

Basic Directions and Possibilities of Sustainable Development of Tourism from the Aspect of Economic Indicators of Sustainability – Mountains Case Study

Milena Turčinović^A, Aleksandra Vujko^{A*}, Miroslav Knežević^A

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Abstract

The paper deals with the concept of sustainable tourism in mountainous, rural areas of Serbia and its economic indicators, i.e., the impact of economic indicators of sustainability on the local community, to point out the potential directions of tourism development. The research was conducted in selected rural areas of Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Stara Planina, and Fruška Gora. Respondents expressed their opinions on the issue of sustainable tourism development, how sustainable tourism has contributed to the local community and the local population, which elements of sustainability have been fulfilled, and in what way. It was concluded that residents of rural mountain destinations believe that tourism directly and positively affects the sustainable development of rural destinations. Development indicators such as Income, Standard of living, employment possibility, Tourism, Investments, Women's entrepreneurship, and women empowerment, have shown a significant increase from the tourism development. Thus confirming the initial hypothesis H that the economic indicators of sustainable tourism development provide a better quality of life for local communities.

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainable tourism, economic indicators of sustainable tourism, rural development

Introduction

If we were to say that sustainable development (Ruiz-Real et al., 2022) represents the proper functioning of the system over a long period and that the essence of sustainable development is meeting the needs of current generations, without impairing the ability to meet the needs of generations yet to come, then we would actually confirm the opinion of the theorists (Fallon, Schofield, 2006; Ahmadi et al., 2018; An, Aaron, 2020) that the most important for a country are those

^A Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Singidunum University, 11000, Belgrade, Serbia

* Corresponding author: aleksandravujko@yahoo.com

forms of tourism that enable planned, responsible and sustainable use of resources. In order for tourism to be sustainable, it is necessary to establish a balance between economic, ecological and social indicators of development that is, taking care of environmental protection, improving the quality of life and economic development (Nunkoo et al., 2020). According to Quaranta et al. (2016) indicators of economic sustainability in tourism indicate the possibility of responsible acquisition of economic profit and improvement of living standards by the local population. Ecological indicators indicate a responsible use of resources, which is two-way and to be sustainable, must go from both sides, both tourists and residents (Nunkoo, Ramkissoon, 2012; Boley et al., 2018), while Petelca and Garbuz (2020), indicators of sociological sustainability they imply interpersonal relations that ensure the improvement of the quality of life of the local community. Sustainable tourism represents a development model that will bring indicators of sustainable development into balance with satisfied users of tourist services - tourists (Germanovich et al., 2020). In the opinion of Chen et al. (2023), sustainable tourism allows meeting the tourist needs of modern tourists without jeopardizing the resources necessary to meet future tourists' needs.

Sustainable tourism has numerous positive consequences for the local community (Gao, Wu, 2017). Some of them are greater employment opportunities. There is the development of female entrepreneurship, which is very important because, in this way, sustainable tourism contributes to the empowerment of women (Vujko et al., 2018). Today, more and more women are investing in their education and experience, which was not the case in previous years. The number of women with higher education is significantly higher today, which contributes to the self-awareness of the female population when it comes to the business world. Women get the opportunity to occupy high business positions, have the right to make important business decisions, to define business goals and strategies (Maksimović et al., 2019).

The standard of living of the local population rises, the incomes are therefore also higher as sustainable tourism develops (Huo et al., 2023). A high standard of living for the local population implies the overall living conditions of the people of a local community. What are the living conditions, working, and social conditions of a nation, we find out thanks to the new standard of living of the population. If all three components of the standard of living are satisfactory, it can be concluded that the standard of living of the local population is good or very good Kachniewska (2015).

All of the above are some of the positive economic factors of sustainable tourism, where one must not forget another very important element, namely the investments of the local population, which are necessary and constant, thanks to which they achieve numerous benefits (Balaguer, Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Ling et al., 2023). In different ways, sustainable tourism contributes to the preservation of the culture, traditions, and customs of a community. A large part of the tourist offers in rural areas (Ćurčić et al., 2021) is represented by handmade products (magnets, sculptural and pottery items, handmade woolen clothing, various spices, spreads, drinks and food, and similarly). Tourists get to know the way of life of the local community, while the local population makes economic gains (Blake, 2009; Quaranta et al., 2016). This approach to the sustainable development of tourism enables the advancement and development of the tourist destination, all with the help of the local population, which is part of the overall tourist offer. All this contributes to the development of rural destinations that represent an escape from the everyday noise and hustle and bustle of urban and suburban areas. Rural areas due to their characteristics, untouched nature, less developed infrastructure and superstructure, numerous natural and anthropogenic resources, and a small number of inhabitants, guarantee peace and rest for tourists and residents from the surrounding, developed areas (Lindberg et al., 2021; Ruiz-Real, 2022; Ma et al., 2022).

The subject of the research is the mountain area of Serbia, namely its four most attractive mountains: Kopaonik, Fruška gora, Zlatibor, and Stara Planina. The starting hypothesis H is the statement that the economic indicators of sustainable development of tourism ensure a better quality of life for the local communities of the mentioned mountain areas. In this context, components such as tradition, culture, customs, language, writing, and ethical values of the local community stand out, because it is these components that represent the attraction factor, and their responsible management achieves the desired effects of tourism development as well as attracting tourists. The conclusion was reached that in the investigated areas there are numerous opportunities for investments that will contribute to the sustainable development of tourism, without damaging the real values of the rural areas of Serbia. Managing the mentioned destinations properly will contribute to the authenticity of the entire tourist offer of Serbia, as one of the potentially leading tourist destinations in Europe.

Methodology

The local population of the municipality of Čajetina, the municipality of Raška (Kopaonik), the settlements of Čerević and Banoštor on Fruška gora and the village of Gostuša on Stara Planina were examined, between October 2023. and February 2024. The research used economic indicators of sustainable tourism development as parameters for measuring the quality of life of the local population and their awareness of the importance and the impacts that tourism has and can have on the rural development of destinations. Variables such as income, standard of living, employment opportunities, tourism, investments, and female entrepreneurship were used. Respondents were expected to rank the mentioned influences that certain attitudes have on their lives, using a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1967), from negative to positive. In order to compare the answers of the respondents concerning the gender of the respondents, the Pearson Chi-Square test was used. For statistically significant differences in answers, those with a value of p less than 0.05 are considered. With higher values, it can be stated that there is no statistical significance in relation to the sex of the respondents.

The local population of 4 mountain areas in Serbia was taken as the territorial scope of the research. Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Fruška gora and Stara planina.

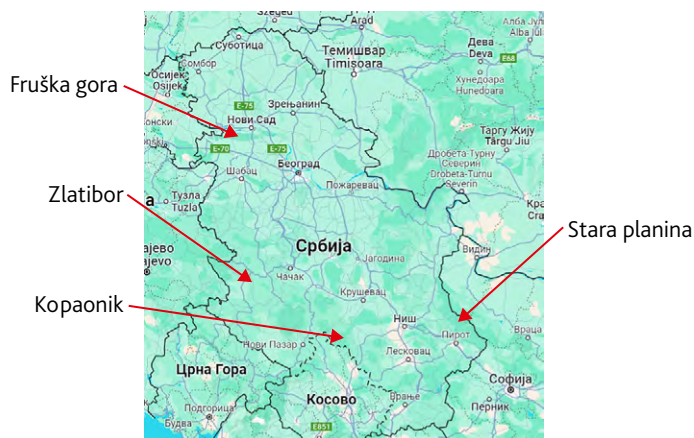


Figure 1. Map of destinations

Source: www.google.com

Zlatibor is located in the southwestern part of Serbia, at an altitude of 700 to 1500m, 238km from Belgrade, near Užice and Čajetina. The highest mountain peaks are Tornik (1496m) and Čigota (1422m). Zlatibor has developed into a very popular summer and winter tourist center, with the longest tourist tradition of mountain tourism in Serbia (Jovanović, 2020). Zlatibor is a tourist center that offers tourists tourist attractions such as a tour of the cowboy town “El Paso City in Vodice”, a tour of the Stopića cave, the Gostilje natural waterfall, Ribničko lake, a ride on the longest gondola in Europe, a tour of the lake on Obudojevica, and the like.

Kopaonik is the mountain with the highest peak in the Central part of Serbia. It extends along a branched ridge with a length of 82 kilometers, in the direction from the foothills above Kosovska Mitrovica, to the northwest over a series of peaks higher than 1600 meters, to the highest part of the so-called Ravni Kopaonik massif with the peaks: Gobelja (1934 m), Karaman Vučak (1936 m), Suvo Rudište (1976 m) and Pančicev vrh (2017 m). Kopaonik is a tourist center that offers tourists tourist attractions such as Đorov bridge, Kadijevac, the Kozja glava picnic area, a tour of the Kopaonik reserve (Bele stene, Jankove bare, Jelak, Duboka, and other), the connector of the Heavenly Chair, the amusement park on Kopaonik and the like (Jovanović, 2020).

Stara Planina is a mountainous area in Eastern Serbia on the border with Bulgaria, which extends in four municipalities: Zaječar, Knjaževac, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad. Today, Stara Planina is an important tourist center of Serbia (Jovanović, 2020) which offers tourists the chance to enjoy the natural beauty of Piljski and Čungulski waterfalls, Temštica Canyon, Kozije kamen - Zavojsko lake, a tour of the Bishop's plaque and the Cave Church of Saints Peter and Paul from the 13th century, and more.

Fruška gora covers an area of 25,525 ha, by a much wider zone on the southern side of the Pannonian Plain, along the very bank of the Danube (Jovanović, 2020), with the highest peak Crveni čot (539 m) and other significant peaks - Stražilovo (321 m) and Iriški venac (451 m), (Jovanović, 2020). Fruška Gora represents the tourist center of Serbia, which offers fans of religious tourism the opportunity to visit the Fruška Gora Monasteries: Šišatovac, Krušedol, Grgeteg... In addition to the Fruška Gora Monastery, it offers tourist attractions such as: a tour of the Fruška Gora Lakes, the Chestnut Lookout, the Eagle's Battleground, and more.

The second part of the research was a SWOT analysis. It is an analysis that aims to identify business opportunities for the local community when tourism is viewed as an economic activity that the surveyed local population considers to be sustainable. The analysis was intended to encourage the local population to take action to achieve economic, ecological, and social benefits thanks to the development of sustainable tourism of the destination.

The SWOT analysis was done using the interview technique with eminent experts in the field of tourism: Vladimir Živanović, director of TO Zlatibor, dr Bojana Milovanović, director of JPNP Kopaonik, Goran Karadžić, director of JP Stara Planina and dr Nataša Pavlović, director of TO Vojvodina.

The paper started from the initial hypothesis H that the economic indicators of sustainable tourism development provide a better quality of life for the local communities of the mentioned mountain areas, which was intended to show that the local population is aware of the importance of development of tourism in rural destinations, as well as that rural tourism is sustainable, responsible and a desirable form of tourism that allows the development of rural destinations to take place in a planned and sustainable manner.

Results and discussion

The results of the survey include a total of 275 responses, of which 123 are answers from female respondents and 152 from male respondents (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	152	55,3
	Female	123	44,7
	Total	275	100,0

Based on the data from Table 1, the respondents were members of different genders. More than half of the respondents were men, while 44.7% of the respondents were women.

Table 2. Age group of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-15	6	2,2
	16-25	19	6,9
	26-35	79	28,7
	36-45	98	35,6
	46-55	56	20,4
	56-65	10	3,6
	Over 66	7	2,5
	Total	275	100,0

The data shown in Table 2 show that the respondents are members of different age groups, which means that the respondents responded from different points of view and that this research looked at the attitudes of employees and potential employees.

Table 3. Respondent's place of living

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Zlatibor	36	13,1
	Kopaonik	58	21,1
	Fruška gora	84	30,5
	Stara planina	97	35,3
	Total	275	100,0

Table 3 shows data on the territorial scope of the research. The research was conducted in rural areas of Serbia: Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Fruška gora, and Stara Planina. 35% of respondents were from the Stara Planina area, while the least number of respondents were from Zlatibor.

Table 4. *Income*

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Income	No change	12	15	27
	Better	15	1	16
	Much better	125	107	232
Total		152	123	275
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		11,045 ^a	2	,004

Looking at Table 4, it can be concluded that a large number of respondents believe that the sustainable development of tourism has influenced the increase in the income of the local community, while a smaller number of them conclude that there have been no changes. Satisfying tourist needs occupies a high position in people's perception. During the COVID pandemic, people were prevented from traveling to desired cross-border destinations, but due to a strong desire to satisfy their tourism needs, they began to travel within the borders of their country, which led to an unprecedented number of intercity tourism in Serbia (Vunjak et al., 2020). Domestic tourism reached its peak in that period. All this points to the fact that income from sustainable tourism is guaranteed. The results from the same table prove that there are significant statistical differences in the answers of both genders, that is, based on the answers, it can be concluded that male respondents to a greater extent believe that sustainable tourism has influenced the local population's total income.

Table 5. *Standard of living*

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Standard of living	No change	4	10	14
	Better	32	2	34
	Much better	116	111	227
Total		152	123	275
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		26,387 ^a	2	,000

Based on the data shown in Table 5, both male and female respondents believe that sustainable tourism has resulted in a much better standard of living for the local population. Sustainable tourism strives to preserve the environment, strengthen the economic situation of the local community, better quality education for the local population, all of which together contribute to a better lifestyle for the local population. Looking at the same table it can be concluded that there are clear statistical differences in the answers, depending on the respondent's gender. Female respondents to a lesser extent note that sustainable tourism has influenced the standard of living of the local community.

Table 6. *The employment possibility*

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Employment opportunities	No change		4	7	11
	Better		13	1	14
	Much better		135	115	250
Total			152	123	275
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	9,754 ^a	2	,008		

The data from Table 6 prove that sustainable tourism had a great impact on employment opportunities (only 4% of respondents believe that the development of sustainable tourism has not made any changes). The tourist market is constantly expanding. Companies from other economic activities are joining the tourist market, therefore the offer is increasing. Hotels, motels, agencies, ethnic villages, and the like are opening, increasing the need for human resources (Vujko et al., 2021; Kelfaoui et al., 2021). As the demand for tourist products grows, so does the supply of them, and therefore new jobs are created. Every newly opened position in one of the tourist companies represents a chance for employment for the local population.

The data from Table 6 (Pearson Chi-Square Test) indicate the existence of significant statistical differences in the responses of respondents of different genders. Male respondents believe that the development of sustainable tourism had a great impact on the opening of new employment opportunities.

Table 7. *Tourism*

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Tourism	No change		4	10	14
	Better		12	1	13
	Much better		136	112	248
Total			152	123	275
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	11,269 ^a	2	,004		

Table 7 indicates the view of respondents on the impact of sustainable tourism on the development of tourism as an economic activity. More than 90% of respondents believe that sustainable tourism has had a very good effect on tourism in general. This can be explained by the fact that an increasing number of people, large companies, hotel chains, and large tour operators have begun to take sustainability into account (Strzelecka et al., 2017). More and more attention is being paid to establishing a sustainable business. Legal regulations related to environmental protection are considered, so there is a “Green Key” certificate, which guarantees that the hotel company complies with legal regulations when talking about sustainability. Large tour operators have decided to do business only with such hotels and hotel chains, so a sustainable way of doing business has become a business decision that guarantees a high position in the tourist market (Wijijayanti, 2023). The only hotel in Serbia, outside of Belgrade, that has a “Green Key” certificate, is the “Mona” hotel on Zlatibor. After the renovation (2007), the hotel

strove to establish a sustainable business. Looking at Table 7 (Pearson Chi-Square Test), it can be concluded that there are significant statistical differences in the responses of respondents of the opposite sex. The female respondents do not believe that the development of sustainable tourism had a great impact on the development of tourism in a certain destination.

Table 8. Investments

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Investments	No change		9	3	12
	Better		78	91	169
	Much Better		65	29	94
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	14,895 ^a	2	,001		

Looking at Table 8, it can be concluded that a greater number of respondents believe that investments are better due to the development of sustainable tourism, while 94 respondents out of a total of 275 believe that investments are much better. Due to the wide range of possible tourist products and services, the local population can decide in which direction they want to invest money, knowledge, skills, time, and experience, and thus achieve economic and social-cultural profit. The data from Table 8 (Pearson Chi-Square Test) indicate significant statistical differences in the respondents' answers. Respondents of the opposite sex had different opinions about the impact of the development of sustainable tourism on the investments of the local population.

Table 9. Womens entrepreneurship

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Womens entrepreneurship	No change		15	5	20
	Better		66	82	148
	Much Better		71	36	107
Total			152	123	275
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	15,290 ^a	2	,000		

Table 9 shows us that almost 50% of male respondents believe that female entrepreneurship is much better developed, which was contributed by sustainable tourism. Thanks to tourism, women got the opportunity to develop their businesses and implement business plans (Vujko et al., 2018). Through handwork, home cooking, and authentic handmade products, women contribute to the overall offer of the tourist destination, thus, they get the opportunity to establish small or medium-sized businesses. Local cuisine is something that sets Serbia apart from other tourist destinations. Traditional dishes, spices, drinks are something that the rural areas of Serbia are recognizable by (Vujko et al., 2017). The women recognized this as a chance to start their own business and thereby achieve economic benefits and contribute to a better position of the destination in the minds of real and potential tourists. By looking at table 9 (Pearson Chi-Square Test), it can be concluded that there are significant statistical differenc-

es in the responses of respondents of different genders when talking about the impact of the development of sustainable tourism on the development of female entrepreneurship.

Table 10. Womens empowerment

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Womens empowerment	No change	13	4	17
	Better	72	81	153
	Much better	67	38	105
Total		152	123	275
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	10,361 ^a	2	,006	

Looking at Table 10 it can be concluded that respondents believe that sustainable tourism has contributed to the empowerment of women (Vujko et al., 2018). As the spread of sustainable tourism affects the better quality of education, a better way of life, and a better standard of living of the local community, awareness of gender equality spreads. Women through the exchange of experience, counseling, various seminars and through work on themselves, become aware of their own values and quality (Maksimović et al., 2019). Table 10 (Pearson Chi-Square Test) indicates statistically significant differences in respondents' answers. Only 3% of female respondents believe that the development of sustainable tourism has not affected the empowerment of women while the number of male respondents who believe that there are no changes in the empowerment of women is higher.

The second part of the research presents a SWOT analysis of the selected tourist attractions of the observed areas with the aim of improving the tourist offer at the destination, with an emphasis on the expansion of accommodation capacities.

Table 11. SWOT analysis number 1. Zlatibor

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of tourist demand is constant, A large number of natural and anthropogenic resources that represent attractive tourist destinations, Tourist demand is represented by tourists of different ages, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to respect the rights of employees in companies that provide tourist services Insufficient quality staff Distortion of the authenticity of the destination Inadequate treatment of the local population, which is engaged in the production of characteristic products for this destination
CHANCES	THREAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large number of high-category hotels, while lower-category hotels are in short supply Insufficient number of registered households that provide tourist accommodation and food services Investment in the education of the local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large number of present investors Emigration of the local population due to the impaired quality of life Oversaturation with the already existing tourist offer

Source: Authors

Based on the SWOT analysis of Zlatibor as a tourist destination, it can be concluded that the chances of the local population to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism at the destination, and thus to their own economic and social sustainability, are high. It is necessary to recognize and make the local population aware of the strengths, weaknesses, opportu-

nities, and threats of Zlatibor as a tourist destination suitable for investment in tourism. The insufficient number of registered households that open their doors for tourists to experience the destination in the right way and get to know the traditions and culture of the local community is one of the significant opportunities for investment in the local population. Investing in the education of the young local population creates a loyal and satisfied workforce. With compliance with legal regulations and control of law enforcement, tourist companies can have satisfied employees who make Zlatibor's tourist offer of higher quality, increasing the chance of getting loyal and satisfied service users. Zlatibor, as a part of Serbia that represents a recognizable summer and winter destination, has numerous natural and anthropogenic beauties that can only be preserved by taking care of the protection and preservation of the natural environment (spreading awareness of sustainability among the population, tourists and of tourism service providers).

Table 12. SWOT analysis 2. Kopaonik

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed winter season • Untouched nature • Ski slopes recognized in the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated local population • Pronounced seasonality at the destination
CHANCES	THREAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of authentic offer • Inclusion of the local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Insufficiently developed infrastructure and superstructure at the destination • - Competition

Source: Authors

Based on the data from SWOT analysis 2, it can be concluded that the pronounced seasonality of Kopaonik is at the same time the strength and weakness of this tourist destination. The insufficient percentage of tourist demand in the summer months represents an opportunity for the local population to present a tourist product worthy of attention on the tourist market in the summer months of the year. Seasonality can also be considered as a weakness, because a certain period of time is necessary to position Kopaonik in the minds of tourists as an attractive tourist destination in all periods of the year. The rich, untouched nature of Kopaonik offers the local community the opportunity to create an authentic tourist product for present and potential tourists. Related tourist services can properly contribute to the sustainable development of tourism at destination. The previously mentioned tourist product must be different, and stand out from other tourist products in the tourist market of Kopaonik. In cooperation with local and state authorities, with the help of various non-governmental organizations, with the consent of the local population, investments should be made in the infrastructure and superstructure of Kopaonik to meet the needs of the population and tourists. Also, by investing in the education of young people and providing opportunities to work in tourism, it can prevent the population emigration to other regions, and reduce the need for service providers to import labor.

Table 13. SWOT analysis 3. Stara planina

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untouched nature • Destination in nascency • Continous growth in tourist demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underdeveloped infrastructure and superstructure of the destination • Small population number • Living standard of the population
CHANCES	THREAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little competitiveness • Promoting authentic tourist offer • Border with Bulgaria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big economic challenges during the formation of a tourist product • Non-existence of an urban plan

Source: Authors

By interpreting SWOT analysis 3, it can be concluded that Stara planina is an emerging destination and that is why the initial investments are large. Due to the fact that the destination is emerging, as a special challenge that needs to be overcome is the construction of buildings, roads, regulation of sewage and other networks, proper functioning of the system. Given the underdevelopment of the area, competition is reduced to a minimum, which provides the opportunity for providers of tourist products and services to be among the first and to occupy a high place in the minds of potential tourists. It is necessary to mention the proximity of the Bulgarian market, which is also an opportunity for the tourist offer of Stara Planina acceptance by foreign Bulgarian tourists. Adaptation to their demands and needs leads to the conquest of one market segment. The weakness of rural areas is the small number of inhabitants and so in Stara Planina also. In that area a small number of inhabitants remained and continued to run their households, which indicates a lack of local population that could, to a large extent, make up the staff of local companies. Special attention should be paid to this problem and the standard of living should be addressed, which would be guaranteed to be higher thanks to the development of sustainable tourism, employment would be enabled for young people in the field of tourism and catering, and thus the percentage of young people emigrating would be significantly lower. Members of older ages would have the opportunity to pass on the knowledge and experience gained on Stara Planina to tourists, through different production of wool clothing and handmade accessories. Local and traditional dishes would also form an indivisible whole of the tourist offer.

Table 14. SWOT analysis 4. Fruška gora

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural and anthropogenic resources • Climate • Accessibility of the destination • Recognizable areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficy of the educated local population • Proximity to suppliers • Insufficiently developed infrastructure and superstructure
CHANCES	THREAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A destination suitable for the development of religious tourism • Ethno villages that nurture the tradition and culture of Fruška Gora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High costs of hiring staff • Increasing competitiveness

Source: Authors

By looking at the data from SWOT analysis 4, it can be concluded that Fruška Gora as a tourist destination has not received the attention it deserves. The natural and anthropogenic beauties of this destination have only begun to gain importance in the last few years. Unspoiled nature, pleasant climate, terrain that is not particularly challenging are just some

of its advantages. Also, a big advantage of this tourist destination compared to some others are the Monasteries of Fruška Gora, whose value and importance are recognized in the tourist market making them one of the main assets of this tourist destination. Based on the previously mentioned riches, Fruška Gora is a tourist destination particularly suitable for religious tourism. It is also necessary to consider the fact that with the development of Fruška Gora as a tourist destination, there will be an increase in tourist demand, which implies the necessity for accommodation facilities and other facilities that make up the tourist offer of the destination and represents a chance for the local population to decide to invest in the aforementioned economic activity. It should be noted that there is only one ethno - village registered on the territory of Fruška Gora which belongs to high-category accommodation facilities and is part of the tourist offer for tourists with high spending power, so therefore it can be considered that investing in an ethnic village that will convey the spirit of Fruška Gora to tourists who come from different parts of the world suitable that the tourist market. The support of the government is necessary when regulating the infrastructure and superstructure of the tourist destination, and for the provision of employees, the support of the surrounding areas is necessary.

Conclusion

Throughout the paper, the basic characteristics of the sustainable development of tourism are listed, and the numerous advantages it brings with it are defined. The achievement of ecological, economic, and social sustainability for every destination ensures the preservation of material and immaterial wealth for future generations.

The rural areas of Serbia that have been singled out as subjects of research face numerous problems and numerous obstacles that need to be answered in accordance with the principles of sustainability. Protecting natural resources, preserving cultural and natural assets, and spreading awareness of the benefits of sustainability are just some of the ways to overcome real obstacles. It is necessary to have the ability to predict potential dangers for sustainable tourism in these areas in time and to take appropriate actions and eliminate irregularities in the system. Special attention should be paid to the importance of rural areas both for the local community and for the tourist offer of a country.

The roles of local authorities, the local population, foreign and domestic investors, and potential and actual tourists are equal. Established standards and legal regulations must be followed to meet common goals. Controlling them and adequately punishing them is one of the ways to ensure the smooth development of sustainability. It is very important to inform people about sustainable tourism and its advantages, through various advertising channels, seminars, workshops, and awards.

In this research the initial hypothesis H that the economic indicators of sustainable development of tourism ensure a better quality of life for local communities in the mentioned mountain areas was confirmed. The population is aware of the importance of tourism development and what advantages and benefits tourism development has for the local community and the lives of individuals within that community. Tourism is a sustainable and responsible form of development of rural destinations, which in the future can be a significant factor in revitalizing villages. It also enables the empowerment of women - one of the most sensitive categories of rural residents. With the responsible, planned and sustainable development of tourism, rural destinations will develop and provide residents with a better and more meaningful life, which is primarily reflected in the overall quality of life.

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