

LET THE VOICES OF RESIDENTS' BE HEARD. FACTORS DETERMINING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN WESTERN SERBIA.

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Abstract

Local residents are the most important component of a tourist destination, and in order to develop tourism sustainably, it is important to understand their perspectives. The purpose of the research is to find out the way the residents (n=845) perceive towards the development of tourism in Western Serbia. Three factors that represent the viewpoints of residents on the development of tourism have been found by using the main component exploratory factor analysis (EFA). These include perception of tourism benefits, support for tourism development, and attachment to the community. Additionally, the purpose of the research is to find out if residents' perspectives are different depending on their sociodemographic characteristics. The paper's findings demonstrate that residents in Western Serbia have a favorable outlook on the development of tourism and that there are some differences in their viewpoints on certain socioeconomic characteristics.

Keywords: attitudes of the local residents, tourism development, Western Serbia, tourism benefits, tourism development, attachment to the community

INTRODUCTION

The local residents are the most vital and significant component of the tourist destination, and in order to maximize their contribution to its success, it is imperative to comprehend their perspectives about the development of tourism (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017). The literature has shown that the best way to achieve sustainable tourism development is through the engagement of local residents (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2014). Thus, in order to have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to a tourist destination's long-term,

sustainable success, it is essential to comprehend the implications of tourism development from the perspective of local residents (Woo et al., 2015).

Several studies (Alshboul, 2016; Carpenter & Miller, 2011; Simmons, 1994) highlighting the advantages of educating local residents about sustainability have indicated community engagement as an essential component. Furthermore, according to many studies (Cañizares et al., 2014; Demirović et al., 2020; Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012; Harun et al., 2018; Lo et al., 2014), the local community has emerged as a significant player in the tourist sector. This means that a successful tourism product requires active community involvement and participation (Kim et al., 2014). As the public sector of business is gradually being replaced by the private sector, the community's role in the development of tourism over the past few decades is becoming more prominent, and the relationship between the local community and the private sector is growing more effective (Marais, 2011).

Although local residents may respond to the impacts of tourism in different ways, there is still limited understanding of this topic. Considering local residents are an integral component of every tourist destination, it is important to have a deeper knowledge of how they feel about the development of tourism in order to leverage their opinions for the destination's success (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017). While Carmichael (2000) addresses the ways in which residents' views, both good and negative, influence their behavior and the actions that follow, other research on residents' attitudes about tourism neglects the behavioral aspect (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2011). It has been indicated by several scholars (Ezeuduji & Reed, 2011; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; King et al., 1993; Smith & Krannich, 1998) that local communities in need of economic development accept tourism.

However, it's probable that certain communities, particularly rural ones, would respond negatively to the increased tourism growth (Lepp, 2008). While avoiding the response component, a few studies (Jackson & Inbakaran, 2006; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012) have looked into locals' support for tourism and how to forecast their behavior (Peters et al., 2018). It underscores how crucial it is to ascertain the relationship between the effects of tourism, the residents of the area, and the conduct that may be adopted as a course of action (Peters et al., 2018).

As one of the four major tourist clusters in Serbia, the Western Serbia region is recognized for its tourism importance in the tourist Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Strategija razvoja turizma Republike Srbije od 2006. do 2015. godine, 2006). Furthermore, three of Serbia's eighteen priority and important tourism destinations are located on the area of Western Serbia, the topic of this research (Strategija razvoja turizma Republike Srbije od

2016. do 2025. godine, 2016). According to the previously described strategy, which identified 18 priority tourist sites based on factors including accessibility, accomplished visitor traffic, and the infrastructure and superstructure already established, these locations are crucial for the completion of tourism products.

On the territory of Western Serbia, which is the subject of this paper, there are tourist priority destinations: Podrinje/Loznica/Banja Koviljača, Divčibare/Valjevo and the tourist region of Western Serbia. Administratively, these tourist destinations are located in the Mačva, Kolubara and Zlatibor districts.

Western Serbia is a prime illustration of a mainly rural region that makes use of its potential and anticipates it in the growth of rural tourism. This assertion is supported by the fact that an important percentage of Western Serbia's households satisfies the strict requirements and guidelines set forth by regulations for the provision of catering services in rural tourism, making this kind of tourism one of the region's top priorities (Perić, Dramićanin & Gašić, 2020; Program razvoja turizma turističke regije Zapadna Srbije od 2020. do 2025. godine, 2021).

Future economic development in the Republic of Serbia can be greatly influenced by rural areas like Western Serbia that have experienced substantial growth in tourism (Gašić & Ivanović, 2018). According to Dimitrijević and colleagues (2022) the majority of Serbia's rural tourism takes place in rural regions in Western Serbia and Šumadija, which are recognized for having a high capacity for tourists. The quantity of visitors arriving and staying overnight also reflects the significance of Western Serbia in the continued development of Serbian tourism. Specifically, 40.8% of all visitors visited Western Serbia and Šumadija in 2021, and 43.7% of them stayed overnight (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022). As it is important to deal with the attitudes of the local residents in all stages of tourism development, this research will be an incentive for the future development of tourism in Western Serbia. Thus, this paper's primary objective is to investigate how the residents perceive tourism development. This will be examined through research and identifying factors that reflect the local population's views on the development of tourism in their communities. The second objective is to analyze if there is a statistically significant difference between the identified development factors and the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.

In light of the goals, two primary research hypotheses were established:

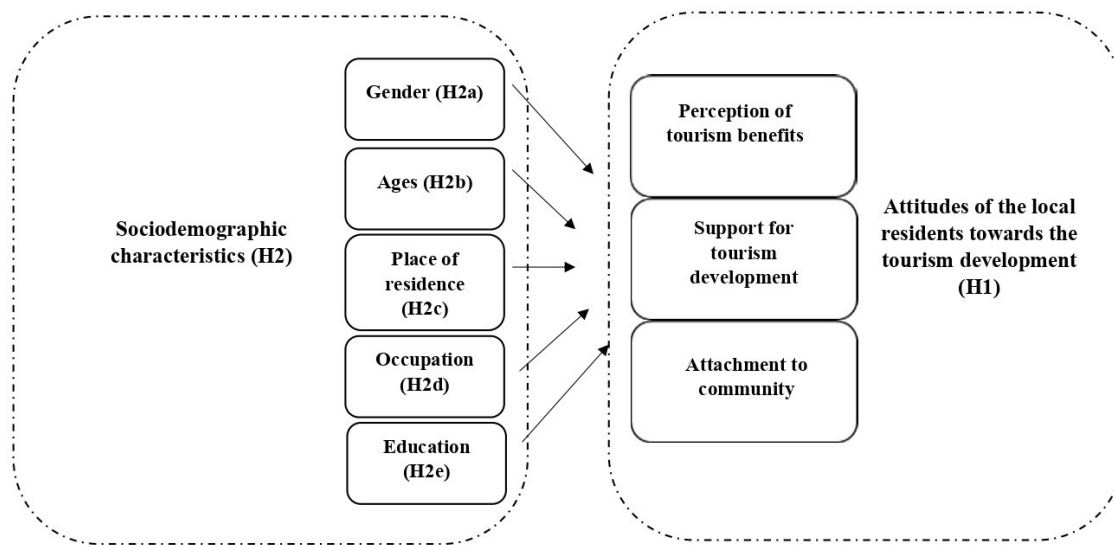
H1: Residents in the Western Serbia region have an overall positive perspective on the growth of tourism in their local area (Perception of benefits from tourism/Support for tourism development/Community commitment).

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between the resident community's views regarding tourist development factors and their socio-demographic characteristics.

Sub-hypotheses were developed within the framework of this hypothesis in order to specifically support or reject each perspective:

There is a statistically significant difference in the residents' perceptions regarding the factors that contribute to tourist development based on the respondents' gender (H2a), ages (H2b), place of residence/district (H2c), occupation (H2d), education (H2e).

Figure 1 Research framework.



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

An effective tourism product must be developed with active engagement and interaction between communities (Roberts & Hall, 2001). Additionally, community-based tourism is a powerful means of promoting resource conservation, local residents quality of life, and sustainability in the tourist industry (Scheyvens, 1999). For instance, residents who aim to increase or sustain agricultural growth while also preserving the rural legacy (environment, culture, and way of life) may find that tourism in rural regions is a viable alternative (Chuang, 2010). According to Shani and Pizam (2012), community involvement is essential to the development of sustainable tourism, and in order to launch tourist development initiatives, the community must first be productive and contribute to development (Yu et al., 2011).

Although the community should play a significant role in tourism management, residents are regrettably frequently left out of the planning, decision-making, and overall development of tourism in tourist destinations (Cater, 1994; Teye et al., 2002). Nevertheless, Karmakar

(2011) observes that as tourism development strategies are being developed, the local community is being included and consulted increasingly frequently in a variety of significant areas, including the economics, social aspects, culture, and environment. For this reason, many academics now consider residents' support for the development of tourism to be of paramount significance (Ezeuduji & Reed, 2011; Lepp, 2008; Leslie & Wilson, 2005; Liu, 2006; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Styliadis et al., 2014). The success or failure of the destination in terms of the degree of satisfaction among tourists can be determined by the residents, even if they are an integral element of the tourism offering themselves.

Consequently, residents who have negative thoughts about the development of tourism could discourage visitors from having authentic experiences that live up to the expectations of those who are looking for encounters that offer chances for engagement and education (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017). There is a substantial correlation between the level of local community engagement in tourism and its impacts. Accordingly, the level of local community involvement and their response to tourism growth can frequently be influenced by the individual advantages that tourism can provide (Hanafiah et al., 2013). In line with Petrović et al. (2017a), the local residence also experiences that the potential for increased spending and the backing of the local government in fostering tourist growth are major factors in the industry's development. The local community is more supportive of changes in tourism growth if it participates more in local association work, passes local rules, develops plans, and makes other crucial choices at the local level (Petrović et al., 2017b).

In this sense, the community considers tourism favorably and anticipates that it will improve residents' quality of life in the future (Demirović et al., 2020). The same authors claim that residents' perception regarding the growth of tourism are positively correlated with their level of commitment to the community. The community's continuous sustainable development and the growth of tourism occur almost simultaneously (Petrović et al., 2021; Sebele, 2010).

A number of factors, including the accessibility of government representatives, tourism organizations, businesses, and other local stakeholders, as well as the degree of collaboration between the government and the residents of the area, influence how much the local community contributes to tourism (Zamil, 2011). To promote sustainable community-led tourism initiatives that will support long-term economic growth in the area, strategic alliances between the public and commercial sectors are required (Saravanan & Rao, 2012).

DATA AND METHODS

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that was developed to measure residents' attitudes toward tourism development in their communities. The questionnaire's construct was formed by previous research (Demirović et al., 2020) that examined the determinants which impact residents' support for the sustainable growth of tourism in rural areas. The questionnaire consisted of three segments, which were related to: residents' perception of tourism development in their communities through the perceived tourism benefits (see Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2014; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004); the degree of attachment to the community (see Lee, 2013); supporting tourism development (see Nicholas et al., 2009; Woo et al., 2015). The local residents' perception of tourism development was analyzed through the perceived benefits of tourism development: social benefits (five items), environmental benefits (two items), and economic benefits (three items).

Residents of municipalities and cities within the territory of Western Serbia participated in the research, considering the primary objective was to determine the perspectives of local residents on the support of tourist development. The study included 845 respondents in the study population who were residents of the 24 municipalities (Mačva, Kolubara, and Zlatibor districts). Data were collected from July 2021 to July 2022. Since it was important for the attitudes of the local population to be heard, it was crucial to interact with them. Respondents were recruited via sending them private messages with online questionnaire (Google Docs) on social networks (Facebook, Instagram) and email, sharing surveys on those social networks, and utilizing in-person (face-to-face) questions while out in the field. Respondents were informed that the survey questionnaire is anonymous, participation is voluntary, and that the results of the survey will be used only for scientific and research purposes.

The statistical methods used in this research include descriptive statistical analysis to see the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents, principal component exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the factors of residents' attitudes about the development of tourism in their communities, Cronbach's alpha to test the internal consistency of the items that measure each factor. An ANOVA test was conducted to see the differences in respondents' responses regarding their age, place of residence, occupation, and level of education, and a T-test was conducted to compare the data provided by respondents of different genders regarding tourism development factors. The responses were measured by a five-point Likert scale (1 – disagree, 2 – partially disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – partially agree, and

5 – absolutely agree). The data were processed in the software for social sciences SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science), version 23.0.

RESULTS

Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents (local residents of Western Serbia) are presented in Tab 1.

Table 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (N=845)

Characteristics	Absolute frequencies	Percentage (%)		Absolute frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender			Permanent residence		
Male	395	46.7	Mačva district	113	13.4
Female	450	53.3	Kolubara district	148	17.5
			Zlatibor district	584	69.1
Occupation			Education		
Student	91	10.8	Primary school	16	1.9
Employed	615	72.8	High School	283	33.5
Unemployed	87	10.3	Faculty	421	49.8
Pensioner	52	6.2	Master's/ doctoral studies	125	14.8
Age			Monthly income		
15-24	93	11	< 300e	228	27
25-34	237	28	301-500 e	269	31,8
35-44	238	28.2	501-700 e	204	24.1
45-54	155	18.3	701-900 e	82	9.7
55-64	83	9.8	> 901 e	62	7.3
65-74	30	3.6			
75-84	9	1.1			

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

Based on the descriptive analyses, it can be concluded that the sample is partially equal according to gender. When looking at the data in detail, it can be seen that more women (53.3%) than men (46.7%) were involved in the research. The youngest respondent was 15 years old, and the oldest was 83 years old. The average age of the respondents is 40 years, and the standard deviation is 13.07. The respondents who participated in the research reside in

three districts in Western Serbia. The largest part of respondents reside in Zlatibor District (69.1%), followed by respondents from Kolubara District (17.5%) and Mačva District (13.4%). The largest number of respondents are employed (72.8%), while the smallest number of respondents are pensioners (6.2%). The largest number of respondents earn between 301 and 500 euros and between 501 to 700 euros. Compared to these percentages, the share of those who receive an average of 701 to 900 euros per month is extremely small (9.7%), and the number of those who earn more than 901 euros per month is negligible (7.3%). The majority of respondents (49.8%) have completed high school or university, followed by secondary school (33.5%), while the percentage of respondents with completed primary school is negligible (1.9%). In addition to the aforementioned socio-demographic characteristics, it was established which part of the respondents is involved in the development of tourism in their community. The results showed that only 27.5% of respondents are somehow involved in the development of tourism.

Exploratory factor analysis

The scale of attitudes of the residents towards the development of tourism showed high statistical significance ($\alpha = .956$). To isolate factors, a principal component exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed, with Direct Oblimin rotation and Kaiser normalization. The Kaiser-Meier-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy measure was satisfactory at 0.950 and the Bartlett test confirmed the adequacy of the factor analysis ($X^2=16277.85$; $df=276$; $p<.000$). All commonalities were above 0.3, further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items.

Three components were found using factor analysis to represent locals' perceives toward the development of tourism in their communities. These findings align with the results of the original research that provided the scale (Demirović et al., 2020).

Principal components analysis revealed the presence of three components with characteristic values over one, which describes 66.93% of the total variance. The distribution of individual factor contributions is shown in Tab. 2.

Table 2 Factor saturations

Factors	Total Contribution	% Variance	Cumulative %	Rotated Sum of Squared Contributions
1	12,085	50,354	50,354	10,245
2	2,142	8,923	59,278	7,259
3	1,837	7,656	66,933	8,513

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

The first factor has 11-factor weights above 0.3, the second factor has six-factor weights, and the third factor has seven-factor weights, as can be observed by examining the three rotated factors. The method used to extract three factors is optimum when each component has three or more factor weights, which is the ideal circumstance (Pallant, 2011). The domain descriptors and matching alpha reliability coefficients are shown in Tab 3. The first factor is described by 11 variables. They primarily refer to the benefits that the community can have from tourism development, which relate to social benefits (five variables), environmental benefits (two variables) as well and economic benefits from tourism development (four variables). The grouping of variables is almost the same as in the original scale (Demirović et al., 2020) with one added variable ("*The community in which I live is rich in decorations and is nicely arranged*") which originally belongs to the Attachment to Community scale. However, the addition of this variable does not change the very essence of the scale, and it has retained its original name Perception of tourism benefits. The second factor is described by six variables. They describe the personal views of the local residents on providing support for the development of tourism, which is reflected in the support of tourism initiatives, active participation in the creation of plans related to tourism etc. This factor fully corresponds to the original factor named Support to tourism development, therefore this name has been retained (Demirović et al., 2020; Nicholas et al., 2009; Woo et al., 2015). The third factor related to Attachment to Community, in earlier literature (Lee, 2013) was identified with 10 variables. From the mentioned variables, in a later study the authors Demirović and colleagues (Demirović et al., 2020) rejected two variables related to "*how the local residents identifies their life with life in the community*" and "*the feeling that the community is a part of them*". In this paper, factor 3 is described with seven variables. Their content refers to the personal attitude of the local residents about the extent to which they are connected to the community and how much belonging they feel towards it. This factor corresponds to the Attachment to the community factor from the original questionnaire, with one less variable that in this paper was assigned to factor 1. Given that the removal of this variable did not significantly affect the meaning of the factor, factor 3 was named as in the original research (Demirović et al., 2020).

An assessment of the reliability and validity of the scale was carried out. The reliability of the measuring instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient. This measuring instrument is among the most frequently used indicators of internal agreement of the scale, i.e. the degree of relatedness of the variables that make up the scale (Pallant, 2011). Reliability analysis was conducted to test internal coexistence as a measure of construct reliability. Ideally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be greater than 0.7 (DeVellis, 2003), therefore it was confirmed that the reliability measures of all constructs are acceptable for

group analysis because they are all greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), i.e. the findings are in the range from 0.907 to 0.941. Detailed factor saturations are given in Tab. 3.

Table 3 Factor analysis of community attitudes towards tourism development

Items	Perception of tourism benefits	Support for tourism development	Attachment to community
($\alpha = 0.956$)	0.941	0.907	0.914
Local culture is more preserved and respected thanks to tourism.	.842		
Tourism encourages environmental protection.	.822		
Thanks to tourism, opportunities for participation in local activities (concerts, fairs, exhibitions...) have increased.	.820		
Opportunities for training/education have increased due to tourism.	.814		
Thanks to tourism, more (natural) areas are protected.	.802		
Tourism influences the increase of investments in local infrastructure.	.788		
Tourism influences the increase of investments in tourism infrastructure.	.721		
Tourism has the effect of increasing the sense of belonging to the local community.	.708		
Tourism affects the increase in the standard of living.	.638		
The development of tourism increases the value of local real estate.	.523		
The community I live in is rich in amenities and beautifully landscaped.	.502		
I would like to participate in the promotion of environmental education and conservation initiatives in my community.		.866	
I would like to actively participate in the creation of plans and strategies related to tourism.		.865	
I would be happy to get in touch with tourists from other areas.		.838	
I would support the further development of tourism in my community.		.812	
I support the development of tourism initiatives that are sustainable and good for my community.		.611	
I believe that the further development of tourism will have a positive effect on the quality of life of all residents of the place where I live.		.588	
I am very attached to the place where I live.			.861

Table 3 (continued)

Items	Perception of tourism benefits	Support for tourism development	Attachment to community
I feel a strong sense of belonging to the place where I live.			.845
I love that I live in this community.			.844
Life in my community reflects my way of life.			.786
Living in my community makes many things easier and possible for me.			.737
I believe that life in my community is better than in other communities.			.653
People I know favor our community and its tourism potential over other communities.			.482

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

Given that an Oblimin rotation was performed, which allows for association between the factors, the extent to which they correlate was examined. It was shown that the most prevalent correlation is between the factor's Perception of benefits from tourism and Commitment to the community, which is 0.576, while the correlation between the factor's Perception of benefits from tourism and Support for tourism development is 0.495. Also, an incredibly powerful correlation occurs between the factors Support for tourism development and Commitment to the community (0.431). These connections can be predicted by the content of the factors themselves.

Local residents attitudes towards tourism development factors

Although the local residents are an essential part of the tourist destination and a part of the tourist product itself that can ensure the success or failure of the destination in terms of the level of tourist satisfaction, their positive attitudes can contribute to the success of the destination (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017), therefore it is necessary to continuously measure their satisfaction with tourism development. The results showed (Tab. 4) that the local residents have a positive attitude towards the development of tourism. This attitude is proven by the relatively high mean scores of all three factors separated by exploratory factor analysis, which refers to attitudes about the development of tourism in their communities. The factor related to support for the development of tourism was rated the highest ($M=4.07$), while the residents rated their perception of benefits from tourism ($M=3.29$) and commitment to the community ($M=3.25$) somewhat lower, but positively.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of factors

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation
Perception of tourism benefits	3.29	1,03778
Support for tourism development	4.07	0,92797
Attachment to community	3.25	1,07049

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

Factors influencing residents attitudes

The t-test was used to investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of the local residents towards the development of tourism in relation to the gender of the respondents. The results of the t-test are shown in Tab. 5.

Table 5 Results of the t-test in relation to the gender of the respondents

Factors	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
Perception of tourism benefits	-0.809	0,419
Support for tourism development	-1.982	0,048
Attachment to community	1.909	0,057

Note: t - t-test value; Sig. (2-tailed) for $r \leq 0.05$;

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

From the results shown in the previous table, it can be noted that only in the case of support for the development of tourism, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of the attitudes of both genders ($r=0.048$). This result leads to the conclusion that the female part of the respondents rated the attitudes related to the support of tourism development in their community with slightly higher average marks. Regarding the other two factors, there are no statistically significant differences in the respondents' attitudes, which means that the respondents of both genders have relatively similar attitudes toward the development of tourism in their communities.

One-factor analysis of variance of the ANOVA test, with the application of the LSD test (Tab. 6), was applied to identify statistically significant differences in the responses of respondents depending on their age about factors related to the development of tourism in the community.

Table 6 ANOVA analysis of variance about the age of the respondents

Factors	F-valu	LSD post-hoc test
Perception of tourism benefits	0.869	0,517
Support for tourism development	2.197	6 < 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Attachment to community	1.839	0,089

Notes: 1) From 15 to 24 years old; 2) From 25 to 34 years old; 3) From 35 to 44 years; 4) From 45 to 54 years; 5) From 55 to 64 years; 6) From 65 to 74 years; 7) From 75 to 84 years

Sig. – level of statistical significance ($r < 0.05$); F – coefficient of variance

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

Based on the previous table, it can be noted that the size of statistical significance less than or equal to 0.05 is recorded only in the case of support for the development of tourism ($r=0.041$), while in the other two factors, no statistically significant difference can be observed between the mean scores of the respondents' attitudes about their age. To gain insight into which age groups there are significant differences, a post-hoc LSD test was applied. The results of this test, at the level of significance of $r<0.05$, indicate that the biggest differences in answers were observed between respondents in the age category 65-74 years, about all other mentioned age categories, except for the category of respondents 75-84 years. The results shown in the previous graph point to the conclusion that people belonging to the age category 65-74 show the least willingness to support the development of tourism in their community.

To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of the local residents towards the development of tourism in their communities, and in relation to their place of residence, a one-factor analysis of variance was also conducted (Tab. 7). About permanent residence, the respondents were divided into three categories: Mačva, Kolubara, and Zlatibor districts.

Table 7 ANOVA analysis of variance in relation to the respondent's permanent residence

Factors	F	LSD post-hoc test
Perception of tourism benefits	5.5556	1, 3 > 2
Support for tourism development	4.949	1, 3 > 2
Attachment to community	12.544	1, 3 > 2

Notes: 1) Mačva district; 2) Kolubara district; 3) Zlatibor district

Sig. – level of statistical significance ($r<0.05$); F – coefficient of variance

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0. Using the post-hoc LSD test, an insight was gained into which groups there are significant differences in responses, at a significance level of $r<0.05$. Namely, it can be concluded that the respondents from the Kolubara district showed somewhat different and lower average evaluations of the development of tourism in their community, compared to the respondents from the Mačva and Kolubara districts.

The respondents who are without employment and those who are retired show the largest disparities (Tab. 8). In particular, respondents who are either working or students had better average scores in all three categories when it came to their perceptions of how tourism is developing in their communities. This leads to the conclusion that, in comparison to respondents who are unemployed or retired, students and working adults have a greater understanding of the advantages that tourism brings to their town, support tourism's growth more actively, and show a greater sense of community commitment.

Table 8 ANOVA analysis of variance in relation to the respondent's occupation

Factors	F-value	LSD post-hoc test
Perception of tourism benefits	3.451	1, 2 > 3
Support for tourism development	3.667	1, 2 > 4
Attachment to community	3.099	1, 2, 4 > 3

Notes: 1) Student; 2) Employed; 3) Unemployed; 4) Pensioner

Sig. – level of statistical significance ($r < 0.05$); F – coefficient of variance

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

The results in Tab. 9 show that the magnitude of statistical significance less than or equal to 0.05 is recorded for two of the three factors. Using the post-hoc LSD test, insight was gained into which educational groups there are significant differences in the answers, at the significance level of $r < 0.05$. The obtained results show that the respondents who have completed high school express a lower degree of agreement with the attitudes related to the support of tourism development than the respondents who have completed higher school, faculty, or master's/doctoral studies. On the other hand, looking at attitudes related to commitment to the community, a different situation is observed. Namely, the respondents who have completed elementary school show a greater attachment to the community than all other mentioned categories of respondents' education.

Table 9 Analysis of variance ANOVA in relation to education of the respondents

Factors	F-value	LSD post-hoc test
Perception of tourism benefits	0.646	/
Support for tourism development	3.090	2 < 3, 4
Attachment to community	3.063	1 > 2, 3, 4

Notes: 1) Elementary school; 2) High school; 3) Higher school/faculty; 4) Master's/doctoral studies

Sig. – level of statistical significance ($r < 0.05$); F – coefficient of variance

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 23.0.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main assumption of this study was that local residents possessed a generally positive attitude toward the development of tourism in their communities, which the findings supported given the significance and effect that residents may have on the tourism sector. The comparatively high mean scores of all three categories retrieved by exploratory factor analysis serve as evidence for this mindset, thus confirming hypothesis H1. The three factors indicate

the perspectives of residents on the benefits they believe tourism offers to the area, their propensity to encourage tourists, and their level of community attachment. The social, economic, and environmental benefits that residents may experience as a result of tourist growth are all considered to be part of the perceived benefits of tourism. The goal of support for tourist development was to investigate how often residents participated in a variety of activities to further boost the development of tourism. Ultimately, community attachment represents the relationship between residents and their communities, which can be reflected in positive, negative, or mixed feelings that lead to greater or lesser community attachment. The results obtained in this research are from previous research that dealt with the attitudes of the local residents towards the development of tourism. Consequently, some authors in their research state that the development of tourism in rural areas is well-received by the local community (Jaafar et al., 2015). Brankov and colleagues claims that the local residents generally recognize tourism as a driver of development and have a positive attitude towards this activity (Brankov et al., 2015).

Only 27.5% of the respondents stated that they are somehow involved in the development of tourism in their communities, which does not represent a positive result. Considering it may be interpreted in a broader perspective and it raises the issue of whether the results could be changed if more of them were related to tourism, this result may serve as a start point for further research. Namely, previous research has clearly shown that residents employed in activities that have direct or indirect links with tourism better perceive tourism development and have a positive attitude towards this social phenomenon (Draper et al., 2011; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014; Vargas- Sánchez et al., 2015). Regardless significance whether they are engaged in tourism or not, it was crucial in this research to hear the opinions of all the local residents.

Although a lot of research can be found in the literature on the topic of the attitudes of the local residents, few studies have dealt with the influence of the sociodemographic characteristics of the residents on the general attitudes toward the development of tourism. Socioeconomic factors such as age, gender, income, level of education (McGehee & Andereck, 2004), and financial dependence on tourism (Kim et al., 2013) represent important factors related to the attitudes and support of the local residents for tourism development (Demirović et al., 2020). In this research, it was found that in the variables of gender and age no statistically significant differences can be observed in the views of respondents on the development of tourism, thus the hypotheses H2s and Hb were rejected. This indicates that the attitudes of the local residents of both genders, of different ages do not differ. An exception can be noted only in two cases with the factor related to support for tourism

development. Namely, the female part of the respondents gave slightly higher average scores for the attitudes related to supporting the development of tourism in their community, while respondents belonging to the age category between 65 and 74 showed the least willingness to support the development of tourism. The results agree with earlier findings where it was confirmed that no significant differences between the sexes were observed (Brankov et al., 2015), but also with the data that in some studies women provide greater support for the development of tourism (Muresan et al., 2016). Also, it has been proven that age does not influence the attitudes of the local residents toward the development of tourism (Muresan et al., 2016). On the other hand, the results showed that there are significant statistical differences in the attitudes of respondents about the place of residence in one of the three districts where the research was conducted, as well as about the occupation and level of education of the respondents. Therefore, the hypotheses H2c, H2d, H2e are confirmed. Namely, the local residents of the Kolubara district show a lower degree of tourism development compared to the local residents from the Mačva and Zlatibor districts. The local residents is not aware of the benefits of tourism development and does not have a high perception of tourism development in their district. Furthermore, looking at the occupation of the local residents, the biggest differences were observed between respondents who are unemployed and those who are retired. Namely, respondents who are students or employed have a positive attitude towards the development of tourism in their communities to a greater extent. This leads to the conclusion that students and employed respondents have a better perception of the benefits that their community has from tourism, provide more support for tourism development, and are more committed to the community than non-employed or retired respondents. Also, the difference can be seen in the results that show that the respondents who have completed high school express a lower degree of agreement with the attitudes related to the support of tourism development than the respondents who have completed higher school, faculty, or master's/doctoral studies. In contrast, though looking at attitudes related to commitment to the community, a different situation is observed. Namely, the respondents who have completed elementary school show a greater attachment to the community than all other mentioned categories of respondents' education. In the broader context of things, hypothesis H2 is confirmed, although three sub-hypotheses are confirmed and only two are rejected. It concludes that the sociodemographic characteristics of the residents influence how they perceive towards the development of tourism in several significant ways.

A certain limitation may be the sample, that is, the attitudes of the residents that should be continuously monitored, given that they change over time (Gursoy et al., 2010). Based on this,

it can be emphasized the need to repeat the research in the same settlements in the following period, but among the wider residents, as well as among the elderly residents, to determine potential differences in the attitudes of the local residents. In addition, future research can include variables related to the negative impacts of tourism, to create a clearer picture of the development of tourism. Likewise, this research did not differentiate between residents who receive direct economic benefits from tourism, and those who do not. Therefore, future research should include independent variables that indicate the field of their work, for example: "*I work in tourism*", "*my job is related to tourism*", or "*my job is not related to tourism*". In this way, an even clearer picture of the attitudes of the local residents would be obtained.

It should be noted that until now no research has been conducted in the literature that covered such a broad research territory, so the contribution of this paper is outstanding. The research covers three administrative districts that include 24 municipalities and cities on the territory of Western Serbia. It is essential to utilize the existing measurement tool to inquire into the opinions of residents in the other three disticlusters that the Tourism Strategy of the Republic of Serbia has outlined in order to support the growth of tourism in Serbia. It would provide insight into the views of the local populations and allow for the comparison of the results, which would allow for the formation of future tourism development initiatives. As a consequence, researchers will be able to compare the outcomes for every cluster, giving us insight into the opinions of the community and helping to shape future tourist development strategies.

The outcomes of this study, especially for those in rural areas, have important management implications for educators, community leaders, and policy makers. Many questions may be raised based on this study's findings, which may pave the way for the local community to be more actively involved in tourist decision-making. Even though the local community is one of the main players and stakeholders in any destination, policy makers for tourism development may make more accurate decisions on how to enhance tourism in the area based on their opinions. Therefore, policymakers have the ability to both support the sustainable development of tourism in rural regions and cultivate a sense of community and collaboration among those living there.

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