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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN TOURISM IN KRAGUJEVAC²

Abstract

The development of tourism in cities in recent years has increasingly led to negative ecological, socio-cultural, and economic effects. Cities in Serbia are facing the same issues, and therefore must plan their tourism development according to the principles of sustainable development in order to reduce the negative impact of tourism. Market research is crucial for planning strategies for sustainable urban tourism development. This scientific work highlights the importance of market research for the sustainable development of tourism in Kragujevac, with a focus on the identification of key elements that contribute to the improvement of city tourism. A survey conducted among 302 respondents during June and July 2023 collected data on demographics, motivation for visiting, satisfaction with the offerings, and perceptions of the ecological and social aspects of tourism. The results show that tourists are most attracted to cultural and historical landmarks, events, natural beauty, and gastronomic offerings. The research revealed challenges in the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, which requires further consideration to enhance tourism development. Strategies that support environmentally friendly practices, such as using renewable energy sources and promoting eco-tourism, along with improving tourists' awareness of sustainable practices, are recommended.

Key words: *Market Research, Sustainable Development, Urban Tourism, Tourist product, Kragujevac.*

JEL classification: *Z32, Q01, Q56*

ОДРЖИВИ РАЗВОЈ ГРАДСКОГ ТУРИЗМА У КРАГУЈЕВЦУ

Апстракт

Развој туризма у градовима последњих година све више доводи до негативних еколошких, социо-културних и економских ефеката. Градови у Србији

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суочени су са истим проблемима стога морају планирати свој туристички развој према принципима концепта одрживог развоја како би смањили негативан утицај туризма. Истраживање туристичког тржишта кључно је за планирање стратегија одрживог развоја градског туризма. Овај научни рад истиче важност тржишног истраживања за одрживи развој туризма у Крагујевцу, с фокусом на идентификацију кључних елемената који доприносе унапређењу градског туризма. Анкетом, спроведеном међу 302 испитаника током јуна и јула 2023. године, прикупљени су подаци о демографији, мотивацији за посету, задовољству понудом и перцепцији еколошких и друштвених аспеката туризма. Резултати показују да туристе највише привлаче културно-историјске знаменитости, догађаји, природне лепоте и гастрономска понуда. Истраживање је открило изазове у одрживом коришћењу природних и културних ресурса, што захтева даље разматрање како би се унапредио развој туризма. Препоручују се стратегије које подржавају еколошки прихватљиве праксе, попут коришћења обновљивих извора енергије и промоције екотуризма, уз унапређење информисаности туриста о одрживим праксама.

Кључне речи: *Истраживање тржишта, Одрживи развој, Градски туризам, Туристички производ, Крагујевац.*

Introduction

Tourism market research is a crucial element for the successful sustainable development of urban tourism, particularly in the context of cities like Kragujevac. In today's globalized tourism environment, where competition among destinations is continuously intensifying, precisely understanding the needs and preferences of tourists becomes critically important for optimizing tourism offers and services. Kragujevac, as a significant urban center in Serbia with a rich history and cultural heritage, faces challenges in maintaining a balance between increased tourism activity and the preservation of local resources and identity. In this context, market research not only helps in identifying current tourism trends but also in developing strategies that enable cities like Kragujevac to attract and satisfy visitors while preserving their unique characteristics. Analysing tourist preferences and behavior facilitates the creation of targeted marketing campaigns and the enhancement of infrastructure and services in line with sustainable development principles. Additionally, research reveals opportunities for improving local communities and economies through the development of sustainable tourism initiatives that provide long-term benefits for the city. In this sense, continuously monitoring and adjusting strategies based on market research results is crucial to ensure that tourism in Kragujevac contributes not only to economic development but also to the preservation of its cultural and ecological heritage.

Literature review

The concept of sustainable development has quickly become common in numerous global discussions (Brdulak, & Stec, 2024, 77). This term is used in various contexts, including the economy, nature, and society (Voronina et al., 2024, 7). Sustainable development is closely linked to the way we value environmental resources and to many ethical principles that arise from it. The adoption of sustainable development principles encourages people to think about the following: the quality of the environment for optimal living, the availability of resources in the future, the state of the environment for future generations, and social well-being (Stojanović, 2023, 26).

The concept of sustainable development was first mentioned in 1980 in the World Conservation Strategy, published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The goal of the strategy was to achieve sustainable development through the conservation of living resources, combining scientific-theoretical and practical guidelines for conservation activities (Baker, 2006).

In that strategy, sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable development, environmental quality, and economic development have become compatible activities. Environmental protection cannot be achieved at the expense of limiting economic development; instead, the entire discussion on ecological issues should be directed towards achieving sustainable development (Črnjar & Črnjar, 2009, 78).

Sustainable development is a way of looking at the world that emphasizes the interconnectedness of economic, socio-cultural/social, and ecological changes. It also represents a way to describe our collective pursuit of a quality life, which includes economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. This approach implies that all aspects of development must be integrated to achieve a long-term balance between growth, social justice, and the conservation of natural resources (Todorov et al., 2022, 355).

Four main principles are considered key to the concept of sustainability: 1. A holistic approach to planning and strategy, as opposed to unplanned development; 2. The preservation of key ecological processes; 3. The protection of human heritage and biodiversity; and 4. Development in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability of productivity for future generations (Lane et al., 2022). Sustainable tourism development is a key component for the long-term protection of natural resources, as well as for the enhancement of economic and social development. Ecotourism, with its principles, significantly contributes to achieving this goal. Therefore, the integration of ecotourism principles into the tourism industry can establish a balance between economic development and the preservation of the natural environment, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector (Todorov et al., 2023, 80).

Sustainable tourism does not only imply the preservation of nature or socially responsible business practices. The theoretical definition of sustainable tourism encompasses economic, social, and environmental protection dimensions (Penjišević et al., 30).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development covers a wide range of interconnected goals, including the eradication of poverty, economic growth, social

inclusion, and achieving environmental sustainability by 2030. Policy decisions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be relevant to the policy context and developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, taking into account local and national conditions (<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>). The New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outline various levels of action and engagement, the most visible being global, regional, national, and local levels. Paragraphs 3 to 5 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1, which established the 2030 Agenda (United Nations 2015: 3/35), emphasize this. As prescribed in the SDG framework goals, and later reinforced by the New Urban Agenda, achieving the globally agreed-upon vision is only possible through actions at multiple levels – from micro to meso and macro levels. To realize the principle of “leaving no one behind,” a series of actions is required, ranging from ensuring a consistent method for measuring and understanding inequalities that all countries can uniformly apply (as proposed through the SDG monitoring framework), to implementing concrete actions at the meso (national/regional) and micro (city, settlement, and neighbourhood) levels (Ndugwa & Mwaniki, 2024, 35).

As stated by the authors Rabotić and Joksimović, (2013, 32-38; 2022, 80), sustainable development and ecotourism can be successfully integrated with urban tourism by enhancing green spaces in urban areas, preserving parks and botanical gardens, and introducing educational programs and activities that promote environmental awareness. Additionally, the use of renewable energy sources and the encouragement of environmentally friendly transportation in cities further contribute to sustainability. The development of local ecotourism attractions within urban environments allows tourists to explore nature and ecological initiatives while simultaneously contributing to economic development and the preservation of the local community.

Urban areas today face significant challenges in balancing economic development and improving environmental quality (Grube, 2023, 1674). Therefore, it is essential to develop appropriate solutions that minimize negative impacts, establish sustainability, preserve nature, and enhance living conditions in cities. One of the contemporary approaches to urban planning that provides mechanisms to address these issues is the concept of “green cities.” According to the definition, a “green city” is a city that achieves high environmental performance according to established criteria regarding environmental quality (air, water, land, and biodiversity), efficient use of resources (water, energy, land, and other available resources), and mitigation and adaptation to risks arising from climate change. This concept also maximizes economic and social benefits, taking into account the city’s fundamental characteristics such as population size, socio-economic structure, and geographic and climatic characteristics (Milojević & Mikić, 2022, 72).

Ecotourism is travel primarily based on an interest in the natural history of a destination. It is a form of nature-based tourism, where the focus is on learning, sustainability (preserving natural resources and involving the local community), and ethical planning, development, and management (Fennell, 2015, 17). Often premised upon high levels of community participation, ecotourism is dependent on collaboration between locals and other tourism stakeholders (Chuitsi & Saarinen, 2019, 351). Significant aspects of shaping ecotourism include the motives for exploring the natural environment and the resources that facilitate its respect, as well as creating economic benefits for the

local community (Kočović De Santo, 2022, 59). Ecotourism and urban tourism represent key segments of the global tourism industry that are continuously gaining popularity in the modern world. These tourism products not only allow visitors to enjoy natural beauty, cultural richness, and urban attractions but also place special emphasis on nature conservation and sustainable development. In this context, the selection of appropriate eco-destinations and sustainable urban tourist locations becomes crucial for ensuring harmony between tourism activities and ecosystem preservation. Ecotourism promotes nature conservation, while urban tourism supports the preservation of cultural heritage and the improvement of local communities. Both forms of tourism encourage responsible behaviour towards nature and raise environmental awareness among tourists. In addition to providing unforgettable experiences for visitors, ecotourism and urban tourism play a key role in supporting local economies and preserving biodiversity (Todorov et al., 2023, 178).

According to UNWTO (2024), Urban Tourism is “a type of tourism activity which takes place in an urban space with its inherent attributes characterized by non-agricultural based economy such as administration, manufacturing, trade and services and by being nodal points of transport. Urban/city destinations offer a broad and heterogeneous range of cultural, architectural, technological, social and natural experiences and products for leisure and business”. According to the United Nations, in 2015, 54% of the world’s population lived in urban areas and, by 2030, this share is expected to reach 60%. Along with other key pillars, tourism constitutes a central component in the economy, social life and the geography of many cities in the world and is thus a key element in urban development policies. Urban tourism can represent a driving force in the development of many cities and countries contributing to the progress of the New Urban Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.unwto.org/urban-tourism>), in particular, *Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends (<https://tourism4sds.org/sdg-11-sustainable-cities-communities/> Viewed: 06.08.2024).

Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists. Tourism is intrinsically linked to how a city develops itself and provides more and better living conditions to its residents and visitors. Fulfilling tourism’s potential as a tool of sustainable and inclusive growth for cities requires a multi-stakeholder and multilevel approach based on close cooperation among tourism and non-tourism administrations at different levels, private sector, local communities and tourists themselves. Likewise, the sustainable development and management of tourism in cities needs to be integrated into the wider urban agenda (<https://www.unwto.org/urban-tourism> Viewed: 06.08.2024).

Urban tourism is a multifunctional tourism product that meets various needs of tourists through its offerings. As a specific tourism product, it experienced expansion in the second half of the 20th century as a result of the intense development of tourism infrastructure, enabled by the urbanization process in places initially considered peripheral (Podovac, 2016, 2). According to the Law on Tourism (2019, Article 3, Paragraph 1, Item 39), a tourism product is a set of interdependent elements organized in practice as a distinct value chain comprising material products and services, natural values and cultural assets, tourist attractions, tourism superstructure, and tourism infrastructure. The tourism

product encompasses all elements that can be marketed, whether it is an individual entity such as a hotel or park, or a collective set of resources. The basic components of a tourism product include attractive locations, goods and services, and the accessibility of the tourist area. This product consists of tangible elements and intangible services that consumers engage with due to their appeal (Tošić, 2023, 139).

Urban or city tourism refers to travel to larger or smaller cities for sightseeing, shopping, visiting relatives and friends, conducting business, and enjoying culture, entertainment, and recreation (Rabotić, 2013, 163). Urban tourism is a complex category of study due to its frequent overlap with other forms of tourism in urban settings, which necessitates a systematic consideration of this concept. Its complexity arises from the fact that it is the subject of research across various scientific disciplines such as management, tourism, marketing, spatial planning, ecology, geography, and economics (Podovac, 2016, 163).

According to the current Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2016, 34), the tourism products of particular importance for the development of tourism are:

- 1) City tourism (urban tourism);
- 2) Events (cultural, sports, etc.);
- 3) Mountain tourism;
- 4) Spa & wellness in spas/health tourism;
- 5) Thematic routes;
- 6) Rural tourism;
- 7) Nautical tourism;
- 8) Meetings, incentive travels, conferences, and exhibitions/events (MICE tourism);
- 9) Cultural heritage (cultural tourism);
- 10) Special interests;
- 11) Transit tourism.

According to the Development Plan of the City of Kragujevac for the period 2021-2031 (p. 48), tourism represents a promising development opportunity for the city, complementing other economic sectors. Tourism development is an integral part of the city's overall development and economy. The city possesses significant but underutilized potential that can be leveraged to build a sustainable and attractive tourism offer, placing Kragujevac on the map of true "tourist cities" in Serbia. Kragujevac has the potential to develop seven core tourism products. Market research represents a fundamental function in marketing research, serving as the foundation for conducting research and development, production and sales, promotional, and other activities of a tourism enterprise. Analyzing a company's opportunities in the tourism market allows for the collection of sufficient information to identify problems and consider their potential solutions. Market research precisely defines the needs, motives, and behavior of tourists to assess the existence and extent of demand for the products and services of the tourism enterprise. After market analysis and research, the focus shifts to studying consumer behavior tourists, which is an integral part of market research (Čerović, 2004, 1).

The tourism market consists of two main components: supply and demand, as well as tourism intermediaries. The interaction between these components forms the

tourism market. The source of tourist mobility is the emitting market, while the receptive market is characterized by foreign tourist consumption as opposed to domestic (national) consumption (Gržinić, 2019, 62).

Methodology

As part of the inter-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation between the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies (RSJP), the Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MTO), the Tourism Organization of Serbia (TOS), and local tourism organizations (LTO) in Kragujevac and Sokobanja, a pilot project was implemented titled “*Improving the Work of Tourism Organizations in Conducting Market Research to Enhance Public Services*” The market research in the territories of Kragujevac and Sokobanja was conducted between June and July 2023. This pilot project also included the education sector, with fourth-year students from the Tourism High School in Sokobanja and students from the Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja and the Faculty of Economics in Kragujevac volunteering to conduct tourist surveys in the city of Kragujevac and the municipality of Sokobanja. The training for volunteer researchers in tourist market analysis was conducted by the marketing agency “Pro Pozitiv” from Belgrade, hired by Republic Secretariat for Public Policies, Republic of Serbia. For the purposes of this study, empirical data from the survey, conducted on a sample of 302 respondents in the city of Kragujevac, was used. Data analysis was performed using the statistical software SPSS 26.0, with the note that similar research has not been conducted at the national level by the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies. The survey questions included demographic data, motivations for visiting, satisfaction with the tourist offer, perceptions of the ecological and social aspects of tourism, and recommendations for improving the tourist offer. The city of Kragujevac is located in the central part of the Šumadija region, 140 km south of the capital Belgrade via highway E10. It covers an area of 835 square kilometers, according to the last demographic census (2022), the city of Kragujevac has a population of 175.802, and is the largest city in Šumadija and the fourth largest in Serbia. It is situated at an average altitude of 180 meters. The city lies on the banks of the Lepenica River, in the Kragujevac basin, where the branches of the Šumadija mountains meet: Rudnik, Crni Vrh, and the Gledić mountains. Kragujevac and its surroundings boast rich natural resources, offering numerous opportunities for the development of transit, stationary, business-event, sports-recreational, hunting and fishing, health, and rural tourism (<https://arhiva.kragujevac.rs/o-kragujevcu/turizam/> Viewed: 30.07.2024.).

Kragujevac is an industrial city, but also one with significant agricultural land, covering a total area of 83,475 hectares, of which 63.9% belongs to rural areas and 36.1% to urban zones. The city represents 35% of the total area of the Šumadija district and about 1% of Serbia’s territory tourism (Strategija održivog razvoja grada Kragujevca 2013-2018). Kragujevac has a temperate-continental climate, with July being the warmest month (average temperature of 27°C) and January the coldest (-0.5°C). The average annual temperature is 11.5°C, with 50 to 60 humid and tropical days per year. The average annual precipitation is 530 mm, while there are 30 days of snow, 20 days of fog, and 2 days of hail annually. The city offers various forms of tourism depending on whether the resources are primarily natural or social. Social resources support business

tourism (M.I.C.E. – meetings, incentives, conventions, events), conference, event-based, cultural, and religious tourism, while natural resources support eco-tourism, rural tourism, hunting and fishing, and sports-recreational tourism. The city’s macro-regional influence and capacities create opportunities for the development of fair, business, and conference tourism (Strategija održivog razvoja grada Kragujevca 2013-2018). The most important tourist attractions in the city of Kragujevac include the “Milošev venac” complex, which features the Old Court Church and the Assembly building, Amidža’s Konak from 1818, the Konak of Prince Mihailo from 1860 (now the National Museum), the building of the First Kragujevac Gymnasium from 1833, the “Knjaževsko-srpski teatar” building from 1835, and the “Old Foundry” Museum, which showcases the development of industrial production in Serbia. Other significant attractions are the “October 21st” Memorial Park, with monuments dedicated to the victims of executions during World War II, and the “Kragujevac Aquarium” the first public aquarium in Serbia (<https://arhiva.kragujevac.rs/o-kragujevcu/turizam/> Viewed: 30.07.2024.). According to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Youth (<https://mto.gov.rs/tekst/308/sektor-za-turizam.php>), Kragujevac recorded a total of 30.170 tourist arrivals in the period from January to June 2024, representing an 11% increase compared to the same period in 2023. The number of domestic tourist arrivals was 18.688 (an increase of 8.2%), while the number of foreign tourist arrivals was 11.482 (an increase of 15.8%). The aim of the research is to identify key factors influencing both the supply and demand in tourism. Based on these findings, future local strategies and tourism development programs will be created to improve tourism in line with sustainability principles.

Empirical results and discussion

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics and Average Age of Tourists According to Sociodemographic Characteristics (in Percentages)

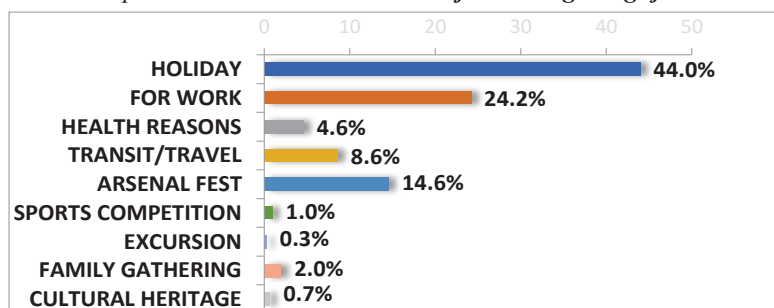
Category	Subcategory	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	48%
	Female	52%
Education	Secondary Education	42.4%
	Higher Education	57.6%
	18-29 years	38.1%
	30-44 years	38.4%
	45-59 years	16.9%
	60 and more	6.6%
Employment Status	Employed	70.5%
	Retiree	5.6%
	Unemployed	6.6%
	Student	15.9%
	Not Disclosed	1.3%
Motivation for Travel	Health Reasons	49.3%

	Business Obligations	37.6%
	Leisure	35.2%
	Transit Travel	37.5%
	Arsenal Fest	27.5%

Source: Author's research

Table 1. provides an overview of the demographic composition and average age distribution of tourists from a sample of 302 respondents. The gender distribution is nearly balanced, with 52% female and 48% male. A significant majority, 57.6%, have attained higher education, indicating an educated tourist demographic. The largest age groups are 30-44 years (38.4%) and 18-29 years (38.1%), suggesting that younger and middle-aged adults dominate the visitor profile. In terms of employment, 70.5% are employed, 15.9% are students, 6.6% are unemployed, and 5.6% are retirees. Travel motivations vary, with health reasons cited by 49.3%, followed by business obligations (37.6%), leisure activities (35.2%), transit (37.5%), and event attendance like Arsenal Fest (27.5%), reflecting diverse travel purposes. The calculated arithmetic means for the provided demographic data are as follows: For Gender, the average is 50, calculated from 48% male and 52% female. In terms of Education, the average is 33.33, derived from the percentages of 0% for Primary School, 42.4% for Secondary School, and 57.6% for University. The Age Groups have an average of 24.0, based on the values of 38.1% for ages 18-29, 38.4% for ages 30-44, 16.9% for ages 45-59, and 6.6% for those aged 60 and older. Finally, for Employment Status, the average stands at 19.82, with 70.5% employed, 5.6% retirees, 6.6% unemployed, 15.9% students, and 1.3% classified as other. Regarding the Motivation for Travel, the average percentage is 37.42%, calculated from the motivations of 35.2% for vacation, 37.6% for work, 49.3% for health reasons, 37.5% for transit/travel, and 27.5% for Arsenal Fest.

Graph 1. What is the main motive for visiting Kragujevac



Source: Author's research

Graph 1. shows the reasons tourists visit Kragujevac, revealing the diversity of motives for coming to the city. The largest percentage of tourists visit for leisure, accounting for 44% of all visits. Business travelers are the next largest group, representing 24.2%, highlighting the importance of business activities in attracting

visitors. The Arsenal Fest, a significant cultural event, attracts 14.6% of tourists, while transit or passing through the city makes up 8.6% of visits. Health reasons motivate 4.6% of visitors, while sports events and excursions have a smaller impact, with 1% and 0.3% participation, respectively. Family gatherings account for 2% of visits, and cultural heritage attracts 0.7% of tourists. These data highlight the diverse motives for visiting Kragujevac, with a focus on leisure and business visits, as well as the significance of cultural events like Arsenal Fest.

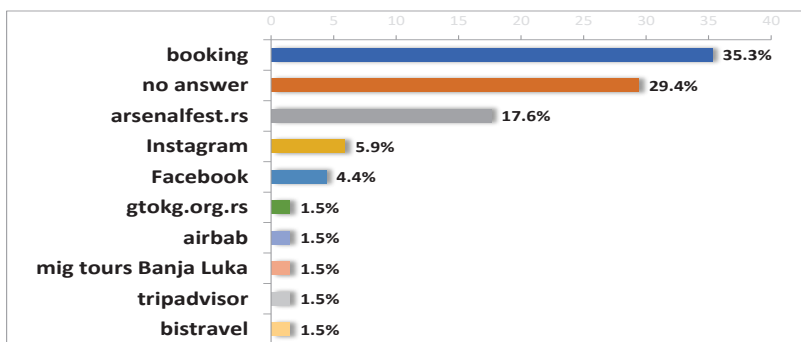
Table 2. A source of information before traveling

Source of Information	First Response (%)	Top three responses (%)
Recommendations from friends and family	35.8	42.4
Personal positive experiences	37.7	37.7
Websites, online booking systems, and social media	18.5	21.5
Traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers)	3.3	5.3
Recommendations from doctors	3.0	3.0
Information from employers	1.7	1.7

Source: <https://visit-serbia.info/sombor-city-card/>

Table 2. shows the sources of information that tourists use before traveling to Kragujevac, revealing various channels through which visitors obtain information about the destination. Recommendations from friends and family are the most common source, cited by 35.8% of respondents as their primary source, and a total of 42.4% as multiple sources. This highlights the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations in travel planning. Personal positive experiences from previous visits are the second most important source, matching the percentage of the first response with 37.7%. This data shows that many tourists revisit Kragujevac due to favorable experiences they had previously. Websites, online booking systems, and social media are the third most significant source, mentioned by 18.5% of respondents as their primary source, with a total participation of 21.5% when considering multiple responses. These channels are becoming increasingly important in the decision-making process for travel. Traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, are less represented, with 3.3% of respondents citing them as their primary source and a total participation of 5.3%. Recommendations from doctors and information obtained from employers are the least used sources, with low percentages of 3% and 1.7%, respectively, indicating specific situations in which these sources are utilized. These data emphasize the dominant role of personal experiences and recommendations in informing tourists, while digital platforms are gradually increasing in importance, though traditional media still plays a smaller but significant role.

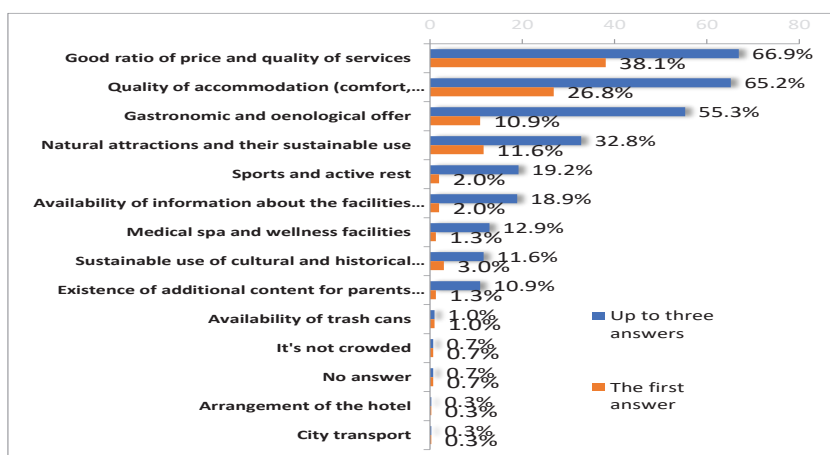
Graph 2. Which sites and booking systems were used before the trip



Source: Author's research

Graph 2. shows the specific websites and booking systems that tourists used before traveling to Kragujevac. This question was answered by 68 respondents, which constitutes 23% of the total number of respondents. The most popular site is Booking, used by 35.3% of respondents, indicating its dominance in online accommodation bookings. A significant percentage of respondents, 29.4%, did not provide an answer, which might suggest either a lack of use or difficulty recalling specific sites. The website arsenalfest.rs, dedicated to the popular music festival in Kragujevac, was used by 17.6% of respondents, underscoring its importance in attracting tourists. Social media platforms were also used but to a lesser extent. Instagram was used by 5.9% of respondents, while Facebook was used by 4.4%. The official website of the Kragujevac Tourist Organization, gtokg.org.rs, as well as Airbnb, Mig Tours Banja Luka, TripAdvisor, and Bistravel, were each used by 1.5% of respondents. These data show that while sites like Booking dominate the online booking process, specialized websites and social media play an important role in informing and planning travel for specific segments of tourists.

Graph 3. Reasons for the satisfaction of the visit

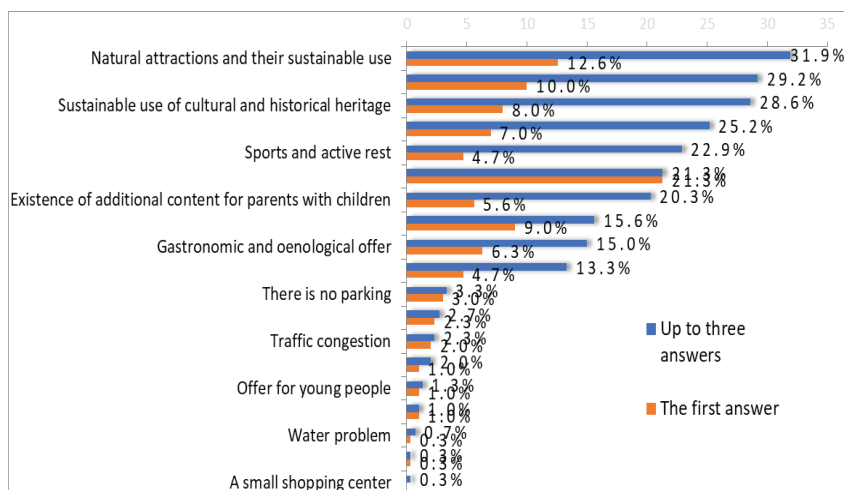


Source: Author's research

Graph 3. shows the reasons for tourist satisfaction during their visit to Kragujevac, based on responses from participants who could list up to three reasons. The largest number of respondents expressed satisfaction with the good value for money of services, with 66.9% including it among their top three reasons and 38.1% naming it as their primary reason. The quality of accommodation, including comfort and sustainable energy use, was also highly rated, with 65.2% mentioning it among their top three reasons and 26.8% as their main reason. Gastronomic and wine offerings were a significant factor for 55.3% of respondents, while 10.9% cited it as their main reason for satisfaction.

Based on the data collected regarding the reasons for tourist satisfaction during their visit to Kragujevac, the standard deviation helps to assess the variability in responses among participants. Among the most cited reasons, value for money leads with 66.9% of respondents including it in their top three reasons. The quality of accommodation, with a focus on comfort and sustainable energy use, was highlighted by 65.2%, followed by gastronomic and wine offerings at 55.3%. Other factors, such as natural attractions (32.8%), sports and active leisure (19.2%), and medical spa facilities (12.9%) contributed to satisfaction, albeit to a lesser extent. These figures indicate a significant variation in satisfaction factors, reflecting diverse priorities among tourists, but also pointing to core aspects that hold broad appeal.

Graph 4. Reasons for dissatisfaction with the visit



Source: Author's research

Graph 4. shows the reasons for tourist dissatisfaction in Kragujevac, based on responses where participants could list up to three reasons. The most frequent concern was natural attractions and their sustainable use, mentioned by 31.9% of respondents, with 12.6% listing it as their main reason. Lack of information about local attractions was the second most cited issue, at 29.2%, with 10% stating it as their primary reason. The sustainable use of cultural and historical heritage followed, with 28.6% including it among their top three, and 8% as their main reason. Spa and wellness facilities caused dissatisfaction for 25.2%, while 7% listed it as their primary issue. Sports and leisure activities generated dissatisfaction for 22.9%, with 4.7% naming it as their main concern.

Additionally, 21.3% of respondents did not specify concrete reasons for dissatisfaction. Facilities for parents with children were problematic for 20.3%, with 5.6% citing it as the main reason. Poor value for money was a concern for 15.6%, and 9% identified it as their primary issue. Gastronomy and wine offerings dissatisfied 15%, while 6.3% listed it as their main reason. Accommodation quality affected 13.3%, and 4.7% cited it as the primary concern. Minor issues included parking (3.3%), electricity problems in campsites (2.7%), traffic congestion (2.3%), and Arsenal Fest (2%). Other smaller complaints included offerings for young people (1.3%), lack of trash cans (1%), water issues (0.7%), and nightlife and small shopping centers (0.3%)

The standard deviation of 11.31% for the percentage of respondents listing reasons among their top three highlights a considerable variability in the factors contributing to tourist dissatisfaction. While certain issues, such as the sustainable use of natural attractions, were cited by a significant portion of respondents, other concerns, like traffic congestion or nightlife offerings, were mentioned far less frequently, indicating a broad range of experiences and dissatisfaction levels among tourists. This spread suggests that while some aspects of the tourist experience are more universally problematic, others affect only a smaller subset of visitors.

One of the ways to improve the environment is through digitalization, specifically by purchasing an online ticket that consolidates a range of services for a single price, inspired by the greenest city in the Republic of Serbia, Sombor. The city of Sombor has introduced the “*Sombor City Card*” for the first time. This unique digital card allows tourists and residents to visit cultural institutions, tourist attractions, dining establishments, and other locations in Sombor at discounted prices. This system provides tourists with an easier and simpler way to visit numerous destinations without worrying about tickets. The “*Sombor City Card*” is part of the “*Zaplovi Srbijom*” project and represents a universal pass for city events and institutions. This project contributes to a cleaner environment by enabling all services to be handled digitally (<https://vtc.rs/sombor-city-card/>).

Figure 1. “*Sombor City Card*”



Source: <https://visit-serbia.info/sombor-city-card/>

Conclusion

Based on the data obtained about tourists in Kragujevac, it is evident that most tourists are satisfied with the relationship between price and quality of services. As the first response, 38.1% of respondents rated this while 66.9% of respondents included this answer among their top three. The quality of accommodation and gastronomic offerings were also highly rated; as the first response, 10.9% of respondents rated the quality of accommodation and gastronomic offerings while 55.3% of respondents included these ratings among their top three. These results indicate an adequate level of basic tourist products in Kragujevac. Kragujevac attracts visitors due to its cultural events, natural and cultural attractions, underscoring its potential to cater to diverse interests. Recommendations from friends and previous positive experiences contribute to the city's good reputation. However, there are concerns about the sustainable use of natural resources and cultural heritage, which require more attention and improvements in preservation and promotion. The problematic availability of information about tourist attractions limits the visitor experience, suggesting the need for enhancements in digital and physical infrastructure for tourist information. The quality of accommodation has been rated positively, but improvements are needed in the sustainable use of resources, considering that 4.7% of respondents cited this reason as their first response, while 13.3% included this issue among their top three answers. To improve the sustainable use of resources in accommodation facilities, they should reduce water consumption, use energy more efficiently, implement ecological practices, utilize renewable energy sources, recycle waste, and provide training for staff on sustainable practices. The lack of family-friendly activities, sports options, and nightlife has also been identified as areas for future development and improvement. Addressing issues such as city congestion, parking, and traffic is crucial for improving the overall visitor impression of the destination, encouraging repeat visits, positive reviews, and personal recommendations. Market research is essential for the development of urban tourism in Kragujevac, as it allows for the analysis of visitor needs and preferences, identification of target markets, and more effective marketing strategies. It also provides insights into the city's competitive advantages, facilitating the development of new tourism products and services. Collaboration with academic institutions and the private sector is vital for the successful implementation of recommendations and the long-term sustainability of tourism in Kragujevac, as academic institutions can provide research and analyses that identify key areas for improvement, while the private sector offers insights into market trends and consumer demands. Joint projects can lead to innovations, training for employees through specialized educational programs, as well as strengthening the promotion of Kragujevac as a tourist destination through joint marketing campaigns. This synergy creates a tourism sector that is economically sustainable, socially responsible, and environmentally friendly. To further enhance sustainable development, it is important to implement strategies that include the use of renewable energy sources and promote environmentally friendly practices. Investing in green infrastructure and educating local communities about sustainable tourism can significantly contribute to the preservation of natural and cultural resources, ensuring the long-term viability of the destination.

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