resource value assessment, the ranking of the resources and other potential elements, in a hierarchical order, against their estimated value is provided, which is a basic prerequisite for implementing the next phase in the spatial planning process of tourism. The value of the resources and other constituent elements of the overall tourism potential, point to those spatial units that have a comparative advantage for tourism development. Spatial units with the highest complementary value can be expected to be the most attractive for tourists and therefore be given priority. Relevance is the result of unity of relevance to the individual criteria. This is precisely the area of Matka Canyon, which has an extraordinary complementary tourist value expressed through a number of rare and endemic plants and animals. Speleological objects especially caves, then excellent rock climbing, artificial accumulation suitable for numerous water sports and nautical sports, wildlife kayaking, unique living world, all enriched with cultural and spiritual richness, and proximity to the city of Skopje contribute to be one of the main tourist destinations in the country.

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# THE PLACE OF BUSINESS HOTELS IN CONTEMPORARY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Nadezhda Kostadinova<sup>A</sup>

# Abstract

The fast changing conjuncture in tourism industry, new tendencies both in supply and demand market together with the enlarging influence of the branch globally, cause sustained dynamics in hospitality business as well, being a part of the whole process. Hence new generation of guests is formed that makes necessary totally new approaches when it comes to criteria of hotels' qualities estimation and grouping them by types. The purpose of this paper is weak sides and disadvantages on working classification systems to be identified and rooting on them a new approach to contemporary hotel classifications to be proposed. In this context one specific type of hotels is outlined that according to the author is a typical representative of that new generation hotels, deserving distinction from the rest. It's about business hotels. Several main reasons, proving its nowadays significance, are discussed, and as a result business hotels' classifications, based on up-to-date evidence and theory are proposed. As a result the author suggests fully new definition for business hotel and classification of business hotels. The conclusions made, are in the context of the issue about the need of conceptually new classification systems that should be applied. Furthermore they should be separately treated and typically structured under appliance of different actual criteria.

Keywords: Classification systems, Business hotels, Business travellers, Hospitality

#### Introduction

Hotels as tourist enterprises are inevitably becoming more and more significant for guests' level of satisfaction. What's more impressions left over tourists during their stay in the hotel may impact their whole opinion about the trip undertaken. This is a principal prerequisite that makes the field of hospitality business attractive enough to be observed, analyzed and researched from its scientific side (though it is not the only one). The dynamics and rapid evolvement of tourist industry globally, invariably implicates hotel sphere in the process.

This survey treats one type of hotels that are still not enough specified officially and that need to take more significant place in contemporary classification systems. It is about business hotels.

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The **purpose** of the paper is to make a suggestion for definition of business hotel, system classification of business hotels as well as to prove the necessity of one. This is achieved first by finding out and outlining the gap of the above in functioning classifications. Second – by extracting contextual essence from up-to-date scientific works and other representative outlets that treat the contents of business tourism and business traveller. At the same time the author puts some limitations, clearing out that the following pages do not pretend to cover the whole literature concerning the theory of business hotels, but takes into consideration some contemporary authors, who pay attention to the treated issue as well as Bulgarian regulatory document and international official reports.

The **object** of the report is a business hotel as phenomenon in hospitality and in science for tourism. The **subject** is its place in classification systems. The **methods** used are synthesis of gathered information, model approaching, logical research, observation and information analysis.

#### Defining the inefficiency in working hotel classification systems

There are numerous trials a decent encompassing typification of hotels to be made. Both international unions and organizations or state authorities on national level are doing this. However, each attempt to be made such, comprises some kind of discrepancies or disadvantages.

A study of UNWTO from 2015 under the name "Hotel Classification Systems" aims to represent different ways and methods of preparing those systems. It says that "there is no worldwide standard for official hotel classification systems and there may well never be one due to the incredible diversity of the environmental, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts in which they are embedded" (UNWTO, 2015, p. 5). From the point of view of customers its purpose is to "inform intending guests in advance on what can be expected in order to reduce the gap between expected and experienced facilities and service delivery" (UNWTO, 2015, p. 10). So it can be accepted that the role of preparing typification of hotels is to ease both contractors on the tourism market and customers. The second ones – by making them aware of what to expect about hotel product they've bought as they cannot consume it before reaching the place it is positioned at and practically cannot use the service.

Passing through the whole study shows however that its title is somehow misleading as in fact hotels are not being classified in separate groups themselves but rather a certain number of criteria have been marked down according to which the star categorization is given. The star category is the most popular one and is based on attempt a quality graduation of hotels to be achieved according to a number of listed criteria elements that exist or do not exist in a given hotel.

It is evident from the above texts that:

First – all the criteria in conjunction with categorization of hotels are in fact aiming to impose certain standards overall functioning hotel enterprises by being classified in separate groups and based on level of quality of the hotel service;

Second – it is admitted by many working groups dealing with this issue that an overall standardized system is sought that guarantees benefits for both sides – customers and entrepreneurs, but in fact such one is hardly achievable.

According to a HOTREC Annex named *Classification of hotels in Europe*, "Tour operators and travel agents, as well as hotel booking and review sites are invited to use the official classification. If they use their own rating scheme alongside, they should specify so" (HOTREC Gen-

eral Assembly, 2009, p. 1) Hence, it is absolutely possible several systems to be put into force for one and the same hotel. The situation is the same when it comes to a hotel, working on the territory of a given country but in the same time a part of international chain. Then again at least two types of standardization lists are valid (the local/national one and the main chain's one). And what if a hotel is included in several platforms with its own groups of observed standards and in the same time is a part of an international Chamber of trade, commerce and industry and is forced to achieve agreed EU standards for instance? The next reasonable question is where's the ease for hoteliers and their clients in pretension to all systems to benefit and inform them as well as possible.

In the table below (Table 1) there is an example of some actual standard systems, representing how unique itself the systems may be and demonstrating the large number of criteria included in them.

Hotels Criteria 2		EEIG EU Standard April		Requirements for hotels according t Bulgarian Regulation* / revision in 201		
Group criteria name	Number of listed elements to be fulfilled	Group criteria name	Number of listed elements to be fulfilled	Group criteria name	Number of listed elements to be fulfilled	
General hotel info	15	Compulsory Statutory requirements	12	Requirements concerning hotel buildings	69	
Reception and services	43 (including miscellaneous)	Furnishing, equipment and fitting of rooms (room quality)	23	Requirements concerning furnishing and equipment	144	
Rooms	149	Elevators	/description of the requirement/	Requirements concerning the service quality	17	
Gastronomy	23	Tradesmen's entrance	/description of the requirement/	Requirements concerning facilities available	43	
Event facilities (MICE)	13	Car park and parking lots	/description of the requirement/	Requirements concerning the professional and language qualification of personnel	16	
Leisure	19	Storerooms for sport equipment	/description of the requirement/			
Quality and online activities	8	Laundering, cleaning and ironing of guests' clothes	/description of the requirement/			
		Gastronomic and special offer	8			
		Reception, hall and lounge (Check-in desk and porter)	5			

#### Table 1: Groups and number of criteria included in classification standard systems

		For leisure time, games, sports, cure and recreation	75 (can be taken into consideration according to the kind, situation, quality, variety, and technical standard)		
		For conferences and seminars	7		
Total	270	Total	135	Total	289

Source: Hotelstars, 2015. https://www.hotelstars.eu/criteria/. [Online]

Available at: https://www.hotelstars.eu/fileadmin/Dateien/PORTAL\_HSU/Kriterienkataloge/EN\_Hotelstars\_Union-Criteria\_2015-2020.pdf [Accessed 15 June 2019]

European Economic Chamber of Trade, 2012. EEIG EU Standard for Hotels. Brussels: Eropean Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry

\* Regulation for the requirements to accommodation places and food and entertainment places and for the laying down of category, refusal, downgrading, suspension and limitation of category/from 17.08.2015

The excerpt doesn't claim to be full and detailed as for the aims of current paper its task is just to give a colorful example for the inefficiency and needless complexity of applied classification systems.

After all it can be noticed that these sophisticated systematization can hardly contribute for benefitting the entrepreneurs and customers. From scientific point of view this large number and having variable structure and logic classifications "means different scientific approach to the object and lack of proper methodology for grouping the lounging establishments." (Dabeva, 2005, p. 328). From the point of view of entrepreneurs such criteria appears to be a rude interference into their private investment intentions and decisions. On regular national meetings of hospitality branch, more frequently met is the opinion that such detailed requirements is not a fair way of imposing any regulations and moreover under conditions of market economy, where demand defines supply. Another reason for their inefficiency is the fact that namely the demand on tourist market is the most rapidly changeable factor because of changing types of clients, tastes, habits, motivation for commencing a travel and so on. All the above systems couldn't follow the dynamics on the market as fast as necessary so that they reflect the changed reality. Just on the contrary - clumsy actualization procedures are being lead instead.

From the point of view of customers, the full content of any type of standard classification systems practically are not encompassed by perspective guests. In this line it is underestimated the role of *Internet* where it takes only a couple of minutes to reveal that part of hotels' characteristics that exactly have influence over customer's intentions to visit such an accommodation property. Hardly any guest pays attention to the whole set of standards included in each system. The most essential for contemporary customers are opinions and experience shared by previous guests. In this part actual systematization criteria fall behind. Out of European countries Norway is the only one where guest reviews are included in the total evaluation (UNWTO, 2015, p. 11). For this reason widely disputed becomes the issue that "stars" / "points" visible on the largest booking platforms or meta searching websites (internet platforms that give the chance to guests to compare hotels' prices, facilities and read about previous experiences before booking the hotel) and expressing the marks and level of appreciation of hotel guests, are in fact the new category for the tourist of 21-st century.

### The necessity of separate approach to business hotels

Regarding again the contemporary classification systems, it is noticeable that, despite being quite overwhelming, full of content and even confusing and contradictory there are certain signs of segmentation approach. If they are accepted as classification systems benefiting and pointed to customers' market, they represent slightly visible but anyway existing signs of product differentiation. According to T. Gorcheva and V. Kraeva (Gorcheva T., V. Kraeva, 2008, p. 156) in market segmentation there is an approach that "points the marketing messages to a concrete audience or a certain group of customers". This approach can be noticed in parts of regulation classifications where characteristics of different types of hotels are available. Here can be mentioned the *MICE* part in Hotelstars' classification (https://www.hotelstars.eu/criteria/, 2015) and the part *"For conferences and seminars"* in the system of EEIG (European Economic Chamber of Trade, 2012). In Bulgarian regulation system, which according to Dabeva "possesses characteristics of a law, i.e. its references are mandatory for primary producers" (Dabeva, 2005, p. 332) even **business hotels** are extracted as a distinguishable, principally different type of hotels with its own typical characteristics. This can be qualified as an advantage and a "step ahead" in Bulgarian legislative regulation of hospitality business.

# **Business hotels – definition and classification**

Finding a separate definition for a business hotel turns to be not an easy task. Only a few authors dealing with the issue about business tourism pay special attention to business hotels as its essential element. Specifics of business hotels could be also searched in the business of tourism and closely connected travel industry, event planning and the like. Here, however companies are interested more in travellers' and visitors' behavior itself rather than in hotel industry and hospitality as their main purpose is on the basis of currently gathered data to support earning marketing policy towards existing and future prospects (potential clients). From a third side hospitality industry itself, where certain diversification of hotel typology is supposed to be done, as already researched and explained above, is too "clumsy" to answer adequately to the real market reality and is not yet prepared to fully define and examine business hotels separately. These three sides shortly give explanation about the **absence of business hotels as examined phenomena** both in theory or practice. The author would try to bring out one single definition from the persisting information in conjunction with business hotels.

A.S. Kuskov, speaks about "commercial hotels" and gives as an alternative name "business hotels". According to him these hotels are usually situated in the center of the town or in its commercial zone (Kuskov, 2008, p. 98). In this light, it is a bit confusing while his business hotels are not strongly distinguished by another type of hotels that are being classified as *city hotels*. Kuskov also adds that commercial hotels are the largest group of hotels but this can be explained with the fact that he doesn't strongly divide business hotels with its own identical characteristics. In addition the author completes the description of these hotels claiming that "not so large conference-groups also find this type of hotels attractive" (Kuskov, 2008, p. 98)

Rooting on most classification systems for marking out hotel categories, convenient for business, are usually four and five star hotels. Also according to them namely high category hotels are supposed to dispose for their clients facilities such as: banquet options, conference rooms or business centers, equipment/technology of conference rooms (facilities for projection, flipchart, a printer and a fax machine, sound system), internet connection/high speed internet connection and PC in conference room, own specialists for conferences (although yet most of them are marked as supplementary or additional i.e. not obligatory). Hence, it can be claimed that business hotels are under the umbrella of high-category hotels (4 and 5 star). In Bulgarian Regulation document concerning the requirements to accommodation places, again business hotels are divided under the criterion *according to hotel's purpose and function* and a definition is given as follows: *business hotel is a four star or five star hotel, where necessary facilities for organizing work meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars are available* (Darzhaven vestnik, 2015)

To differentiate *city hotels* from *business hotels* the Bulgarian Regulation document will be considered again, where both categories are in two separate groups and likewise requirements to them are also different. In addition, following the logics of official national and international classification systems, every four or five star hotel can be considered business in case it bears classified characteristics and nonetheless of the location it operates at. Hence there can be mentioned *city business hotels and resort business hotels* (both mountain or seaside, representing the supply for the mass tourism).

Basically the author's opinion is that the above are very narrow definitions that put certain limitations in characterizing business hotels. First – they are not necessarily city hotels as many of them are found in resort areas as well and secondly they are not necessarily high class hotels as middle class ones are allowed to propose smoothly all the mentioned elements that are attributed to business hotels and there aren't any restrictions about this in official classification systems (for example business center, conference hall, fax, photocopy, secretarial services and so on.)

Some authors do not speak about business hotels at all, but deal with the content of business tourism as a whole and thus this kind of hotels fell in the group of suppliers of business services. John Swarbrooke and Susan Horner give the name of "accommodation operators" listing them in the group of "supply" when shaping out the structure of business travel and tourism. (Swarbrooke J., S.Horner, 2001, p. 7)

In the same line S. Kadieva speaks about business tourism and the "taking place various business events" (Rafailova, G. et al., 2012, p. 84). According to her hotels are among the suppliers of business services together with destinations that supply convenient conditions, meeting venues, congress centers, nontraditional places for event purposes and specialized suppliers of conference services in the destination (Kadieva S., K. Yancheva, 2016, pp. 263-270)

According to Penkova (Penkova, 2009, p. 79) the classification is determined by the main motivation of tourist travel, which in the business tourism is "travels for the purpose of entering into transactions, participation in fairs, market researching etc.", while hotel facilities could be used for work activities but could only be as well only for recovery/overnight of corporate travellers. It should be mentioned however that business travellers often combine their travels with getting aware with tourist resources in destinations, culture-events visits, communications with friends and relations etc.

Holloway pays attention to business tourism dividing it into several parts and that can be accepted to be from the demand side: meetings, incentive travel, exhibitions and trade fairs, individual business travel. (Holloway, J.Christopher, C. Humphreys, 2016, pp. 319-336) For the purpose of the current paper it is proper to be examined the first and the last group from the line, concerning the presumption that they are closely connected with the hotel service. The rest two – incentive travels and exhibitions and trade fairs, are usually composed of a package of services, most of them out of the sphere of hospitality and is not of interest to this paper.

The author principally enriches the classification of Swarbrooke and Horner by more detailed division and description of some newly formed groups of customers. These customers usually consume hotel services too so they are to be used in this report as a basis for a future classification of business hotels.

Concerning the *meetings* Holloway speaks about:

- meeting's attendees who "all belong to the same profession or trade and are all members of the same professional or trade association". He puts them in the category of "association meetings" where delegates take part and adds that these are in fact meetings with numerous participants and can reach thousands of attendees.
- 2. "colleagues who work for the same company", "known as corporate meetings". They often include training staff meetings and reach up to one hundred attendees;
- 3. SMERF meetings the author classifies as a separate part of meetings. That is in fact an abbreviation of several types of meetings such as: social meetings, military meetings, educational meetings, religious meetings, fraternal meetings

*Individual guests* are also classified by the author as a "sector of business tourism industry" (Holloway, J.Christopher, C. Humphreys, 2016, p. 335). He gives them the generalizing description that it comprises of "all men and women whose work obliges them to travel".

It is worth however making the last group a bit wider as nowadays several types of individual travellers are recognized by researching companies on the market. There can be distinguished according to the purpose of travel:

- 1. individuals with personal business tasks and obligations;
- 2. individuals with tasks and obligations as part of their job;
- individuals who combine business visit and leisure visit (a new term is already put to practice here – bleisure tourists) (Holloway, J.Christopher, C. Humphreys, 2016, pp. 319-321)

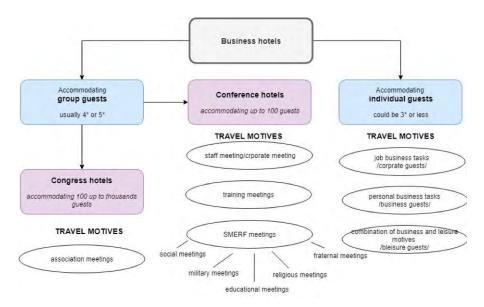


Figure 1. Classification of business hotels

Source: The figure is made by the author, based on Holloway, J.Christopher, C. Humphreys, 2016, The Business of Tourism. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson According to the above theories and definitions, concerning business tourism and the examined sides of business hotels, the author of this report suggests a new definition and a scheme-classification of business hotels.

Business hotel is a lounging place of high or middle quality (based on stars or other type of symbols), proper both for accommodation or a various range of business activities, pointed to group or individual guests whose motive of visit is as a general rule (but not necessarily) different from leisure and recreation, positioned at any location.

# Conclusion

After some observations and analysis made it can be concluded that an up-to-date approach to contemporary classification systems is needed in order new type of hotels with sustainably enlarging significance to be adequately included in them. Such a specialized type is namely business hotel which is still not enough examined, a contemporary and full definition is difficult to be found while alongside business travellers, as an element closely connected with them, are already being annually researched and included in reports of international business travel companies. Hence business hotel is still to be further appraised from its scientific side.

The proposed structure classification of business hotels is a sample one, presented from the point of view of market demand. It is still to be examined from the point of view of existing state-of-the-art technologies that influence functions of contemporary business hotels. Technologies themselves influence the whole activity of hotels and their competitiveness on the market (Mancheva-Ali, 2018, p. 802) The author would take into consideration namely this side, thinking that the question of technological collateralization is the next one that takes quite a limited space in working classification systems and together with this works for turning the standard business hotel product into a customized one.

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# SPECIFICITY AND LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF E-RECRUITMENT IN SERBIAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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# Abstract

Human resource planning is extremely important for the success of any organization in the long run. Successful recruitment in recruitment of human resources is based on the ability to locate appropriate candidates and positions for talented individuals in the organization and beyond. E-recruitment offers new support options for human resources management and makes the organization more competitive in the labour market. This paper deals with the specifics of E-recruitment and its application in hospitality industry activities and identifying the most important channels and means of E-recruitment, as well as detecting characteristics, concrete advantages and disadvantages of this kind of finding and recruiting human resources in comparison with traditional methods. The obtained and integrated data can be used as a starting point for further strategic planning of human capital in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: human resources, Information technology, Hospitality industry, Serbia

# Introduction

Recruitment is the process of seeking candidates for an appropriate job position and encouraging them to apply for a job in an organization. Recruitment is an activity that links employers and job seekers (Flippo, 1968). After established and projected needs for certain employee profiles, it is necessary to define a several principles relating to the methods of attracting the desired employee profile and the ways of selecting the best people. It is very important that attracting and selecting should be proactive activities, where it will be anticipatory to meet the requirements of the company in terms of human resources. Bad practice is when these activities are activated only when there is an urgent need to fill a job position (Faiyyaz, 2014). The first activity in attracting human resources is the analysis of trends in the labour market, where the contingent of available "talents" is located. The migration of educated young people, along with the trend of ageing of the Serbian population leads to the reduction of the contin-

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gent of young, educated and computer literate experts, thus increasing the price of such a profile in the labour market. At the same time, there is a significant deficit of experienced middle-age managers (Mitchell, 2014). The other trend is the increase in the number of employed women, which can have tangible consequences on the way of thinking of human resources managers, primarily in the field of meeting demands of families in which there are two careers, by introducing a more flexible system of sick leave, allowing temporary interruption of work and defining the scheme of work divisions (Dash, 1999). The demographic trend, which is important for the functioning of the human resources sector, is a change in the structure of the required occupations as a result of the gradual entry of Serbia into an information society. If a company chooses for labour market personnel for a particular position of work, the question arises as to whether to seek the necessary profile over the Internet, whether in that process using the services of a specialized agency or to adhere to the traditional methods of advertising in the newspaper and personal recommendations. It is necessary to resolve the relationship between permanent and part-time employees. This question can be solved only by lowering the analysis to the level of a concrete work position. The basic advantage of the temporary engagement of workers is the possibility of quick and inexpensive reduction or expansion of the work contingent. The underlying weakness of such approach lies in a lower level of motivation of workers who are temporarily employed (Freeman, 2002). There are a large number of recruitment methods, which are applied depending on the particular circumstances. Some of the most commonly used recruitment methods are press ads, recruitment agencies, internal announcements on the company notice board, contact with educational associations and institutions, business consultations, business fairs, personal and business contacts, distribution of leaflets etc. The practice has shown that more than a third of hotel workers are employed based on a recommendation from already employed workers, about 20% through an official advertisement, 16% based on a direct application and about 10% through employment agencies (Labour Market Trends, 2015).

#### Literature review regarding e-recruitment

Significant changes in the tourist market were played by the emergence of modern information technologies. In modern conditions, where the new marketing concept is characterized by flexibility and innovation, one of the important business policy models is their introduction and application. Recruitment via the Internet, or E-recruitment, is a phenomenon that has led to a new market where there is a unique level of interaction between employers and potential workers. Ever since the emergence of E-employment in the US in 1994, HR departments increasingly use this form of recruitment - often combining their intranet with third party services (Internet companies). E-recruitment offers one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to hire new employees in the organization (Florea, 2013). Internet recruitment, e-recruitment, or online recruitment is the use of internet technologies to attract and select candidates and accelerate, simplify, and thus facilitate the overall recruitment process. Under this term, the most commonly used is the use of the site of the company, the advertising web-site as an intermediary in employment, the biography database, the browser for the purpose of promoting the organization as well as social media platforms in order to fill vacancies (Lievens et al, 2002; Melanthiou et al, 2015). In most cases, employers advertise vacancies on the Internet and interested candidates send their applications or biographies by email. In some situations, candidates looking for work post their biographies in the hope of attracting the attention

of employers. Recruitment through the Internet provides access to a large number of people and the possibility of almost simultaneous response. E-recruitment helps organizations reduce the time for recruitment, costs, but also increase reputation and market recognition (Fred and Kinange, 2018). Automated communication means that clients and candidates are notified promptly about job status changes, the job can be viewed in real-time and everyone has access to the same information. Candidate data or talent pool can easily be stored and later used (Monteiro et al., 2019). Expert literature focuses on various theories that are relevant to this research. Some of the earlier studies (Smith, 1999) are based on an attempt to e-recruitment to help the employer to better segment the potential workers. Galanaki (2002) conducted a descriptive study on recruiting online, including 99 IT companies in the UK whose shares were traded on the London Stock Exchange. The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, followed by interviews with 34 companies. The author has determined that internet agencies give candidates to companies that are significantly better than candidates in traditional types of employment. So far, research have shown that the use of Internet technologies, in this way, changes (Kinder, 2000), and transforms (Piturro, 2000; Searle, 2003; Veger, 2006) how the HR sector recruits candidates for new or vacant positions. Preferring E-recruitment over traditional employment channels, employers and candidates will experience certain advantages and disadvantages (Bartram, 2006; Tong and Sivanand 2004). As can be seen, the literature presents some contradictory conclusions and identifies individual issues both as an advantage and a lack at the same time. For example, research by Pin et al. (2001) suggests that the Internet provides smaller companies with an example of how larger companies work and indicates that due to lack of barriers, small businesses can use E-employment tools in the same way as larger companies. However, the lower the attractiveness of the company and the lower ranking on search engines means that, with the inconsistency of other facts (ceteris paribus), online recruitment is more effective for companies already familiar to those looking for a job (Galanaki, 2002).

E-recruitment, therefore, has its drawbacks. A large number of candidates and problems with sincerity of candidates are just some examples. Also, the transparency of the current employees' process may indicate that they leave work and reduce the attractiveness of the organization among potential candidates.

# Methodology

The research was carried out from November 2017 to February 2018. The survey was carried out on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, by electronic means. It included management personnel in officially categorized hotel facilities (hotels, motels, pensions and tourist villages) that had electronic contact. The questionnaire was compiled based on a review of the relevant literature (Ladkin and Buhalis, 2016; Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). It consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of 6 questions relating to general information about hotel companies, such as the name of the company, possession of the hotel stars, year of opening, number of employees, the average age of the technology. The second part of the questionnaire had 9 questions and focuses on recruitment methods and the establishment of E-recruitment channels (recruitment competency, recruitment methods, use of advertising websites, use of social networks, recruitment mediators, e-recruitment efficiency considerations, recruited electronically, the level of management for which E-recruitment is appropriate). The third part of the questionnaire consisted of 9 statements referring to opinions on E-recruitment, and

the respondents indicated the degree of agreement by rounding one of the numbers on Likert's five-step scale of 1 (do not agree) to 5 (completely agree). During the research the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: The method of recruitment of new staff in the hotel industry in Serbia depends on the star rating (class) of hotel facilities.
- H2: The level of application of E-recruitment in hotel facilities in Serbia depends on the average age of the technologies used.

# Description of sample and analysis of results

The survey was conducted in 66 hotel facilities in Serbia. In this research, all categories are represented, with a smaller or higher percentage share. In the overall sample, the 3-star facilities have the largest share, 44%, followed by 33% with four stars. Data shown in Table 1 indicated that in most of observed facilities, the reception of new staff is immediate (43 facilities), 22 companies own their own personnel service, while only one facility uses the services of specialized human resources agencies.

#### Table 1. In whose jurisdiction is the recruitment of new staff

Jurisdiction of the recruitment of new staff	Frequency	%
We have our own personnel department.	22	33.3
We directly receive employees.	43	65.2
We use the services of specialized human resources agencies.	1	1.5

The largest percentage of surveyed hotel companies have from 11 to 50 employees (60% of the total sample), and about a third of facilities operate less than 5 years or longer than 20 years. Generally speaking, technology in the examined hotel facilities is not obsolete. Half of the hotel companies surveyed have technology from 5-10 years old (Table 2).

**Table 2**. Number of employees in the facility and the length of the facility's business and the average age oftechnologies in surveyed hotel companies

Number of employees	Frequency	length of the facility's business (years)	Frequency	Average age of technologies (years)	Frequency
0-10	17 (25,8%)	< 5	20	<5	26 (39.4%)
11-50	40 (60,6%)	6-10	14	5-10	32 (48.5%)
51-250	8 (12,1%)	11-20	10	11-20	7 (10.6%)
>250	1 (1,5%)	> 20	22	>20	1 (1.5%)

It is noticeable that the same popularity is recruiting new staff through personal contacts and recommendations, as well as recruiting on the Internet (Table 3). A total of 19 facilities use only personal contacts and recommendations, while the same number uses a combination of personal contacts and recommendations and online advertising. Total of 18 facilities gave priority to E-recruitment or internet advertising as the main options. Only 2 companies surveyed have opted for other types of recruitment, such as Youth Cooperatives etc., and one for recruitment through the employment agency, as well as for newspaper advertising.

Most common methods in the process of finding new staff (Multiple answers are also possible)	Frequency	%
Employment agencies	1	1.5
Internet advertising	18	27.3
Advertising in the newspapers	1	1.5
Personal contacts and recommendations	19	28.8
Other: Youth Cooperatives, Employment Fairs, TV Ads, NES	2	3.0
Employment agencies and Internet advertising	1	1.5
Advertising on the Internet and the newspapers	1	1.5
Internet advertising and personal contacts and recommendations	19	28.8
Internet Advertising and Other	2	3.0
Employment agencies, Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations	1	1.5
Internet advertising, Personal contacts and recommendations and Other	1	1.5

 Table 3. What methods are commonly used in the process of finding new staff

Considering the possibility of a multiple answers, a total of 43 of the 66 hotel facilities participating in the survey use Internet advertising when recruiting new staff, either as the only form of recruitment or combined with some of the traditional methods. Recruitment through personal contacts and recommendations, regardless of the development of technology, is still very high, in 40 facilities this type of recruitment continues to be used. Out of a total of 43 examined services that use electronic forms of recruitment of new staff, 59% of them in E-recruitment use a combination of job advertising websites and internet means of communication.

From the companies that use the employment website when advertising new jobs, most of those opt for the "Infostud" company site. In addition to this, the National Employment Service page and "Lako do posla" page can also be distinguished. The most common dual combination is "Poslovi Infostud" and "Lako do posla" pages. In other words, "Infostud" is the most frequent answer when it comes to selecting intermediaries for recruiting new staff. At the same time, Internet communication tools that are most commonly used in the surveyed hotel companies are "Facebook" and "Gmail" – in 19 hotel facilities "Facebook" is used for E-recruitment, and the same number uses Gmail, either as the only means or combined with other Internet means of communication. According to the survey results, Serbian hotel operators are not completely convinced of the effectiveness of E-recruitment. A positive attitude on this issue is found in 40.9% of the answers. They believe that E-recruitment is most appropriate for finding new employees when it comes to working positions within the operational management or management of a lower level, a total of 30 respondents share this view. The share of those who find it suitable for middle level management is also significant.

In Table 4 are shown arithmetic means of respondents' answers and they are ranged from 2.91 to 4.02. Standard deviation values ranged from 0.925 to 1.179. Bearing in mind that all the questions in the third part of the questionnaire were formulated positively, the following conclusions are reached: 1) The most positive attitude of the companies was noted in the assertion that E-recruitment has a much wider territorial scope than traditional types of recruitment, with a mean score of 4.02; 2) The lowest is the average rating of the companies regarding the impact of E-recruitment on the overall success of the organization, only 2.91; 3) It is also significant that the E-recruitment is a result of saving time and money of the organization and that E-recruitment is one form of free promotion of the organization; 4) Other claims have slightly

lower meanings, but all claims have a mean value of over 3, which tells us that the attitudes of managers are between "I'm not sure" and "partly agree".

Respondents' opinions on E-recruitment	Mean	Std. Dev
E-recruitment results in saving time and money of the organization	3.62	1.019
E-recruitment has a much wider territorial scope than traditional types of recruitment	4.02	1.015
The introduction of E-recruitment into an organization's business requires no special investment	3.55	1.179
Social networks are an effective recruitment method	3.11	1.025
In order for E-recruitment to be successful, adequate data processing software is required	3.27	1.089
E-recruitment has a significant impact on the overall success of the organization	2.91	1.133
By using E-recruitment, the employer creates a public image of a modern organization	3.58	.978
E-recruitment are discriminated against potential staff who are not IT literate	3.44	1.040
E-recruitment is one form of free promotion of the organization	3.77	.925

 Table 4. Respondents' opinions on E-recruitment.

By cross-tabulation analysis (Table 5) of recruitment methods and category of facilities, it can be concluded that in four- and five-star hotels the most common way of advertising is the Internet advertising, while 3- and 2-stars facilities perform recruiting through personal contacts and recommendations. One-star Hotel facilities, in general, use alternative types of recruiting such as Youth Fairs, Employment Fairs, TV Ads, NES. All results coincide with the recognition that a higher category of the facility leads to a more modern way of doing business - in this case, a modern method of finding and recruiting new staff (Hypothesis 1 confirmed).

 Table 5. Cross-tabular analysis of data related to recruitment methods and hotel category.

De anvitan ant ar ath a de		Ho	tel categ	ory	
Recruitment methods	1	2	3	4	5
Employment agencies	0	0	1	0	0
Internet advertising	0	3	5	9	1
Advertising in the newspapers	0	0	0	1	0
Personal contacts and recommendations	0	5	12	2	0
Other: Youth Cooperatives, Employment Fairs, TV Ads, NES	1	0	1	0	0
Employment agencies and Internet Advertising	0	0	1	0	0
Internet advertising and Advertising in the newspapers	0	1	0	0	0
Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations	0	2	8	9	0
Internet advertising and Other	0	0	0	2	0
Employment agencies, Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations	0	1	0	0	0
Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations and Other	0	0	0	0	1

By comparing the average age of technology in the hotel company with the recruitment method used, it can be concluded that when searching for new staff, the use of a combination of E-recruitment and personal contacts is commonly used in hotel facilities with up to 5 years old technology, and these two modes are equally represented. In the case of an enterprise with the technology old 5-10 years, there is also a similar representation of both ways, while in the

case of those with slightly older equipment, 11-20 years, there is a slight advantage of Internet advertising. In Table 6 it can be noticed that a company that has technology older than 20 years new candidates recruited electronically. All this suggests that the age of technology does not mean basing on traditional recruitment methods (Hypothesis 2 rejected).

Table 6. Cross table analysis of data related to recruitment methods and the average age of the technologies

Recruitment methods		Average age of technology (years)					
Recruitment methods	<5	5-10	11-20	>20			
Employment agencies	0	1	0	0			
Internet advertising	5	8	4	1			
Advertising in the newspapers	1	0	0	0			
Personal contacts and recommendations	8	10	1	0			
Other: Youth Cooperatives, Employment Fairs, TV Ads, NES	0	1	1	0			
Employment agencies and Internet Advertising	0	1	0	0			
Internet advertising and Advertising in the newspapers	0	1	0	0			
Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations	10	9	0	0			
Internet advertising and Other	2	0	0	0			
Employment agencies, Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations	0	1	0	0			
Internet advertising and Personal contacts and recommendations and Other	0	0	1	0			

The application of the ANOVA variance analysis (Table 7) examined whether there is a significant relationship between the dependent variables (items related to attitudes towards E-recruitment) and independent variable (the length of the business of the facility). The results of a one-way variance analysis indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the age of hotel facilities only in the claim that "Social networks are an effective recruitment method" where the level of significance is 0.006 (at the level of significance p < 0.01). In order to get an insight into between which group differences exist, LSD post-hoc test was applied.

 Table 7. Analysis of variance ANOVA - according to the length of business of the company

	The age of the hotel company or the length of the business (years)				F – value	LSD
	< 5	6-10	11-20	> 20	(p < 0,01)	post-hok
Social networks are an effective recruitment method	2.65	3.00	4.00	3.18	4,604	3>4,2,1

The results of the post-hoc test indicate that "more experienced" enterprises (those who operate 11-20 years) give the highest rating to this issue, which means they have a positive attitude regarding the use of Social networks for business purposes and specifically for e-recruitment of new staff. Such results can also be explained by previous experience of respondents of this age category with similar software packages. It is interesting that, according to the results, the facilities with the least length of operating have the most negative attitude towards this modern way of finding employees, which is exactly the opposite of the assumption that the newer hotel companies are facing modern business and innovation. Companies that operate for 6-10 years or more than 20 years fall into those that are not yet convinced either in the positive or the negative side of this type of recruiting new staff.

# Conclusion

Based on the studies of electronic recruitment, as well as the survey of hotel companies on the territory of Serbia, it can be concluded that E-recruitment, when it comes to hotel management, is not the dominant form of recruitment of new staff. It is interesting to note that the recruitment of personnel through personal contacts and recommendations is highly represented, which can be associated with a still insufficient level of development of hotel industry or mentality of employees and employers when they are unprepared for changes. It is also difficult to understand how hotel companies do not have a concrete picture of the advantages and disadvantages of E-recruitment, although unemployment data show that most of the unemployed are computer literate and are actively seeking employment on the Internet. A large number of responses "I'm not sure," "I do not know," "I do not have an opinion", reflects the current attitude of employers to find personnel by electronic way, but their positive attitude towards social networks as an effective recruitment method is noticed. This can be explained by the fact that social networks are linked to personal contacts, and this type of recruitment can be seen as a possible way to move from traditional to modern types of recruitment. What is also notable is that the recruitment method is not a decisive factor for a successful business, at least the respondents do not consider it decisive. Most hotel companies that use advertising sites use Internet communication tools for recruitment purposes so that we can say that E-recruitment is a complex process that connects more segments that pull or condition one another. It can also be noted that the only one in which the respondents were almost unanimous, is the choice of mediators in electronic recruitment, where "Poslovi Infostud" internet portal are listed as most desirable in recruiting new staff. Although the results of the survey show the non-dominant role of E-recruitment, the data obtained from the public relations sector of popular websites display a large number of ads in the area Hospitality Industry and also a large number of hotel companies that are advertised in this way. Nevertheless, this practice should include a small number of employees who have been recruited electronically. The only thing that can be explained is this contradiction is that internet recruitment does not necessarily mean employment. Many companies use multiple recruitment methods and consider e-recruitment as one of the alternative employment channels because of personal recommendation for a potential candidate still favours.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF QR CODE AS INFORMATION TOOL IN RESTAURANT. CASE STUDY: NOVI SAD

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#### Abstract

This study aims to research the employees' knowledge in hospitality about QR code application as perceived information. The research was conducted on a sample of 10 restaurants and 146 workers located on the territory of the city of Novi Sad. The obtained results indicate that managers are well informed about using QR code and in knowledge of symbols related to allergies and special requirements. Also, results indicate that there are differences between kitchen and restaurant employees in knowledge of symbols related to allergies and special requirements, where chefs and cooks are more informed and familiar than Maître d' and waiters. This study allows the management to better understand the importance of applying QR code in restaurants as a significant marketing tool in perceived information, as part of menu development, and how to improve the guests' expectations.

Keywords: QR code, Food information, Allergen, Special requirements, Restaurant, Novi Sad

# Introduction

The development of information technology and the availability of mobile phones can reduce the concern of individuals with regard to food safety, specifically in the labeling of food allergies and the special requirements of consumers. Today, QR code scanner is an application which, on one side, every individual can have on the mobile and every restaurant on the menu on the other. This simple application will provide unambiguous information about the safety and quality of meals in the restaurant. In addition, the study results (Karlsen et al., 2011) pointed out that involvement in food and information is one of the key determinants in consumers' decisions related to purchasing food. Also, food involvement plays a significant moderating function in the relationships between perceived information and perceived usefulness (Kim & Woo, 2016).

Over the last few decades there has been a tendency to use the word "allergy" to describe all kinds of unexpected reactions to certain food, food ingredients and special needs. According

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to the authors' knowledge, the conclusion is, based on the analysed literature, that no similar research activities have been conducted so far, except for certain studies which refer to hypersensitivity to certain food and food ingredients in the function of age and employment of customers on a cruise ship (Vuksanović et al., 2016) and risk management of allergenic food ingredients in hospitality (Popov-Raljić et al., 2017).

In the literature, authors (Ahuja & Sicherer, 2007; Choi & Rajagopal, 2013) pointed out that approximately 70% of employees in hospitality have not had an opportunity to be trained and educated about food allergies, allergenic food ingredients or allergen management.

This study aims to research the employees knowledge in hospitality about QR code application as perceived information in restaurants located on the territory of Novi Sad.

# Literature review

Many authors (Shin et al., 2012; Tarjan et al., 2011; Tarjan et al., 2014; Hsu, Chang, & Yen, 2012) indicated that the Quick Response (QR) Code, one of traceability systems, has been introduced to the food industries as a two-dimensional barcode. Also, the QR Code can hold considerably more information than the one-dimensional code, as it can embed text, video, advertisements, personal information, etc.

The QR Code can be integrated into users' smartphone applications; that is, the smartphone can scan and decode information and messages about products that the QR Code provides. Shin et al. (2012) and Tarjan et al. (2011) pointed out that QR Code is increasing globally but there has been limited research on consumer's acceptance of its usefulness for providing food information or in the context of food research.

According to the Regulation on food declaration, labeling and advertising (Pravilnik o deklarisanju, označavanju i reklamiranju hrane ("Sl.glasnik RS" broj 19/2017) there are 14 food



Figure 1. Mobile scan code order Source: http://www.yhofoodie.com/product/selfhelp.html



Figure 2. QR Codes on Table Tents Source:https://www.gr-code-generator.com/qr-codes-on/table-tents/

ingredients which can cause allergic reactions or intolerance. Those are: gluten, eggs, milk (dairy products), crustaceans (crabs) and their products, shellfish (other mollusks and their products), fish (fishery products), soy (soy products), lupin (lupins products), peanut (peanut products), nuts, celery (celery products), mustard (mustard products), sesame seed (sesame products), sulfur – dioxide and sulfites (Allergen bureau, 2012; Popov-Raljić et al., 2017).

Zurzolo et al. (2013) concluded that beside 14 common nutritive allergies which must be labeled, consumers often complain about allergies and intolerances to other types of food such as honey, tomatoes, kiwi, oranges, rice, apples and others.

Critical elements in estimating and management of allergenic risks in hospitality were represented by Fooddrink Europe (2013). Those critical elements are: people, a supply chain, handling raw materials, a design and equipment of production plants and hospitality kitchens, production and information for consumers and documentation.

Popov-Raljić et al. (2017) pointed out that there are a few things that represent a great challenge for food manufacturers in the process of making a safety management plan:

- large number of food ingredients containing allergies,
- minimal quantity which causes a reaction,
- wide range of symptoms, and
- small number of people suffering from food allergies.

Vuksanović et al. (2016) pointed out that management of all kinds of unexpected reactions to certain foods, food ingredients and special needs have to be directed to careful risk analysis. Also, control has to be in every segment of production and distribution chain in hospitality.

In previous research Popov-Raljić et al. (2017) advised the guidelines that pointed to a potential risk which must be ensured so that all kinds of unexpected reactions to certain food, food ingredients and special needs are clearly and precisely defined or that they are not present in quantities which can jeopardize the health of consumers. Also, they must follow all segments of production and distribution chain in a hospitality facility, from the design, through the origin of a food ingredient, declaration and labeling in the means of supply to the safe consumption of food and established responsibility.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted on the territory of Novi Sad in June 2019. The research was conducted in Top 10 restaurant by TripAdvisor. The restaurants at which the research was conducted are:

- 1. Project 72 Wine & Deli
- 2. Fish & Zeleniš
- 3. Toster bar
- 4. Cafe Veliki
- 5. Savoca
- 6. alla Laterna
- 7. The Camelot
- 8. Petrus Cafe Gallery Bar
- 9. Aqva Doria
- 10. Restoran Žak

The survey was conducted by trained interviewers. The task of interviewers was to personally interview a manager, restaurant and kitchen staff. Since the interview was conducted through the paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI) (Lavrakas, 2008), the ability of the interviewers to explain the questions from the survey to the manager, restaurant and kitchen staff was essential.

For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire was created to examine employees' knowledge in hospitality about QR code application. The questionnaire was made basis on review of foreign literature and using Serbian Law of food (Pravilnik o deklarisanju, označavanju i reklamiranju hrane ("Sl.glasnik RS" broj 19/2017). On the basis of qualitative research, it was found that certain questions should be shown through the picture. In the end, a total of 33 attributes (questions, items) were identified. There are 26 symbols related to allergies and special requirements, which are further used in the scale to examine employees' knowledge in hospitality about QR code application.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part of the questionnaire was the respondent's consent to fill out the questionnaire. The second part referred to the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents: gender, age, level of education and occupation. The third part of the questionnaire referred to the examination of the knowledge and implementation of the Law (Table 2), which contained 3 items. The fourth part referred to the examination the employees' knowledge in hospitality about QR code application as well as the symbols related to allergies and special requirements (3, 4, 5 and 6). Answers to the questionnaire were measured based on YES and NO. Results were analyzed based on descriptive analysis.

## Results

### **Characteristics of respondents**

The study covered 164 respondents in the area of Novi Sad. Of the total number of respondents, 68% were male and 32% female. The structure of the sample by position is: the same number of employees are managers, chefs and Maître d' (n = 10) and there are more waiters (48%) and cooks (31%) (Table 1).

Table 1 shows the age structure of the employees. More than half of the employees consist of younger employees aged 18 to 30 years. The next category consists of employees aged 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 while the smallest number of employees was in the category of more than 51 years of age. Also, Table 1 shows the sample structure by level of education. The largest number of employees have completed high school (n = 116). Approximately the same number of employees have completed primary (n = 10), faculty/bachelor (n = 10) and Master's degree (n = 10).

Table 1 shows, also, the occupation of the sample by employees. More than 60% of the employees are full time employed and around 37% are students.

Variables	Sample size	Share	Variables	Sample size	Share
Gender	Gender				
Male Female	100 46	68% 32%	Employed (full time) Student	80 64	63% 37%
Position			Education		
Manager Chef Maître d' Cook Waiter	10 10 10 46 70	7 7 7 31 48	Primary school High school Faculty / Bachelor Master's degree	10 116 10 10	7% 79% 7% 7%
Age 18-30 31-40 41-50	88 30 20	60% 21% 14%			
51–60 over 60	5 3	3% 2%			

### Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic data (n=146)

Source: Authors

## **Descriptive analysis**

Answers to questions related to knowledge and implementation of the Law are shown in Table 2, whereby the response format to items is designed to find out from manager if they are familiar with the implementation of the Law. At the same time, it shows that approximately the same number of employees gave the same answer to questions 1 and 2, and all of them are familiar with the Law on Food Safety in Serbia.

### **Table 2.** *Knowledge and implementation of the Law (n=146)*

	Manage	r (n = 10)
	Yes	No
1. Are you familiar with the Law on food labelling in hospitality in the EU? Answers from 2011.	4	6
2. Are you familiar with the Law on food labelling in hospitality in Serbia? Answers from 2017.	5	5
3. Are you familiar with the Serbian Law on Food Safety?	10	-

Source: Authors

Table 3 shows descriptive analysis of answers to questions related to knowledge of QR code. It can be seen that all managers are informed about QR code as a tool for marketing in perceived information. Results show that one of ten Maître d' and Chefs are not familiar with using QR codes in perceived information. Approximately the same number of employees (cooks and waiters) are not familiarized with using QR codes.

	Position Sample Items/Answers		Manager	Chef	Maître d'	Cook	Waiter	
Number			N = 10	N = 10	N = 10	N = 46	N = 70 Yes – No	
			Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No		
1.		QR Code	10 – 0	9–1	9 – 1	30 – 16	50 - 20	

### Table 3. Knowledge of QR code (n=146)

Source: Authors

Answers to questions related to knowledge of symbols connected to allergies are shown in Table 4, whereby the response format to items is designed to examine the employees' knowledge about symbols related to allergies. It can be seen that all managers are well informed about symbols related to allergies (number 1, 2, 3, 4, 11 and 14) compared with the rest of allergies.

Results show that Chefs are more familiar with allergies than Maître d' (numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 11) compared with rest allergies. The results indicate that cooks are more familiar than waiters with allergies (numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 11 and 14) compared with rest allergies. Many employees do not make differences between Peanut with Nuts, as well as Crustaceans (crabs) and their products with Shellfish (other mollusks and their products). The most non familiar allergies for all employees are sulfur – dioxide and sulfites and sesame seed.

	Position		Manager	Chef	Maître d'	Cook	Waiter	
Number	Sample		N = 10	N = 10	N = 10	N = 46	N = 70	
	Items /Answers		Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	
1.	Celery (celery products)		8 - 2	8 – 2	7-3	30 – 16	30 - 40	
2.	Gluten	JE.	10 – 0	10 – 0	10 – 0	40 – 6	60 – 10	
3.	Eggs		9 – 1	9 – 1	8 – 2	36 – 10	60 – 10	
4.	Peanut	8	9 - 1	9–1	8-2	29 - 17	51 – 19	
5.	Lupin	Z	5 - 5	4 - 5	3 - 7	10 – 36	8 – 62	
6.	Crustaceans (crabs) and their products		4 – 6	3 – 6	3 - 6	16 – 30	12 – 68	

 Table 4. Knowledge of symbols related to allergies (n=146)

	Position Sample Items /Answers		Manager	Chef	Maître d'	Cook	Waiter
Number			N = 10	N = 10	N = 10	N = 46	N = 70
			Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No
7.	Nuts	2	7 – 3	7 – 3	6 – 4	20 – 26	41 – 29
8.	Shellfish (other mollusks and their products)		6 – 4	6 – 4	5 – 5	17 – 29	15 – 55
9.	Fish (fishery products)		7-3	8 – 2	7-3	36 – 10	39 – 31
10.	Mustard (mustard products)	1	7-3	7 - 3	6 – 4	20 – 26	25 – 45
11.	Soy (soy products)	3	8 – 2	8 – 2	7 - 3	30 – 16	31 – 39
12.	Sulfur – dioxide and sulfites		3-7	3 – 7	3 - 7	6 – 40	10 – 60
13.	Sesame seed (sesame products)	5	3 - 7	3-7	3-7	15 – 31	9 – 61
14.	Milk (dairy products)	67	9 - 1	9 – 1	9 - 1	38 - 8	60 - 10

Source: Authors

Answers to questions related to knowledge of symbols connected with the special requirements are shown in Table 5, whereby the response format to items is designed to examine the employees knowledge about symbols related to special requirements. It can be seen that managers are more informed about symbols related to diabetes and gluten than rest of symbols (cholesterol free, low salt, low in calories and lactose). The results show that Chefs and Maître d' are well informed about diabetes and gluten but Chefs are more familiar than Maître d' about rest of symbols related to the special requirements. The cooks are more familiar than waiters with symbols related to special requirements.

	Position		Manager	Chef	Maître d'	Cook	Waiter
Number	Sample		N = 10	N = 10	N = 10	N = 46	N = 70
	Items /Answers		Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No
15.	Diabetes	Tendy Tendy	10 – 0	10 – 0	10 – 0	40 – 11	45 – 25
16.	Gluten		10 – 0	10 - 0	10 - 0	45 – 6	60 – 10
17.	Cholesterol free		6 - 4	7 - 3	9 - 1	30 - 21	32 - 38
18.	Low salt		4 - 6	8 - 2	5 – 5	23 - 28	29 – 41
19.	Low calorie	LOW CALOUIE FÖDD	7 - 3	8 - 2	4 - 6	25 - 26	25 - 45
20.	Lactose	LACTOR! Field	7 - 3	9–1	7 - 3	39 - 12	55 - 15

 Table 5. Knowledge of symbols related to special requirements (n=146)

Source: Authors

Answers to questions related to knowledge of symbols connected with special requirements are shown in Table 6, whereby the response format to items is designed to examine the employees' knowledge about symbols related to special requirements. It can be seen that managers are more informed about symbols related to Halal, Vegetarian and Vegan than rest of symbols (Kosher and Hindu). The results show that Chefs and Maître d' are well informed about Vegetarian and Vegan but Chefs are more familiar than Maître d' about Halal, Kosher and Hindu. Approximately the same number of employees (cooks and waiters) is familiar with symbols related to special requirements.

	Position Sample		Manager	Chef	Maître d'	Cook	Waiter
Number			N = 10	N = 10	N = 10	N = 46	N = 70
	Items /Answers		Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No	Yes – No
21.	Kocher	ROBERT	9 - 1	10 - 0	8 - 2	35 - 21	31 – 29
22.	Hindu		8 - 2	8 - 2	7 - 3	21 - 35	25 - 45
23.	Halal	ĒĒ	10 - 0	8 - 2	7-3	35 – 11	35 – 35
24.	Vegetarian	0	10 - 0	10 - 0	9 – 1	40 - 6	63 – 7
25.	Vegan	8	10 – 0	10 - 0	9 – 1	35 – 11	63 - 7

Table 6. Knowledge of symbols related to special requirements (n=146)

Source: Authors

# **Practical contribution**

When comes to the menu development, management must take into account the guests' special requirements, because only in this way it will be possible to secure the better quality development of restaurants. Therefore, the importance of applying QR code in restaurants as a significant marketing tool in perceived information is shown in practical contribution.

**Requirements:** 

- 1. Allergies must be highlighted on the ingredients list of packaged food;
- 2. Allergen information must be available for unpackaged ('loose') food but not to include substance cross-contamination;
- 3. Allergen information must also be available in written format (menus, chalk boards, tickets) not as word of mouth;
- 4. Ensure that recipes/product specification is available for all food that can be purchased;
- 5. Examine ingredient list on packaging carefully; check for composite ingredients;
- 6. Check if any processing aids contain allergies (e.g. cooking oils);
- 7. Prepare detailed allergen chart;
- Collate information in a food allergen handbook approved by a suitably qualified person;
- 9. Make handbook available to staff and consumers;

- 10. Check food substitutes on delivery;
- 11. Train staff in food allergy awareness and procedures;
- 12. Ensures that new products and 'specials' are included in the handbook;
- 13. Include disclaimer in the handbook.

Example of notices:

- Some of our menu items contain allergies but there is a small risk that traces of these may be served in any other food served here;
- We understand the dangers to those with severe allergies so we have recorded which of the menu items contain any of the 14 named EU allergies as an ingredient.

# Conclusion

Achieving the best possible menu development of restaurants, planning must include the QR code application because of easy perceived information for guest special requirements and allergies.

The obtained results indicate that managers are well informed about using QR codes and in knowledge of symbols related to allergies and special requirements. Findings indicate that there are differences between kitchen and restaurant employees in knowledge of symbols related to allergies and special requirements, where chefs and cooks are more informed and familiar than Maître d' and waiters.

This study allows the management to better understand the importance of applying QR code in restaurants as a significant marketing tool in perceived information, as part of menu development, and how to improve the guests' expectations.

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# INBOUND HUNTING TOURISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Markéta Kalábová<sup>A</sup>

# Abstract

Hunting has a long tradition in the Czech Republic, but hunting tourism is relatively new term and it is in its starting point for the development. There is no institution that would monitor data about hunting tourism overall, especially inbound hunting tourism. The aim of this contribution is to compare inbound hunting tourism within individual regions of the Czech Republic. To collect data all municipalities with extended competence, which are responsible for issuing hunting licences for foreign hunters, were address on the basis of the Act 106/1999 Sb. on Free Access to Information. Regions were also evaluated in terms of the amount of each species of game, which is possible to hunt in certain localities. Totally a little more than 10 thousand foreign hunters come to the Czech Republic for a hunt every year. The number of foreign hunters increased by 13 % between 2010 and 2015. The most visited regions are South-Bohemian, South-Moravian and Pilsen region. Some regions are recording a growing trend in the number of hunting licenses issued – South-Moravian, South-Bohemian, Karlovy Vary, Hradec Králové, Liberec, Moravia-Silesia and Pardubice region during the reference period; others issued stable numbers of hunting licences - Pilsen, Central-Bohemian region. The remaining regions are recording a decreasing trend in the number of issued hunting licences to foreigners - Olomouc, Ústí, Zlín and Vysočina Region. From the supply point of view, it was assessed that the Olomouc Region and the Vysočina Region are areas with low potential for the development of hunting tourism in terms of the supply of wild game, while the Vysočina, Zlín, and Olomouc regions have very little potential for the development of hunting tourism in terms of game birds. All other regions have very good potential for the development of hunting tourism because of number of hunted animals. Given that hoofed animals are overpopulated in the Czech Republic, inbound hunting tourism is one of the solutions.

Keywords: Inbound tourism, Hunting tourism, Czech Republic, Game

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## Introduction

Hunting tourism is a specific form of tourism (Petrů, 2007) and is becoming a very popular part of hunting in many countries. Hunting tourism is carried out by hunters who travel to distant destinations from the area where they regularly pursue hunting, often abroad, where the main purpose of the journey is hunting. The motivation for hunting abroad is the desire for adventure combined with the possibility of winning a strong or interesting trophy. For this attractive element of tourism, participants are willing to pay substantial sums of money to intermediaries and hunting providers (Brainerd, 2007). Glossary (Zelenka, 2012) regards hunting tourism as an outdoor recreational oriented activity performed outside closed buildings. Newsome (2005) distinguishes the consumption and non-consumption form of tourism in which game plays a major motivating factor. Game hunting is mentioned as a form of consumer tourism in relation to game. There is considerable disagreement as to include or not to include hunting tourism and ecotourism. Fennell (2000 - in Newsome 2005) argues that the definition of ecotourism is not strictly limited. The main point is a positive attitude and respect for the nature in which the tourist is located, which the hunting tourists fulfill. For example, in its opinion, the EU Federation of Game Management and Wildlife Conservation (FACE) considers hunting tourism as a special form of ecotourism, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, which includes in particular strict adherence to international rules, in particular the Convention on International Trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) and other legislative instruments, conventions and agreements for nature conservation (FACE, 2004).

## Methodology and data

The aim of this paper is to specify hunting tourism in individual regions of the Czech Republic with a focus on foreign clients in the period 2010 - 2015. Numbers of foreign hunters were compared in individual regions. To collect data all municipalities with extended power, which are responsible for issuing hunting licences for foreign hunters, were addressed on the basis of the Act 106/1999 Sb. on Free Access to Information. Regions were also evaluated in terms of the amount of each species of game, which is possible to hunt in certain localities as it creates the maximum offer of hunt. According to these numbers there were set localities with high potential for the development of hunting tourism.

### Hunting regulations for foreign hunters

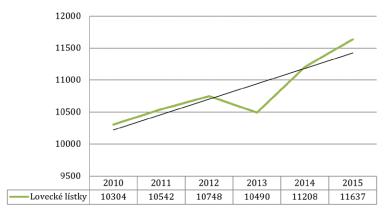
Foreign hunters may hunt in the Czech Republic on the basis of a valid hunting license issued by municipalities with extended competence upon submission of an application, identity card or passport, valid hunting license from their country and insurance document valid in the Czech Republic in the Czech language. Afterwards, foreigners are issued hunting licences for a definite period of time, either for 1 day, 5 days, 30 days, 6 months or one year. The administrative fees for issuing a hunting license vary from CZK 30 to 150 (Pavlicová, 2017).

Three ways of verifying foreign documents are possible for the recognition of the hunting document. If the Czech Republic has concluded a legal aid agreement with a foreign country, there is no need for further verification of the foreign instrument and the document is recognized (eg for Austria, Slovakia, France, Italy, Switzerland). Second possibility is for signatory

countries of the Hague Apostille Convention (eg Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark). In this case, the hunting license must be verified by the so-called apostille, ie a verification clause, which is attached to the original or a copy of the document. Everything has to be translated into Czech by a translator. The last option is to verify the so-called superlegalization. This is the case if the country does not have an international agreement on legal aid with the Czech Republic and is not a signatory to the Hague Apostille Convention. The document will be verified by the competent authority abroad (most often by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country) and subsequently by the relevant Czech embassy in that country (eAgri, 2019). The whole process of obtaining a valid hunting license for foreigners is then quite complicated.

### Inbound hunting tourism according to the number of hunting licences issued

In the period 2010 - 2015 a total of 64,929 hunting licences were issued for foreign hunting guests. The specific numbers of issued hunting licences in individual years are presented in Graph 1. Hunting has a long tradition in the Czech Republic, but recently there has been a growing interest of foreign hunters in hunting in the Czech Republic. Between 2010 and 2015, this was a 13% increase, but in 2013 there was a decline, which was related to the ongoing economic crisis, which was reflected mainly in the numbers of German hunting guests.



Graf 1. Number of hunting licences for foreigners in the period 2010 - 2015

According to Ristic et al. (2013) management of hunting in the Czech Republic and Hungary and is one of the most developed in Europe. Both countries are struggling to reduce overpopulated hoofed animals which cause extensive damage to agricultural and forest areas. However, while about 30 ths. foreign hunters visit Hungary, in the Czech Republic it is only about 10 thousand.

The cartogram in Figure 1 illustrates issued hunting licences in the period 2010 - 2015 by individual municipalities with extended competence. Most hunting licences were issued in the municipalities at the border with Austria and Germany, ie South Bohemia, South Moravia and Pilsen region. Specific municipalities that issued the most hunting licences in the period include Znojmo, Brno, Kaplice, Příbram, Plzeň, Stříbro, Tachov and Ostrov. Other important locations for hunting guests include Rychnov nad Kneznou, Zidlochovice, Breclav, Jindrichuv Hradec, Trebon, Blatna, Benesov, Nyrany and Marianske Lazne.

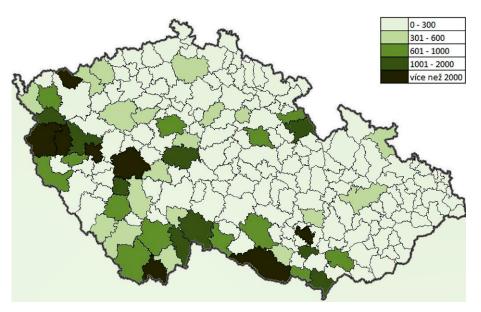
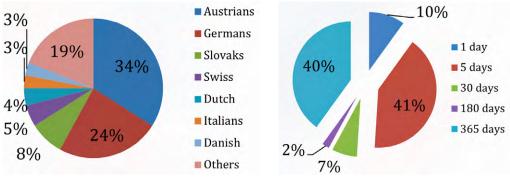


Figure 1. Number of hunting licences according to municipalities with extended competence in 2010 – 2015

## Nationalities composition of hunting guests

The numbers of the most issued licences at the border correspond to the national composition of hunters. In the Czech Republic hunts 34 % of Austrians, 24 % of Germans and 8 % of Slovaks. Hunters most often (41 %) choose hunting licences for 5 days and (40 %) for the whole year. Detailed shares of individual nationalities in hunting tourism and shares of validity of issued hunting licences are shown in graphs 2 and 3 below.

Hunting guests from Austria represent the largest group coming to the Czech Republic for hunting. Most go to the South Moravian Region and South Bohemia. These two regions together make up 64 %. Other regions include Hradec Králové and Pilsen region. Other regions accounted a small share of total arrivals. Hunting guests from Austria in the Czech Republic chose the most hunting licences for 365 days, suggesting that they go hunting several times a



Graph 2. Nationality of hunters

Graph 3. Validity of hunting licences

year. The next most common option (35 %) was hunting tickets for 5 days. The second largest group of hunters is consisted of German citizens, who are mostly heading to the Pilsen Region, South Bohemia, Central Bohemia or Usti Region. Hunters from Germany in the Czech Republic mostly (52 %) choose hunting licences for 5 days. The next most common option (28 %) was hunting licences for 365 days. The third largest group of hunters are Slovaks, representing a total of 8 % of all hunting guests. Slovaks most often went to the South Moravian, Zlín and Moravian-Silesian regions, ie again to the border areas. Guests from Slovakia most often (34 %) travel to the Czech Republic for 5 days or have a hunting licence for the whole year (31%) and go hunting repeatedly during the year. Other foreign hunters using fee hunting in the Czech Republic include mainly the Swiss (5 %), the Dutch (4 %), the Italians (3 %) and the Danish (3 %). The greatest dynamics and increase in the number of hunters was recorded by Swiss hunters. Since 2010 the number of issued hunting licences has increased by 40 %, similar dynamics (increase by 39 %) have been recorded by the Danish, who in 2013 represented more hunters than Italians, whose numbers are stable during the monitored years. The Dutch also have a stable clientele, who recorded a 10 % increase in the number of hunting licences issued between 2010 and 2015.

## **Hunting offer**

Table 1 summarizes statistical data for individual regions in terms of the number of annual hunt of hoofed game, hares and most hunted birds – ducks and pheasants.

Region	Red deer (pcs)	Fallow deer (pcs)	Mouflon (pcs)	Roe deer (pcs)	Wild boar (pcs)	Hare (pcs)	Duck (pcs)	Pheasant (pcs)
South Bohemian	2 827	1 5 4 5	695	12 635	26 921	579	99 283	76 661
South-Moravian	1 491	1 911	1 028	12 865	21 053	8 233	15 909	95 885
Karlovy Vary	3 363	551	653	3 754	10 544	15	1 121	501
Hradec Králové	1223	1 0 3 4	642	7 572	10 307	1 402	12 642	45 635
Liberec	2 082	872	389	4 673	9 685	143	1 979	10 089
Moravian-Silesian	2 015	1647	215	9 105	10 701	2 094	3 506	39 622
Olomouc	2 863	1660	491	6 587	14 271	3 202	9 572	14 792
Pardubice	306	615	575	6 203	13 100	1 177	5 964	6 652
Pilsen	2 810	3 103	1 140	7 446	25 978	60	41 583	16 756
Prague and Central-Bohemian	2 251	5 352	1 623	11 085	37 802	3 531	27 721	113 146
Ústí	5 094	1 819	1 021	5 410	21 902	721	3 099	4 8 4 1
Vysočina	223	793	585	6 203	13 100	1 177	5 964	6 652
Zlíns	1 330	2 167	343	6 268	12 348	1922	3 425	4 863

 Table 1. Number of hunted game in 2017

*Source: Own according to CSU (2017)* 

The stated number of hoofed game represents the maximum possible offer of hunting tourism in the regions. The highest number of deer is found in Ústí and Karlovy Vary regions. It should be noted that such high hunts are mainly related to sika deer, which is overpopulated in these areas and causes considerable damage. This deer is also non-indigenous in the Czech Republic and the state of its populations is in parley. The Central Bohemia Region offers the highest offer of planned hunting in terms of the number of fallow deer, mouflon and wild boars. The South Moravian region dominates in terms of shooting roe deer and hares.

Hunting tourism represents a business opportunity especially in rural regions. Areas with high potential for the development of hunting tourism are located in Karlovy Vary, Pilsen, Liberec, Ústí nad Labem, South Moravian and partially Central Bohemian regions. All regions, with the exception of the Capital City of Prague, should focus mainly on promoting hunting and improving the material and technical base in the area.

## Conclusion

Hunting tourism represents a business opportunity especially in rural regions. Demand analysis revealed the development of the number of hunting licences issued between 2010 and 2015. Some regions are showing an increasing trend in the number of hunting licences issued - South Moravia, South Bohemia, Karlovy Vary, Hradec Králové, Liberec, Moravian-Silesian and Pardubice regions; others issue stable numbers of hunting licences - Pilsen, Central Bohemia. The remaining regions record a decreasing trend in the number of hunting licences issued to foreigners - Olomouc, Ústí and Zlín Regions and the Vysočina Region. The results also agree with the analysis of potential supply in individual regions in terms of hunting furry and feathered game, in which the selected areas were suitable for the development of hunting tourism. In terms of supply, it was assessed that the Olomouc Region and the Vysočina Region are areas with low potential for the development of hunting tourism in terms of furry supply, while the Vysočina Region, Zlín Region and the Olomouc Region have very little potential for the development of hunting tourism in terms of feathered game. The Ústí nad Labem Region should focus on the development of hunting tourism in terms of furry animals, as it is one of the localities with high potential.

Wildlife is a living natural heritage. The exploitation of this renewable natural resource through hunting can contribute to biodiversity conservation under sustainability conditions. Hunting of game by foreign hunters is an important source of income for rural development for many countries, especially in the transformation process, but also a direct source for financing of rescue programs - strengthening of legislative documents of game protection, monitoring of game population, support of science in this area, damages and projects enhancing the education of the local population in relation to wildlife. The Czech Republic has great potential for the development of this form of tourism.

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