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7th International Scientific Conference
"Engagement & Empowerment: A Path Toward
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University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management



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**Engagement & Empowerment:
A Path Toward Sustainable
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ToSEE 2023

Volume 7

pp. 1 – 541

2023

CONTENTS

<i>Editorial</i>	IX
<i>Research Papers</i>	
SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AS CO-CREATORS OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION VALUE <i>Lorena Bašan, Barbara Jerković, Katarina Šimičić, Marija Ham and Ana Pap Vorkapić</i>	1
IS TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT IN SERBIA ALIGNED WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART TOURIST DESTINATIONS? <i>Marija Cimballević, Vanja Pavluković, Tatjana Pivac and Sanja Kovačić</i>	23
CHALLENGES OF SMALL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA <i>Ivan Čapeta, Sara Fuchs and Dino Manestar</i>	43
INTERDEPENDENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS IN TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING <i>Dijana Čičin-Šain, Sonja Brlečić Valčić and Sandra Janković</i>	59
THE INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM IN DESTINATION CHOICE FOR GENERATION Z: MEDIATING ROLES OF SOCIAL ESCAPISM MOTIVATION AND PLEASURE <i>Ana Čuić Tanković and Tajana Vidović</i>	71
FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES OF NPOs OPERATING IN CROATIAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS <i>Lorena Dadić Fruk</i>	85
EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NORTH MACEDONIA <i>Ljupcho Eftimov and Bojan Kitanovikj</i>	99
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USING TOURIST MOBILE APPLICATIONS AND THE SATISFACTION OF YOUNG VISITORS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION <i>Daniela Gračan, Nikolina Šerić Honović and Maja Lena Lopatny</i>	115
DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN FIRST-TIME AND MULTIPLE TIME VISITORS TO A DESTINATION: THE CASE OF THE GORIČKO NATURE PARK, SLOVENIA <i>Miran Grah, Alan Fyall, Borut Milfelner and Sonja Sibila Lebe</i>	129

ToSEE 2023

Volume 7

pp. 1 – 541

2023

DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON THE ENVIRONMENT BY EXTRACTING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE IN NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS – CASE STUDY OF THE UČKA NATURE PARK <i>Hrvoje Grofelnik and Nataša Kovačić</i>	143
SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT IN BAVARIA: INCREASING TOURISM ACCEPTANCE BY APPLYING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES? <i>Marcus Herntrei and Veronika Jánová</i>	155
TOURISM GROWTH AS A DRIVER OF MIGRATION PATTERNS: EVIDENCE FROM CROATIA <i>Ria Ivandić and Neven Ivandić</i>	177
BREAKING THE BARRIERS: AN ANALYSIS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGIES IN THE GLOBAL AVIATION INDUSTRY <i>Sena Kılıç and Özge Peksatıcı Yanıkoğlu</i>	189
POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM PRODUCTS IN RURAL DESTINATIONS: PERCEPTIONS OF RAVNI KOTARI RESIDENTS (CROATIA) <i>Božena Krce Miocic</i>	200
HOW DOES TOURISM AFFECT THE RESIDENTS' LIFE? THE CASE FROM ZADAR (CROATIA) <i>Božena Krce Miocic, Tomislav Klarin and Gabrijela Vidic</i>	215
CAN GENERATION Z IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM? <i>Marinela Krstinić Nižić and Ivan Butković</i>	231
A COMPARISON OF OFFICIAL TOURISM WEBSITES IN TUSCANY REGION AND ISTRIA COUNTY USING TOPIC MODELLING <i>Valentina Marchi, Katarina Lovrečić and Kristina Brščić</i>	249
THE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF CROATIAN PRODUCERS IN TOURISM CLUSTER <i>Davor Mikulić, Damira Keček and Katerina Fotova Čiković</i>	269
GEOHERITAGE PROMOTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: "KUČAJ-BELJANICA MOUNTAINS" NATIONAL PARK IN THE HOMOLJE AREA (EASTERN SERBIA) <i>Đurđa Miljković and Dajana Bjelajac</i>	283
EXPLORING MOTIVATIONS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF ERASMUS+ STUDENTS IN RIJEKA, CROATIA <i>Timea Palfi, Lauren A. Siegel and Tina Šegota</i>	297

ToSEE 2023

Volume 7

pp. 1 – 541

2023

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF LOCAL RESIDENT'S SUPPORT AND ATTACHMENT TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS <i>Milena Podovac, Romina Alkier and Vedran Milojica</i>	315
THE CORPORATE SECURITY IN SLOVENIAN NATURAL SPAS <i>Sebastjan Repnik and Elena Marulc</i>	333
QUALITY GAPS IN TOURISM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: ACCESS TO INFORMATION SERVICES <i>Teresa Skalska</i>	347
THE READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTING ICTs IN HOTEL INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM THE REGIONAL LEVEL <i>Marino Stanković and Ana Portolan</i>	361
FOREST, HEALTH AND TOURISM: DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH TOURISM OFFERS IN LOCAL FORESTS <i>Georg Christian Steckenbauer, Sebastian Markov and Corinna Pippirs</i>	385
ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS FOR ECONOMIC AND TOURISM GROWTH: CASE OF CROATIA <i>Christian Stipanović, Elena Rudan and Vedran Zubović</i>	397
THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN MANAGING CHANGE: THE CASE FROM THE HOTEL INDUSTRY <i>Anita Talaja, Doris Podrug and Lucija Brešković</i>	409
DIGITAL NOMADS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN TOURISM HUB <i>Renata Tomljenović, Zrinka Marušić and Matina Gjurašić</i>	425
(COASTAL) URBAN TOURISM AND QUALITY OF LIFE: RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION <i>Maša Trinajstić and Jelena Đurkin Badurina</i>	441
HALFWAY THERE: DID WE LEARN ANYTHING? - YOUTH PERCEPTION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS <i>Marija Vukadin and Jasmina Mladenović</i>	457
THE ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS <i>Marija Vukoja, Irijana Rajković and Dino Baričević</i>	473
TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN AFRICA: CAN WE RELY ON TIP, ETHNIC TENSION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT? <i>Ernest Alang Wung, Roger Tsafack Nanfosso and Armand Mboutchouang Kountchou</i>	489

ToSEE 2023

Volume 7

pp. 1 – 541

2023

- BE CAREFUL WITH THE ATTITUDE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY: ARE THEY AFFECTED BY TIPS AND TIPPING 503
Ernest Alang Wung and Roger Tsafack Nanfosso
- PROACTIVE VS RESTRAINED BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS: UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT PERCEPTION 519
Zrinka Zadel, Aleksandra S. Dragin, Maja B. Mijatov, Kristina Košić and Ivana Ivančić
- RETHINKING TOURISM UNDER THE PANDEMIC LENS: THE FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES 529
Luqi Yang, Xiaoni Li and Ana Beatriz Hernández-Lara

EDITORIAL

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This proceedings is the result of the participants at the 7th International Scientific Conference ToSEE - Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe: "Engagement & Empowerment: A Path Toward Sustainable Tourism," organized by the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, May 25-27, 2023.

ToSEE 2023, recognized by UNWTO, is an established conference that provides a multidisciplinary platform connecting the academic community with destination managers, the public sector, students, and experts from practice. Renowned international speakers gave the opening keynote presentations: Margarita Zaera Espinos, UNWTO - World Tourism Organisation (Madrid); Faizan Ali, University of South Florida (United States of America); Tina Šegota, University of Greenwich (United Kingdom), University of Maribor (Slovenia) and Georg Christian Steckenbauer, Deggendorf Institute of Technology (Germany).

Of the 93 abstracts originally submitted, 55 full papers were uploaded, and upon the double-blind peer review, 35 articles were published in this Conference's Proceedings. The papers were submitted by 89 authors from thirteen countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The best Ph.D. student and other congress participants' papers were awarded.

According to the main theme of the conference, "Engagement & Empowerment: A Path Toward Sustainable Tourism," and due to the great diversity of authors, the papers cover a wide range of topics, such as different sustainability issues and challenges, tourism impacts, employees, human resource management, destination management, participatory approaches, involvement of various stakeholders and their perceptions, crisis management, use of information technology in tourism and many others.

We are proud that ToSEE 2023 has achieved its goal of bringing together academics and researchers from the tourism industry to promote discourse and critical thinking about the importance of engagement and empowerment of all stakeholders in ensuring sustainable tourism.

Finally, we would like to thank all authors for their contributions and express our special gratitude to the reviewers for their valuable insights and suggestions, which significantly improved the quality of the papers.

We hope that the contributions in this Conference's Proceedings will contribute to greater engagement and empowerment that will lead us to resilient and sustainable tourism.

*Lorena Bašan
Dina Lončarić
Daniela Soldić Frleta
Editors*

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF LOCAL RESIDENT'S SUPPORT AND ATTACHMENT TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Milena Podovac
Romina Alkier
Vedran Milojica

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to examine the key factors, which influence residents' participation in sustainable development of rural tourism destinations in Serbia, and which are related to the resident's support and their attachment to the place of residence. Authors also examined the potential positive impact of local community attachment and resident's support on the benefits for residents, which are realized from tourism development as well as the sustainable aspect of the rural tourism destinations in Serbia.

Methodology – The research sample includes residents of rural Serbia, who filled out an online questionnaire which was defined based on the previously conducted research by Than et al. (2020). The key variables are community attachment, resident support, and perceived benefits (socio-economic and cultural), socio-economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The PLS-PM analysis was performed for data analysis in the R programming language 4.2.5.

Findings – The results show that the residents' perceived benefits positively affect the sustainability of rural tourist destinations in Serbia. Although this research started from the assumption that community attachment and resident's support are positively affecting the perceived benefits of rural households and sustainable development of Serbia as a tourist destination, the obtained research results did not confirm this.

Contribution – This study enables a more complete understanding of the relevance of the inclusion of residents in the rural destination's sustainable development, but also can be used as an important source of information for defining and implementing future policies and strategies of rural development.

Keywords: Resident's support, attachment, sustainable development, rural tourism destinations, Republic of Serbia.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas are an inexhaustible source of resources for the development of various economic activities, which can contribute towards improving the resident's life quality and the economy. Tourism in rural areas plays the role of revitalization and refinement of the rural economy with a focus on the local population and the conditions in which they live and work. One of the primary research questions mentioned in numerous papers is focused on the examination of possibilities and ways for the inclusion of the local population in the development of tourism and adapting this development to their needs which can lead to the realization of various benefits (Muresan et al. 2016; Marzo-Navarro et al. 2015; Yang et al. 2021; Ćurčić et al. 2021; Hassan et al. 2022). Tourism in rural

communities contributes to the achievement of numerous benefits for its residents (job generation, development of socio-cultural and educational values, higher productivity, and income generation for the local community) (Sharples 2002; Mili 2012; Marin 2015). The rural areas of Serbia are still not sufficiently included in the tourist flows in general. Rural tourism in Serbia is based on domestic tourist demand, respectively, mostly tourists from urban areas, as a result of which there is a redistribution of income from more economically developed areas of the country to rural areas (Perić et al. 2020; Dimitrijević et al. 2022). One of the primary reasons is the fact that numerous prerequisites and advantages in Serbian rural areas have not been sufficiently used for recovery and economic diversification as well as for the creation of better living conditions for local residents (Borović et al. 2022). Its rural areas are still not adequately represented on the tourist market due to the lack of adequate infrastructural, financial, and institutional support for its development, etc. (Dašić et al. 2020; Radović 2020). Also, the lack of an appropriate institutional framework for the development of rural community in Serbia contributed to the widespread fragmentation of the rural tourism offer. Sustainable tourism development in rural communities is an indispensable segment of research in tourism studies in the last few decades in the Republic of Serbia. Developing sustainable rural tourism implies the necessity of defining and upholding the sustainability principles as well as appropriate changes in the ethical way of behavior of all the people participating in tourism development chain in rural areas (Maksimović et al. 2017). Sustainability in the context of tourism implies the use of natural resources in the function of developing an integral tourist product, which would provide tourists with an authentic experience, while respecting the principle of resource preservation and the creation of more favorable material conditions for members of the local community. This is exactly why it is of significant relevance to include and examine the attitudes of residents of rural communities on all aspects of benefits and potentially negative tourism impacts. Also, the understanding of these attitudes can have crucial role in the sustainable development of any form of tourism, including rural tourism (Blešić et al. 2014).

Although the focus is on understanding the dimension of economic sustainability of tourism in rural areas, (Yu et al. 2011; Ribeiro et al. 2013; Muresan et al. 2016), a comprehensive analytical framework of the research requires an analysis of the local population's attitudes on both socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of tourism sustainability in rural areas. In this paper the authors are examining the influence of population support and their attachment to the local community on the sustainable tourism development of rural destinations in Serbia. Starting from the fact that this topic is very important from the aspect of defining the developmental strategy of tourism sustainability in rural areas, the authors seek to examine the existence of a positive influence of the attachment and support of the local population on the perceived benefits as well as on the establishment of a sustainable model of development of rural destinations in Serbia.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

1.1. Tourism and sustainability

Due to the uncontrolled exploitation of various resources in order to develop industrial and other activities, the implementation of sustainable development concept represents an indispensable aspect of further and efficient economic and social development. Fundamental changes at the global level took place during the 1980s when the concept of sustainable development emerged (Pezzey 1992). Although the term sustainability primarily belongs to and refers to the field of ecology (Jabareen 2008), over time it found its application in other dimensions of modern development, where it became clear that applying the sustainability concept conditions the survival and further progress of the economy and society globally. The application of the sustainable development concept is an indispensable element of long-term successful and responsible use of resources in order to develop the tourism industry and requires a wider scope of observation of the various impacts that this activity creates in the place where it is intensively developed. According to Marzo-Navarro et al. (2015), the sustainable development of tourism implies business activity, which develops in a way that it enables the protection of present and future generations so that they can satisfy their needs through the preservation and protection of ecological processes, biological diversity as well as cultural heritage. Development of tourism based on sustainability principles represents a long process, in which the local environment (which is considered the basic social and political community) would stimulate the economic development while protecting the environment and forming a better social policy (Subotić 2007, cited in: Gradinac and Jegdić 2016). From the tourist offer holder's point of view, the application of the concept of sustainable development can condition the creation of tourist products, which will be innovative and adapted to market requirements, which further implies the provision of a competitive advantage of the destination and/or company on the tourist market. Also, through the implementation of sustainable forms of tourism in the post-pandemic period, the local population should be recognized and included. From the residents' perspective, the implementation of sustainability concept in tourism activities in the post-pandemic period can be an opportunity to review the previous engagement of the local population in the development of tourism and define innovative ways not only for inclusion in the development of tourist offer, but also for making important strategic directions for further development (UNWTO 2021; Mínguez et al. 2021; Afrić Rakitovac and Urošević 2023). According to Vinerean et al. (2021), residents' negative perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affect their involvement and support for tourism development. The authors also pointed out that it is very important for policy holders of tourism development and destination to influence and promote ideas of unity in order to improve support for the development of the tourism industry, especially in the post-pandemic period.

1.2. Sustainable development of rural destinations

Rural tourism is widespread in Europe with respect for natural attractiveness as a primary attribute in setting up the tourist offer of rural destinations. This form of tourism represents a chance for rural areas to use the essential values of the village to develop a

tourist product, which will provide tourists with an authentic experience but also contribute to better living conditions for local people through the involvement of residents in providing services to tourists (Škrbić et al. 2019). The complexity of the tourist product of rural destinations indicates that it is intended for tourists who want to get to know rural environments, visit attractions and use services in rural areas, and which also represents a significant generator of income and promotion of cultural values for the local population (Pakurár and Oláh 2008; Košić et al. 2017). Muresan et al. (2016) emphasize that tourism in rural areas is a useful tool for the diversification of recreational activities and improvement of the general infrastructure. Although the basis of tourism development in rural destinations is represented by natural resources, destination management must have an innovative approach when defining the developmental strategy and when applying the principles of sustainable development in order to create a sustainable competitive position on the tourist market (Campón-Cerro et al. 2017a). Tourism activities in rural areas have a direct relation to the sustainable development, that is, they are complementary to them in order to protect natural and cultural resources, establishing a balance between the key dimensions of sustainable development (Čurčić et al. 2021). Ryglová et al. (2018) emphasize that the research of socio-economic, socio-cultural, and ecological sustainability in case of rural destinations represents a significant source of competitive advantage because in this type of destination tourism is actually the driver of economic development.

1.3. Community Attachment

Analyzing the residents' attachment to the local community and its resources contributes towards better understanding how residents view tourism impacts, which can be a very relevant factor in ensuring the connection among residents and the sustainable tourism development (Sakata and Prideaux 2013; Demirović Bajrami et al. 2020). Community attachment implies the level of integrating individuals into the community and the feeling they develop towards the community (McCool and Martin 1994). The complexity of this term is related to the existence of various aspects of the development of residents as personalities and characteristics of the community itself, which can influence the lesser or greater level of development of commitment to the domicile (personal experience, customs, degree of community's economic development, number of inhabitants, geographical characteristics of the place, personal affinities, inheritance, etc.) (Adongo et al. 2017). The degree of attachment to the local community by residents is directly related to the benefits they derive from the development of tourism in the place where they live, which is why this category has a pronounced impact on the successful development of tourism within the community (Blešić et al. 2022). Certain studies indicate that commitment to the community is more pronounced among residents who perceive tourism benefits for local community more positively than other community residents (Lee et al. 2010; Chen and Chen 2010; Lee 2013). It is also more likely that those residents will support the sustainable development of tourism due to the benefits realized by the destination as well as the impact of tourism on their quality of life (Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Than et al. 2020). According to Campón-Cerro et al. (2017b), the perceptions of rural residents, commitment to the community and the quality of living conditions in the local community are significant predictors of the support that residents provide to tourism activities. Lee's research (2013) pointed to the fact that the benefits

that the residents are experiencing from tourism development are affecting the relationship among the community attachment and support for sustainable development. Similar conclusions are presented in the research conducted by Meimand et al. (2017), which highlights the fact that community attachment affects the way residents support tourism development, especially in rural areas. Accordingly, the authors defined the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1: Community attachment positively affects perceived benefits of residents in rural tourist destinations.

Hypothesis H2: Community attachment positively affects the sustainable development of rural destinations.

1.4. Resident Support

The residents' support is one of the very common research topics in tourism studies because members of the local community are one of the most relevant interest groups in the tourism development (Tepavčević et al. 2019; Demirović Bajrami et al. 2020). Social exchange theory states that residents will provide significantly higher level of support to tourism development if their benefits will be higher in relation to the actual costs (Ap 1992; Meimand et al. 2017; Chang 2018). According to Ap (1990), the analysis of tourism impacts on local community and residents' perception represents a necessity in defining future tourism developmental plans. Taking into consideration that the support of residents implies them participating in defining and implementing ideas and programs for tourism development at the local level (Than et al. 2020), very often the degree of real involvement affects the perception of the benefits that the population derives from the tourism development activities in the place where they live. Residents who have positive perceptions of the impact of tourism will certainly show bigger support for tourism development (Brida et al. 2011; Nunkoo and Gursoy 2012) and will express a greater willingness to interact with tourists (Chen and Chen 2010). Also, the commitment and involvement of members of the local community as well as support for adapting sustainability principles is influenced by the benefits received by residents (Nicholas et al. 2009; Lee 2013). Residents' support to the tourism development also depends on the degree of their involvement in the development of this activity (Long et al. 1990), which is why the authors defined the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H3: Residents' support positively affects the perceived benefit of residents in rural tourist destinations.

Hypothesis H4: Residents' support positively affects sustainable development of rural tourist destinations.

1.5. Perceived Benefits

Tourism can affect the development of the local community and life quality of residents in several different ways, which are divided into economic, socio-cultural, and environmental ones (Mason 2003; Muresan et al. 2016). From the economic aspect, tourism development reflects in the creation of opportunities for employment and additional income, but there may also be an increase in fiscal burdens, inflation, and local government debt. Also, tourism can contribute to the affirmation of local culture and the

local community lifestyle through tourism and also to building the cultural identity (Podovac et al. 2019). The negative socio-cultural impact of tourism is manifested through the development of criminal acts, loss of local identity, suppression of cultural values through the development of activities that are not typical for the local community, etc. When discussing the ecological aspect of tourism development, this activity can contribute to the protection of nature and landscape, flora and fauna, while on the other hand negative ecological impacts are manifested through the pollution of nature and resources and the destruction of wild animal species (Liu et al. 1987; Tatoğlu et al. 2000; Vieira et al. 2016; Podovac et al. 2019). Residents of rural areas are very sensitive to the transformation of their community due to the development of tourism, especially when this activity changes the basic features and characteristics of the place.

Various factors can influence how benefits from tourism development in rural areas are being perceived, such as socio-demographic characteristics, financial dependence on tourism, the stage of destination life cycle, proximity of the place of residence to the maintenance center tourist activities, etc. (McGehee and Andereck 2004; Ko and Stewart 2002; Látková et al. 2012). Some studies especially point out that residents have developed attitudes about the tourism impacts in regard to the employment of women from rural areas and the economic revitalization of these areas, but they also believe that tourism does not create negative effects in terms of the development of illegal activities (Huttasin 2008; Külekçi et al. 2012). The rural population very often does not have a sufficiently developed awareness of the importance of tourism development due to the insufficient involvement in its development in their place and its benefits for the local community (Bouchon and Rawat 2016). Vuković et al. (2020) emphasized that the personal benefits realized by residents are positively related to the perception of the impact of environmental tourism impacts. Bearing in mind the defined goal of the research, the authors defined the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H5: Perceived benefits positively affect the sustainability of rural tourist destinations.

2. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the theoretical background and defined aim of research, the authors conducted an empirical study in February 2023 on a sample of 123 residents of rural areas of Serbia chosen on case-by-case basis. A questionnaire from the research of Than et al. (2020) was adapted to the defined research subject (Appendix 1). The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts: questions about socio-demographic characteristics and questions which are focused on the research subject. In this more specific part of questionnaire, respondents evaluated the level of agreement with the items related to community attachment, resident support perceived benefits, sustainability of rural areas (socio-economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability). A 1-5 Likert scale was applied (1 - I completely disagree to 5 - I completely agree), and Confirmatory analysis and PLS-PM analysis were conducted. The authors identified the univariate extreme values through a box-plot for each individual variable. The Cooks' distance indicator was used with the aim of identifying the multivariate extreme values. The authors identified 14 multivariate extreme values and removed them before the analysis, and they were not included in the descriptive statistical analysis. Use of PLS-PM in our case is justified

because this is a non-parametric technique, based on variances and with fewer model parameters and therefore requires a smaller sample. In the context of our research, PLS-PM is observed as a series of multiple linear regressions, so the sample size is determined in that way - as the sample size required for the regression with the largest number of independent variables. This is consistent with the research of Chin and Newsted (1999). Confirmatory analysis was conducted on the final number of 109 respondents whereby it was established that between them was no missing data.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

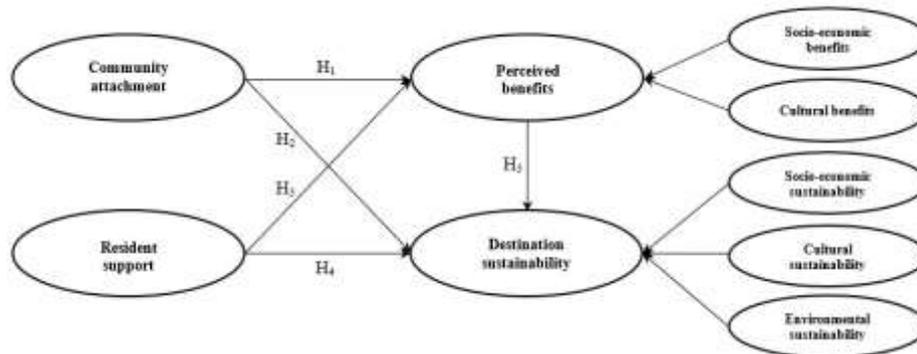
3.1. Descriptive statistics

Based on the conducted survey, 60.2% of the respondents are female, while male respondents make up 39.0% of the sample. One respondent did not want to declare his/her gender. According to age, 27.6% of the respondents are classified to the age group 18-25 years, and 24.4% belong to the age group 35-44. According to the degree of education, 31.7% of respondents have completed doctoral studies, while 26.0% of them have completed university studies. According to the professional status, 66.7% of the respondents stated that they were employed.

3.2. Measurement

The authors conducted a Partial least square path analysis in which they used the R programming language version 4.0.5 (package psplm version 0.4.9). The conceptual research model, which was developed for investigating the impact of the support and commitment of the local population on the rural destination's sustainable development in Serbia is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual research model



Source: Authors' research based on theoretical analysis

The validity and discriminativeness of the latent variables were tested by calculating the Cronbach alpha and Rho coefficients. These analyzes were performed by comparing the loading of the indicator with its own factor, but also through the loading with other

factors. The results of mentioned coefficient are higher than the minimum threshold for all constructs. Also, the results of AVE values are higher than 0.5 which is why it was concluded that on average over 50% of the variance of the indicator is caused by the influence of the latent variable, and not by chance.

Table 1: **PLS regression**

Items	Cronbach alpha	Rho	AVE
Community attachment	0,943	0,952	0.689
Resident support	0,791	0,865	0.613
Socio-economic benefits	0,895	0,924	0.709
Cultural benefits	0,929	0,949	0.824
Perceived benefits	0,924	0,937	0.623
Socio-economic sustainability	0,958	0,964	0.726
Cultural sustainability	0,926	0,948	0.819
Environmental sustainability	0,926	0,947	0.818
Destination sustainability	0,967	0,970	0.640

Source: Authors' research

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between the constructs which was calculated based of the outcomes that are obtained by applying PLS regression.

Table 2: **Correlation coefficients between constructs**

Items	CA	RS	SEB	CB	PB	SES	CS	ES	DS
CA	1.000								
RS	0.687	1.000							
SEB	0.575	0.507	1.000						
CB	0.541	0.570	0.639	1.000					
PB	0.617	0.595	0.909	0.901	1.000				
SES	0.586	0.596	0.775	0.735	0.835	1.000			
CS	0.528	0.527	0.588	0.746	0.736	0.768	1.000		
ES	0.419	0.480	0.410	0.605	0.559	0.654	0.805	1.000	
DS	0.586	0.606	0.712	0.775	0.821	0.950	0.909	0.835	1.000

Note: CA - Community attachment; RS - Resident support; SEB - Socio-economic benefits; CB - Cultural benefits; PB - Perceived benefits; SES - Socio-economic sustainability; CS - Cultural sustainability; ES - Environmental sustainability; DS - Destination sustainability.

Source: Authors' research

According to the results from the previous table, the model has excellent discriminating power. The indicators are arranged in groups in such a way that each indicator has a higher correlation coefficient (loading) in relation to "its" factor than to the others, that is, the constructs are well differentiated from each other. Also, the loading in relation to its factor is above 0.5 for each indicator, which means that in each of them the hidden factor explains more than 50% of the variation in the respondents' answers to the questions (Appendix 2).

3.3. Structural model

The predictive capabilities of the model are shown in Table 3, where the results indicate that the model explains the variables Perceived benefits (PB) and Destination Sustainability (DS) very well (0.999), and the other variables are explained very poorly. The average redundancy column presents the percentage of variance of the dependent variable that is explained by its independent latent variables, i.e., the ability of the independent latent variables to predict the value of the dependent variable (Radić and Lück 2018). According to the data from the column, we see that the power of the model for predicting the variables Perceived benefit and Destination Sustainability is good. The GoFindex is a global measure of the model's predictive power and is 0.832, which is higher than the 0.7 limit that usually indicates high predictive power.

Table 3: Review of the structural model

	Type of variable	R ²	Block communality	Average redundancy
Community attachment	Exogenous	0.000	0.689	0.000
Resident support	Exogenous	0.000	0.613	0.000
Socio-economic benefits	Exogenous	0.000	0.709	0.000
Cultural benefits	Exogenous	0.000	0.824	0.000
Perceived benefits	Endogenous	0.999	0.623	0.623
Socio-economic sustainability	Exogenous	0.000	0.726	0.000
Cultural sustainability	Exogenous	0.000	0.819	0.000
Environmental sustainability	Exogenous	0.000	0.818	0.000
Destination sustainability	Endogenous	0.999	0.640	0.640

Source: Authors' research

The total and partial influence of the variables (effects) are given in table 4.

Table 4: Influence of the structural model

Trajectory	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
CA → PB	-0.0007		-0.0007
CA → DS	0.0007		0.0007
RS → PB	0.0017		0.0017
RS → DS	0.0004		0.0004
SEB → PB	0.5640		0.5640
SEB → DS		0.0007	0.0007
CB → PB	0.5340		0.5340
CB → DS		0.0007	0.0007
PB → DS	0.0012		0.0012
SES → DS	0.5930		0.5930
CS → DS	0.2621		0.2621
ES → DS	0.2356		0.2356

Source: Authors' research

The bootstrap verification method was used in order to perform model verification and the results of the coefficient test are presented in the Table 5.

Table 5: **Bootstrap path coefficients**

	Original	Mean.Boot	Std.Error	perc.025	perc.975
CA → PB	-0.0007	0.000	0.002	-0.002	0.005
CA → DS	0.0007	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.003
RS → PB	0.0017	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.007
RS → DS	0.0004	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.003
SEB → PB	0.5640	0.563	0.021	0.523	0.599
SEB → DS	0.0007	0.540	0.029	0.492	0.606
CB → PB	0.5340	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.007
CB → DS	0.0007	0.592	0.016	0.564	0.624
PB → DS	0.0012	0.261	0.011	0.242	0.282
SES → DS	0.5930	0.236	0.012	0.212	0.257
CS → DS	0.2621	0.000	0.002	-0.002	0.005
ES → DS	0.2356	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.003

Source: Authors' research

The table shows that no confidence interval touches zero on the paths Socio-economic benefits → Perceived benefits, Socio-economic benefits → Destination Sustainability, Cultural benefits → Destination Sustainability Perceived benefits → Destination Sustainability and Socio-economic sustainability → Destination Sustainability, which means that these trajectories are statistically significant.

Table 6: **Results of hypothesis testing**

Hypotheses	Results
Hypothesis H1: Community attachment positively affects the perceived benefits of residents in rural tourist destinations.	Not supported
Hypothesis H2: Community attachment positively affects the sustainable development of rural destinations.	Not supported
Hypothesis H3: Residents' support positively affects the perceived benefit of residents in rural tourist destinations.	Not supported
Hypothesis H4: Residents' support positively affects the sustainable development of rural tourist destinations.	Not supported
Hypothesis H5: Perceived benefits positively affect the sustainability of rural tourist destinations.	Supported

Source: Authors' research

The research results indicate that community attachment doesn't affect positively on the perceived benefits of residents in rural tourist destinations of the Republic of Serbia (H1), nor that community attachment has a positive effect on the sustainable development of rural destinations in Serbia (H2), which indicates that that these two hypotheses were not confirmed. However, some researches have determined intense connection among attachment to the local community and the perceived benefits of residents in rural tourist destinations, which can be a consequence of the greater connection of residents with the

local environment implying greater awareness of the benefits of its development (López et al. 2018; Than et al. 2020; Demirović Bajrami et al. 2020).

The results of the study by Sher et al. (2015) proved that community attachment affects residents' support for adapting sustainability concept in tourism which may indicate that residents are motivated by the benefits they experience from tourism development based on sustainable principles. The obtained research results did not support the hypothesis H3, which is defined to examine the existence of a positive impact of resident support on the perceived benefits of residents in rural tourist destinations of Serbia. However, in their study, Jiang et al. (2023) established a positive connection between the support and participation of residents in the development of tourism and the perceived benefits that residents derive from the development of this activity.

Demirović Bajrami et al. (2020) have indicated that for a positive relationship between resident support and perceived tourism benefits, the basic prerequisite is that the tourism development policy is based on transparency, as well as that the benefits must be equally directed at different layers of the population. However, Nicholas et al. (2009) did not identify a connection among the community support and sustainable tourism development, which was also proven in this paper, which led to the rejection of H4.

According to the results obtained in his study, Lee (2013) concluded that the support of members of the local community does not have a significant impact on the sustainable development of tourism if residents do not participate in the planning process, and this conclusion is consistent with the results of the conducted research. The obtained research results confirmed the accuracy of H5, which examines the existence of a positive influence of perceived benefits from tourism development on the sustainability of rural tourist destinations in Serbia. The conclusion reached by the authors is in accordance with the study of Muresan et al. (2016), who determined that the tourism impacts on the development of domestic handicrafts and the improvement of the conditions of social life and facilities influence the local attitude to support sustainable development in rural area. Similar results were presented in a study on the impact of residents' perceptions on support for tourism development in a national park in Vietnam, where Long and Kayat (2011) pointed out that residents have a positive attitude towards tourism development, especially in terms of tourism impacts on quality of life and environment.

CONCLUSION

Examining the residents' attitudes on the impacts of tourism development in rural areas is very important topic, which has already been published in several different studies when it comes to the Republic of Serbia (Košić et al. 2017; Podovac et al. 2019; Tepavčević et al. 2019; Demirović Bajrami et al. 2020; Vuković et al. 2020). Far less attention has been devoted to examining the impact of residents' attachment to the local community on the development of rural destinations in the Republic of Serbia, while respecting the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, the authors conducted a survey of the attitudes of residents of rural areas of Serbia, where they primarily addressed the important aspects of the research with an adequate theoretical approach, on which the empirical analysis was based. The contribution of this paper is reflected in

highlighting the local population as one of the most significant interest groups in the development of rural destinations with special reference to the Republic of Serbia and its rural areas. The authors have systematized the most important publications on this topic so far with the aim of objectively and completely analyzing the views of residents on the impact of their support and commitment to the development of rural destinations in the Republic of Serbia based on the principles of sustainability. A practical contribution was made for tourism development planners in rural areas, considering that the obtained results can serve as a basis for defining policies and strategies for the development of rural destinations in Serbia in order to ensure long-term beneficial effects for members of the local community. During the theoretical analysis, data collection, data processing, and interpretation of the results, the authors identified several limitations of the research, which further provides a wide range of possibilities for future analyses. One of the primary limitations refers to the relatively small number of respondents, which implies conducting the research on a larger sample of respondents, as well as identifying and examining the most sensitive population groups such as the elderly population, young people, women entrepreneurs, farmers, etc. On the other hand, the respondents answered a large number of questions, respectively, they expressed the degree of agreement with a large number of statements, which is why future research should focus on a smaller number of questions. Also, in the following research the authors will focus on determining the actual level of development of rural tourism in the destinations where this research was conducted. Additional focus will be given on determining whether the analyzed destinations have a long tradition of rural tourism development. An important limitation of the paper refers to the fact that the authors failed to determine to what extent the development of rural tourism was achieved in the destinations where the residents were surveyed, which developed the offer of rural tourism and whether these are destinations with a long tradition or not. Future research should also focus on examining the attitudes of tourism development planners on the degree of involvement and the importance of support that the local population provides and can provide to the development of the place where they live.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Items	Indicators
Community attachment	
CA.1	We believe that life in the region has great meaning.
CA.2	We feel connected to this destination.
CA.3	We feel that we really belong to this destination.
CA.4	We have many friends/family members here.
CA.5	We feel that we like living here more than other places.
CA.6	We think that the housing infrastructure is quite good.
CA.7	We prefer living here than in other places.
CA.8	We like living in this community (with those around us) than in other communities.
CA.9	Our family is determined to live here.
CA.10	We have the feeling that this place is a part of our lives.
Resident support	
RS.1	We support local development based on the ideas of sustainable development.
RS.2	We participated in actions related to the local sustainable development of tourism.
RS.3	We often participate in cultural and touristic activities with tourists.
RS.4	We are eager to advertise our place anywhere.
Perceived benefits	
Socio-economic benefits	
SEB.1	There are more job opportunities here.
SEB.2	Local products are easier to consume thanks to tourism.
SEB.3	Tourists who come here are ready to spend a lot of money on their tourist activities.
SEB.4	Business activities and small businesses develop better thanks to tourism.
SEB.5	The conditions of public facilities have improved thanks to tourism.
Cultural benefits	
CB.1	Our residents want to preserve our cultural specificity.
CB.2	Our local residents focus on promoting cultural activities for tourism.
CB.3	We find an increase in the number of cultural exchange activities with tourists.
CB.4	Our residents feel a greater desire to protect cultural values and beliefs thanks to tourism.
Destination sustainability	
Socio-economic sustainability	
SES.1	Local businesses have prospered thanks to tourism.
SES.2	Residents have higher incomes thanks to tourism.
SES.3	There are more local employment opportunities thanks to tourism.
SES.4	Your family income is more stable and sustainable thanks to tourism.
SES.5	The location combines the development of tourism and the economic development of the community.
SES.6	Local tourism activities have brought many benefits compared to disadvantages.
SES.7	The locality has developed positive programs and plans for social improvement.
SES.8	People are better empowered to participate in the planning of local development policies.
SES.9	The infrastructure system has been improved.
SES.10	Our local community has paid more attention to social issues.
Cultural sustainability	
CS.1	Preservation and management of local heritage are better.
CS.2	The general cultural values of the community are well protected.
CS.3	Tourist activities are developed in accordance with local conditions.
Environmental sustainability	
ES.1	The local habitat is well protected.
ES.2	Environmental pollution of the living environment is controlled and reduced.
ES.3	The local natural landscape is well protected.
ES.4	Local environmental protection activities are gaining attention.

Appendix 2. Table 1: Loadings and cross-loadings

Variable	Block	CA	RS	SEB	CB	PB	SES	CS	ES	DS
ca1	CA	0.787	0.582	0.573	0.456	0.569	0.560	0.409	0.314	0.515
ca2	CA	0.844	0.590	0.573	0.462	0.573	0.540	0.476	0.381	0.536
ca3	CA	0.861	0.633	0.495	0.489	0.544	0.524	0.513	0.412	0.544
ca4	CA	0.759	0.523	0.378	0.406	0.433	0.483	0.414	0.329	0.473
ca5	CA	0.860	0.569	0.454	0.467	0.509	0.441	0.414	0.351	0.455
ca7	CA	0.859	0.543	0.503	0.401	0.500	0.421	0.410	0.329	0.436
ca8	CA	0.884	0.600	0.496	0.451	0.524	0.492	0.480	0.344	0.501
ca9	CA	0.766	0.538	0.350	0.459	0.445	0.453	0.407	0.336	0.456
ca10	CA	0.840	0.536	0.431	0.439	0.480	0.436	0.401	0.324	0.441
rs1	RS	0.653	0.760	0.620	0.459	0.598	0.533	0.449	0.332	0.514
rs2	RS	0.424	0.759	0.253	0.393	0.356	0.424	0.378	0.386	0.442
rs3	RS	0.428	0.826	0.283	0.522	0.442	0.499	0.450	0.451	0.521
rs4	RS	0.623	0.786	0.368	0.392	0.419	0.378	0.351	0.334	0.396
dek1	DEK	0.465	0.410	0.739	0.545	0.712	0.591	0.475	0.389	0.568
dek2	DEK	0.511	0.397	0.880	0.528	0.781	0.642	0.472	0.269	0.570
dek3	DEK	0.442	0.355	0.792	0.510	0.721	0.573	0.456	0.312	0.534
dek4	DEK	0.473	0.445	0.882	0.522	0.780	0.693	0.492	0.359	0.626
dek5	DEK	0.526	0.516	0.904	0.584	0.827	0.748	0.575	0.398	0.690
kk1	KK	0.525	0.456	0.538	0.883	0.780	0.577	0.603	0.482	0.615
kk2	KK	0.507	0.566	0.578	0.927	0.828	0.712	0.749	0.590	0.759
kk3	KK	0.462	0.507	0.622	0.891	0.832	0.702	0.655	0.544	0.717
kk4	KK	0.473	0.538	0.580	0.930	0.830	0.673	0.697	0.577	0.719
dek1	PK	0.465	0.410	0.739	0.545	0.712	0.591	0.475	0.389	0.568
dek2	PK	0.511	0.397	0.880	0.528	0.781	0.642	0.472	0.269	0.570
dek3	PK	0.442	0.355	0.792	0.510	0.721	0.573	0.456	0.312	0.534
dek4	PK	0.473	0.445	0.882	0.522	0.780	0.693	0.492	0.359	0.626
dek5	PK	0.526	0.516	0.904	0.584	0.827	0.748	0.575	0.398	0.690
kk1	PK	0.525	0.456	0.538	0.883	0.780	0.577	0.603	0.482	0.615
kk2	PK	0.507	0.566	0.578	0.927	0.828	0.712	0.749	0.590	0.759
kk3	PK	0.462	0.507	0.622	0.891	0.832	0.702	0.655	0.544	0.717
kk4	PK	0.473	0.538	0.580	0.930	0.830	0.673	0.697	0.577	0.719
ses1	SES	0.467	0.491	0.655	0.534	0.659	0.782	0.534	0.454	0.712
ses2	SES	0.519	0.526	0.770	0.601	0.759	0.864	0.565	0.481	0.776
ses3	SES	0.509	0.533	0.707	0.600	0.723	0.829	0.505	0.407	0.722
ses4	SES	0.551	0.529	0.665	0.636	0.719	0.875	0.642	0.584	0.827
ses5	SES	0.484	0.519	0.628	0.621	0.690	0.913	0.642	0.574	0.846
ses6	SES	0.593	0.548	0.658	0.631	0.713	0.891	0.699	0.594	0.854
ses7	SES	0.520	0.547	0.685	0.676	0.753	0.922	0.741	0.601	0.884
ses8	SES	0.492	0.502	0.613	0.659	0.702	0.870	0.752	0.652	0.867
ses9	SES	0.398	0.397	0.681	0.631	0.726	0.794	0.689	0.532	0.778
ses10	SES	0.453	0.483	0.555	0.660	0.671	0.763	0.738	0.650	0.800
ko1	KO	0.492	0.482	0.561	0.693	0.691	0.731	0.864	0.679	0.822
ko2	KO	0.487	0.454	0.513	0.675	0.655	0.696	0.933	0.732	0.831
ko3	KO	0.464	0.466	0.543	0.674	0.671	0.684	0.920	0.717	0.817
ko4	KO	0.468	0.504	0.511	0.657	0.645	0.670	0.902	0.787	0.820
ozs1	OZS	0.457	0.463	0.422	0.583	0.554	0.634	0.781	0.905	0.795
ozs2	OZS	0.315	0.396	0.339	0.484	0.453	0.574	0.665	0.916	0.731
ozs3	OZS	0.342	0.410	0.357	0.553	0.501	0.533	0.726	0.916	0.723
ozs4	OZS	0.395	0.460	0.362	0.565	0.510	0.618	0.734	0.881	0.767
seo1	OD	0.467	0.491	0.655	0.534	0.659	0.782	0.534	0.454	0.712
seo2	OD	0.519	0.526	0.770	0.601	0.759	0.864	0.565	0.481	0.776

Appendix 2. Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Block	CA	RS	SEB	CB	PB	SES	CS	ES	DS
seo3	OD	0.509	0.533	0.707	0.600	0.723	0.829	0.505	0.407	0.722
seo4	OD	0.551	0.529	0.665	0.636	0.719	0.875	0.642	0.584	0.827
seo5	OD	0.484	0.519	0.628	0.621	0.690	0.913	0.642	0.574	0.846
seo6	OD	0.593	0.548	0.658	0.631	0.713	0.891	0.699	0.594	0.854
seo7	OD	0.520	0.547	0.685	0.676	0.753	0.922	0.741	0.601	0.884
seo8	OD	0.492	0.502	0.613	0.659	0.702	0.870	0.752	0.652	0.867
seo9	OD	0.398	0.397	0.681	0.631	0.726	0.794	0.689	0.532	0.778
seo10	OD	0.453	0.483	0.555	0.660	0.671	0.763	0.738	0.650	0.800
cs1	CS	0.492	0.482	0.561	0.693	0.691	0.731	0.864	0.679	0.822
cs2	CS	0.487	0.454	0.513	0.675	0.655	0.696	0.933	0.732	0.831
cs3	CS	0.464	0.466	0.543	0.674	0.671	0.684	0.920	0.717	0.817
cs4	CS	0.468	0.504	0.511	0.657	0.645	0.670	0.902	0.787	0.820
es1	ES	0.457	0.463	0.422	0.583	0.554	0.634	0.781	0.905	0.795
es2	ES	0.315	0.396	0.339	0.484	0.453	0.574	0.665	0.916	0.731
es3	ES	0.342	0.410	0.357	0.553	0.501	0.533	0.726	0.916	0.723
es4	ES	0.395	0.460	0.362	0.565	0.510	0.618	0.734	0.881	0.767

Source: Calculation by plspm version 0.4.9.

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