

The role and importance of gastronomic tourism in Serbia and Montenegro in the function of destination branding

Uloga i značaj gastronomskog turizma Srbije i Crne Gore u funkciji brendiranja destinacije

Miloš Zrnić^{a*}, Olivera Blagojević^b, Slobodan Čavić^a

^a Academy of Applied Studies Belgrade, College of Hotel Management, Serbia

^b Faculty of Business and Tourism, Budva, Montenegro

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to research the attitudes and opinions of tourists about the importance of gastro tourism and gastronomic products in Serbia and Montenegro. The research was conducted in the period from July to September 2022. Methods used in this reserach were Chi square test, Mann Whitney U and Regression. The results of the research show that there is a difference in opinion about gastronomic tourism and gastronomic products between the respondents in Serbia and the respondents in Montenegro. Also, there are differences in the opinion of the respondents which city is best known for the gastronomic tourist offer in both countries. The obtained results can be used to improve the gastronomic offer of Serbia and Montenegro, which can lead to an even better positioning of both countries on the gastronomic map of Europe.

Keywords: gastronomy tourism, brending destination, Serbia, Montenegro

Sažetak

Cilj ovog rada je da se ispituju stavovi i mišljenja turista o značaju gastro turizma i gastronomskih proizvoda u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori. Istraživanje je sprovedeno u periodu od jula do septembra 2022. godine. Metode koje su se koriste u ovom istraživanju su Hi kvadrat test, Mann Vhitnei U i Regresija. Istraživanje pokazuje da postoji razlika u mišljenju o gastronomskom turizmu i gastronomskim proizvodima između ispitanika u Srbiji i ispitanika u Crnoj Gori. Takođe, postoje razlike u mišljenju ispitanika koji je grad najpoznatiji po gastronomskoj turističkoj ponudi u obe zemlje. Dobijeni rezultati mogu se koristiti za unapređenje i proširenje gastronomske ponude Srbije i Crne Gore, što može dovesti do još boljeg pozicioniranja obe zemlje na gastronomskoj mapi Evrope.

Ključne reči: gastronomski turizam, brendiranje destinacije, Srbija, Crna Gora.


1. Introduction

Gastronomic tourism is a niche of tourism and hotel industry, which, despite the small stagnation due to the epidemiological situation caused by the COVID-19 virus, continues to live and develop, thus presenting a new opportunity in the tourist market – a chance that can and should strengthen the attractiveness of the destination with the introduction of new gastronomic products. In addition, it can stimulate feelings, above all tastes and cultural values, which can be seen as an expression of destination and cultural capital (Bertella, 2011; Grubišić

& Antonijević, 2013; Vuksanović et al., 2016, Popović et al., 2018). Today, thanks to advanced technology, only a little imagination is enough to express and offer great local dishes and gastronomic products to gastronomy tourists (Richards, 2014; Marković & Pindžo, 2020; Isaković & Dragičević, 2018; Hassan & Zrnić, 2021). Gastronomic tourism represents a competitive advantage of the destination and can be of essential importance in the branding of the country or region (Vuksanović et al., 2017; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016). Furthermore, gastronomic tourism offers tourist new experiences for consuming local dishes and

*Corresponding author

E-mail address: milos.zrnic@vhs.edu.rs

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drinks (Sahin, 2015; Zrnić, 2016). New gastronomy experiences certainly can awaken undiscovered tastes when visiting new destination (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). According to Okumus et al. (2018), local gastronomy plays an important role in branding a destination, gastronomic experience and overall guest satisfaction. When consuming food, tourists/guests satisfy not only the need for food and drinks but also the adventurous spirit for the local experience (Aleksić & Čonić, 2017). Vuksanović et al. (2017) emphasis that destination branding refers to the mental separation of tourist resorts from other tourist locations (Perić & Mandarić, 2020; Đorđević & Marinković, 2017). Additionally, according to Tasci et al. (2007) a picture of a destination is a system of one's opinions, thoughts, feelings, visualizations and intentions towards a tourist destination (Popović et al., 2018).

European destinations such as Italy, France, Spain, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, etc. understood the importance of gastronomy in creating a specific tourist atmosphere and tied products-services (tourist offer) to gastronomic tourism. Sahin (2015) highlights some of the advantages and importance of gastronomic tourism:

- Gastronomic tourism is seasonally set, i.e., may be present throughout the year;
- Gastronomic tourism is a new form of positive trend of destination;
- Gastronomic tourism contributes to the value of tourist experience, satisfaction and is associated with the quality of stay of tourists who are looking for new products that lead to a high level of satisfaction.

Moreover, within the framework of gastronomic tourism it is also necessary to mention the concept of gastronomic products. These products can immensely help guests to better explore destination, and sometimes even get in contact with food producer's themselves (Hall & Sharples, 2004). Additionally, Vukić & Drljević (2006) view the gastronomy product as the outcome of work in the material and spiritual segment. Also, the same authors emphasize that quality of gastro-products should have an established standard. Gastronomic products are all those products that can be consumed and/or purchased (cheese, sausages, wine, etc.) (Pamukçu et al., 2021; Symons, 2001; Gordin & Trabskaya, 2013). Moreover, all wishes, requests and modern needs of guests constitute the main characteristics of gastro-products, which depend on the economic situation, technical, technological, personnel circumstances (Vukić & Drljević, 2006; Forgas-Serra et al., 2021; Nemes et al., 2019).

2. Literature review

Gastronomy tourism has been popular in the world for decades, but in Serbia and Montenegro it has recently become more important aspect of tourism. Today, gastronomic visitors-tourists like to visit new destination and enjoy all its natural beauties, including national dishes and local drinks. Food can greatly contribute to the status of a destination, as it is related to quality of life, domestic production and cultural treasures (Tsai & Wang, 2017). Demand for gastronomy tourism is increasing

significantly in the last couple of years. For these reasons, this type of tourism is becoming an increasingly important part of the tourism industry, which is an exceptional opportunity for Serbia and Montenegro to position themselves on the gastronomic map of Europe (Vuksanović et al., 2017). Gastronomic tourism is a kind of phenomenon (Tsai & Wang, 2017). Moreover, Serbian gastronomy was created as a mixture of cuisines of various peoples living on the present territory of Serbia, including the influences of Greek, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish cuisine (Vuksanović et al., 2016; Marković & Pindžo, 2020; Bjeljic et al., 2016). Serbian national cuisine is very rich in various specialties such as cicvara, ajvar and treats with prunes, that can satisfy even the most refined tastes, which is why Serbia becomes recognizable for its excellent foods and drinks. This is supported by the development of authentic offers of different regions within Serbia, which are accompanied by wine production (Trišić et al., 2020).

Serbia has a rich gastronomic heritage (Grubišić & Antonijević, 2013; Vuksanović et al., 2017; Vujko et al., 2017; Kalenjuc et al., 2015). Unlike other countries, e.g., Chinese, Italian or Indian cuisine, that are globally recognizable, Serbian cuisine has not yet established this level of personify (Bjeljac et al., 2015; Vuković & Terzić, 2020). However, there is something original and unique about Serbian gastronomy. Evidence of this is reflected in the refined local production habits and specificities of a large number of peoples in a relatively small area (Tasić, 2018; Stanišić et al., 2018; Vujčić & Ristić, 2012). In addition, there is great dedication and perseverance in preserving old recipes, as well as interest in them (Janković et al., 2020). The uniqueness of the Serbian gastronomic offer is perceived by tourists in their own way but mostly they have words of praise. The pleasant atmosphere of cafes, quality food and drinks, hospitality, toasts, brandy and wine, grilling and cooking in kettles, are just some of the elements of the tourist accent. (Marković & Pindžo, 2020; Stojanović & Čavić, 2018; Rudež & Đenadić, 2017). Serbia, as a western Balkan country, has occupied a significant place on Europe's gastronomic map in the last couple of years. Today, gastronomic visitors-tourists love to visit the destination and to enjoy all its natural beauty. Food can massively contribute to the status of a destination, as it is related to quality of life, satisfaction, branding, domestic production and cultural treasures (Tsai & Wang, 2017).

Those regions where globalization has not yet taken hold and where food is produced without major technological waves, are favorable for the development of gastronomic, culinary and/or gourmet tourism. (Hall & Mitchell, 2007). According to Kalenjuku et al (2017) basic threats to the further development of Serbia's gastronomic development are (Đerčan et al., 2017; Jerkić & Okanović, 2020):

- Poor infrastructure connectivity;
- Poor commitment of state institutionalisms;
- Lack of performance measurement and economic indicators that must provide the right information for investment and business development.

However as basic opportunities for Serbia's gastronomic development, Kalenjuku et al. (2017) list the following entries:

- Serbia's potential as a gastronomic brand is gaining more and more importance;
- Extending tourist detention and encouraging revisit, through food and beverage shopping;
- Developing gastronomy development plans
- Great interest in local gastronomy by foreign guests-visitors;
- Investing and preserving local gastronomic products;
- Appearance on the world market and fairs;
- Preserving gastronomic quality and creating gastronomic trails.

Further, Stanišić et al. (2018) within the framework of the proposal for better use of the own potentials of gastronomy tourism in Serbia states the following:

- Synergy of travel agencies with state institutions;
- Inclusion of professional tourist workers in gastronomic destinations;
- Inclusion of famous influencers in the gastronomic and tourist area;
- Visits to limited gastronomic manifestations;
- Highlighting the importance of infrastructure development;
- Greater management of local self-government; expanding the gastro-offer.

Serbia boasts its natural nature reserves, which are the only ones in this part of Europe, and as such offers special experiences to tourists (Vuković & Terzić, 2020; Marinovski et al., 2014; Štećić et al., 2014). Marinovski et al. (2014) emphasize that in addition to accommodation services, the gastronomic aspect of the tourism offer brings great profit and should not be neglected. When visiting a new destination, guests can show greater or less interest in local food and drinks (dishes) (Hall & Mitchell, 2006; Zrnić et al., 2021). The attractiveness of Serbia's gastronomic offer is primarily reflected in gastronomic activities (events, fairs, gastronomic tours, fairs, organized wine days, local products of the city or region, etc.) (Zrnić et al., 2021; Čavić & Mandarić, 2021) private companies and state institutions that organize individually or in synergy the mentioned events and thus promote local gastronomic products (Tasić, 2018; Dragin et al., 2018). Also, some regions are known exclusively for quality wines (Jević, 2019; Škrbić et al., 2015; Rudež & Đenadić, 2017).

On the other hand, it's very interesting that there are not many research articles in the domestic literature on the topic of gastronomic tourism in Montenegro. Given the importance of tourism for Montenegro, as a generator of economic development, the need to explore selective aspects of tourism is clear (Vitić-Četković et al., 2015). Cultural tourism tends to grow in line with integral growth and development of tourist product (Morić et al., 2021). The potential of developing selective forms of tourism such as ecological, gastronomic tourism, agrotourism, cultural and other aspects is very high in Montenegro.

A country of contrast with various physical-geographical beauties on a relatively small area. Montenegro is a kind of attraction for tourists and visitors, whether they are lovers of the sea or mountain, cultural and historical contents, adventurousness or authentic national cuisine with traditions and customs of the local population. Food and nutrition are important determinants of the cultural identity of a region. For this reason, local gastronomy occupies an important place in creating a tourist product and image of the destination (Vujačić, et al., 2017). Gastronomic tourism, as part of cultural tourism in Montenegro is gaining more and more importance "If you know where someone lives in Montenegro, you will guess what they eat. The kitchen obeys the relief and takes what nature has to offer. The culinary art of Montenegro best gathers the gifts of the Mediterranean and the treasures of the northern mountains" (Vujačić & Kovačević, 2016). In the coastal part for lovers of Mediterranean nutrition, quality sea fish will be served, which is prepared in different ways: "grilled" or as "brodet", a famous Mediterranean fish dish prepared with plenty of spices and olive oil.

Tourists who prefer mountains and preserved nature can enjoy local and organic food, prepared according to the traditional recipe: lamb "under the honeycomb", "kačamak" and "cicvara" and others. To talk about the gastronomy of Montenegro, and not to mention Njeguški prosciutto and cheese, which are traditionally produced on Njeguši (the surroundings of Cetinje), is almost impossible. An integral part of the menu especially on cold winter days is "collard greens", a special type of cabbage prepared with dry meat and herbs. With a rich appetizers and traditional meat dishes, visitors and tourists can enjoy a wide range of Montenegrin wines with a long tradition such as Vranac, also the most famous wine in Montenegro, Krstač or some other wine from a variety of wine lists to your liking. With such a varied gastronomic offer, Montenegro has enormous potential in attracting and retaining a large number of guests during the summer season and of course in winter months on mountain centers for boasting a good part of gastronomic products that are recognizable as quality and unique (Vuković & Terzić, 2020).

3. Methodology

To get the best results on the opinions and attitudes of the respondents about the research of gastronomic tourism Chi square test, Mann Whitney U test and Regression method were used. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, online survey was used from July to September 2022 to obtain insight of respondents on gastronomy products in Serbian and Montenegro. Total number of respondents was 248. All statistics are presented in results and discussion section.

4. Results and discussion

More women participated in the research, 60.9%. Respondents are mostly young, aged 18 to 35 (43.6%). Most respondents are from Serbia (78.3%). Respondents are predominantly university educated, 45%. To test the

differences by place of residence, the chi square test for independent samples was used. In Table 1. we can see differences by place of residence among 248 respondents.

Table 1. Differences by place of residence

Questions		Place of residence						χ^2	p	/V
		Montenegro		Serbia		Total				
		f	%	f	%	f	%			
In your opinion. has the gastronomic tourism of Serbia been sufficiently promoted?	Yes	9	17.65	37	19.07	46	18.78	0.054	0.817	0.015
	No	42	82.35	157	80.93	199	81.22			
In your opinion. has the gastronomic tourism of Montenegro been sufficiently promoted?	Yes	9	16.67	31	16.32	40	16.39	0.004	0.951	0.004
	No	45	83.33	159	83.68	204	83.61			
Did you travel to a certain destination just because of its gastronomy?	Yes	13	24.07	65	33.51	78	31.45	1.743	0.187	0.084
	No	41	75.93	129	66.49	170	68.55			
When choosing a specific destination. I pay the most attention to?	Gastronomic events	8	14.81	29	14.87	37	14.86	5.816	0.055	0.153
	Cultural and historical monuments	38	70.37	106	54.36	144	57.83			
	Local food	8	14.81	60	30.77	68	27.31			
Which region of Serbia do you think you should definitely visit because of the richness of local food and culture?	Central Serbia	6	11.54	10	5.13	16	6.48	15.930	0.001	0.254
	Šumadija	7	13.46	20	10.26	27	10.93			
	All of the above	24	46.15	143	73.33	167	67.61			
	Vojvodina	15	28.85	22	11.28	37	14.98			
Which region of Montenegro do you think should be visited because of the richness of local food, culture and tradition?	Central part of Montenegro	2	3.77	5	2.63	7	2.88	9.140	0.027	0.194
	Seaside	8	15.09	68	35.79	76	31.28			
	North part of Montenegro	12	22.64	25	13.16	37	15.23			
	All of the above	31	58.49	92	48.42	123	50.62			
Which gastronomic product of Montenegro do you consider to be a recognizable brand of the destination?	Ajvar	21	39.62	41	21.03	62	25.00	29.304	0.000	0.344
	Čevapi	3	5.66	40	20.51	43	17.34			
	Karadjordje's steak	21	39.62	33	16.92	54	21.77			
	Orasnice	0	0.00	5	2.56	5	2.02			
	All of the above	8	15.09	76	38.97	84	33.87			
Which gastronomic product of Montenegro do you consider to be a recognizable brand of the destination?	Cicvara	5	9.43	6	3.16	11	4.53	4.634	0.099	0.138
	Lamb under the ashes	3	5.66	12	6.32	15	6.17			
	Njegusi prosciutto	28	52.83	130	68.42	158	65.02			
	All of the above	17	32.08	38	20.00	55	22.63			
To have a pleasant vacation at the destination. what do you consider important?	Donuts	0	0.00	4	2.11	4	1.65	0.590	0.744	0.049
	Hospitality	40	74.07	146	74.87	186	74.70			
	Culture	7	12.96	19	9.74	26	10.44			
	Local food	1	1.85	16	8.21	17	6.83			
	Tradition	6	11.11	14	7.18	20	8.03			
Which city of Serbia do you consider the capital of gastronomic tourism?	Belgrade	21	38.89	78	40.00	99	39.76	8.171	0.086	0.181
	None of the above	12	22.22	53	27.18	65	26.10			
	Niš	6	11.11	39	20.00	45	18.07			
	Novi Sad	13	24.07	22	11.28	35	14.06			
	Subotica	2	3.70	3	1.54	5	2.01			
Which city in Montenegro do you consider the capital of gastronomic tourism?	Budva	13	24.07	49	26.06	62	25.62	13.506	0.009	0.236
	None of the above	22	40.74	66	35.11	88	36.36			
	Nikšić	3	5.56	22	11.70	25	10.33			
	Pljevlja	1	1.85	27	14.36	28	11.57			
	Podgorica	15	27.78	24	12.77	39	16.12			
When arriving at a new tourist destination, what would you visit first?	Gastronomic events	9	16.67	35	18.04	44	17.74	2.286	0.319	0.096
	Cultural and historical monuments	28	51.85	79	40.72	107	43.15			
	Local restaurants	17	31.48	80	41.24	97	39.11			

Source: Author's calculation

Table 1. Continues

Questions		Place of residence						χ^2	p	/V
		Montenegro		Serbia		Total				
		f	%	f	%	f	%			
My pleasure during my stay in a tourist destination is greatly influenced by the choice of gastronomic products?	Yes	37	68.52	153	78.87	190	76.61	2,524	0,112	0,101
	No	17	31.48	41	21.13	58	23.39			
Does the freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products greatly affect my satisfaction during my stay in a certain tourist destination?	Yes	43	79.63	174	89.23	217	87.15	3,481	0,062	0,118
	No	11	20.37	21	10.77	32	12.85			

Source: Author's calculation

The result of the chi square test indicates that respondents from Serbia and Montenegro differ significantly in answering the question: "Which region of Serbia do you think should be visited due to the richness of local food, culture and tradition?", $X^2(3) = 15.93$; $p = 0.00$; $V = 0.25$. About half of the respondents from Montenegro and more than two thirds of the respondents from Serbia think that they should visit Central Serbia and Vojvodina and Šumadija. About a third of Montenegrin respondents choose Vojvodina as a must-see destination rich in food, culture, and tradition.

Moreover, the result of the chi square test indicates that respondents from Serbia and Montenegro differ significantly in answering the question: "Which region of Montenegro do you think should be visited due to the richness of local food, culture and tradition?", $X^2(3) = 9.14$; $p = 0.03$; $V = 0.19$. Slightly more than a third of respondents from Serbia choose Primorje as a mandatory destination rich in food, culture, and tradition. Slightly more than a fifth of Montenegrin respondents choose the North of Montenegro as a mandatory destination.

Additionally, the result of the chi square test indicates that the respondents from Serbia and Montenegro differ significantly in answering the question: "Which

gastronomic product of Serbia do you consider to be a recognizable brand of the destination?", $X^2(4) = 29.30$; $p = 0.00$; $V = 0.34$. Respondents from Montenegro recognize ajvar (39.6%) and Karadjordjev steak (39.6%) as a gastronomic brand, and respondents from Serbia recognize ajvar (21%) and kebabs (20.5%). Furthermore, the result of the square test indicates that the respondents from Serbia and Montenegro differ significantly in answering the question: "Which city in Montenegro do you consider the capital of gastronomic tourism?", $X^2(4) = 13.51$; $p = 0.01$; $V = 0.24$. Extremely small percentage of respondents from Montenegro (1.9%) consider Pljevlja to be the capital of gastronomic tourism. About a quarter of Montenegrin respondents choose Budva (24.1%) and Podgorica (27.8%) as the capital of gastronomic tourism. About a quarter of respondents from Serbia choose Budva (26.1%) as the capital of gastronomic tourism. Differences in the answers to other questions from the questionnaire between respondents from Serbia and Montenegro are not significant, $p > 0.05$.

To test the differences in place of residence in relation to attitudes about the impact of gastronomy on tourism, the Mann Whitney U test was used. Table 3 shows the attitude of diversity depending on the place of residence.

Table 2. Differences in attitudes depending on the place of residence

		M_d	U	Z	p	r
Is local food extremely important to you when choosing a specific destination?	Montenegro	3.00	3808.500	-2.955	0.003	0.188
	Serbia	4.00				
Serbian gastronomy can attract a large number of domestic and foreign tourists?	Montenegro	4.00	4009.000	-2.781	0.005	0.176
	Serbia	5.00				
Montenegrin gastronomy can attract a large number of domestic and foreign tourists?	Montenegro	4.00	4267.500	-1.745	0.081	0.112
	Serbia	4.00				
Gastronomy is a very important segment for tourism development and destination branding?	Montenegro	4.50	4846.500	-0.996	0.319	0.063
	Serbia	5.00				

Source: Author's calculation

On the other side, respondents from Serbia ($M_d = 4$) have a more positive attitude towards the importance of local food when choosing a particular destination compared to respondents from Montenegro ($M_d = 3$) and the difference is significant, $U = 3808.50$; $p = 0.00$. The strength of the effect is small, $r = 0.19$. Furthermore, respondents from Serbia ($M_d = 5$) have a more positive attitude towards the role of gastronomy in attracting foreign tourists to Serbia

compared to respondents from Montenegro ($M_d = 4$) and the difference is significant, $U = 4009.00$; $p = 0.01$. The strength of the effect is small, $r = 0.18$. Differences between respondents from Serbia and Montenegro in attitudes about the role of gastronomy in attracting foreign tourists to Montenegro and the importance of gastronomy in tourism development and destination branding are not significant, $p > 0.05$ and the size of the difference is small,

$p < 0.29$. Binomial logistic regression was used to examine the impact of gastronomic product brand recognition on a particular destination, assess the importance of gastronomy for tourism development and destination branding on the role of freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products in the satisfaction of staying in a particular destination. Predictor variables in the model were operationalized using the questions "Which gastronomic product of Serbia do you consider to be a recognizable destination brand?", "Which gastronomic product of Montenegro do you consider to be a recognizable destination brand?" And "Gastronomy is a very important segment for tourism development and destination branding?" ". The criterion variable was

operationalized by asking "The freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products greatly affects my satisfaction while staying in a particular tourist destination?". The model is statistically significant; $\chi^2(7) = 40.57$, $p = 0.00$; which indicates that predictor variables significantly contribute to the explanation of the criterion variable - the role of freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products in the pleasure of staying at a particular destination. Predictor variables explain between 15.4 (Cox and Snell R²) and 28.8 (Nagelkerke R²) variances of the criterion variable. Table 3 shows different sets of questions about respondents' opinions on gastronomic products in Serbia and Montenegro.

Table 3. Set of questions on gastronomy products

	B	p	Exp(B)	95% confidence interval for EXP (B)	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
Which gastronomic product of Serbia do you consider to be a recognizable brand of the destination?		.335			
– Ćevapi	-.408	.541	.665	.179	2.466
– Karadjordje's steak	.006	.992	1.006	.295	3.425
– All of the above	.919	.152	2.506	.713	8.808
Which gastronomic product of Montenegro do you consider to be a recognizable brand of the destination?		.051			
– Lamb under the ashes	.130	.921	1.138	.088	14.669
– Njegusi prosciutto	.065	.943	1.067	.177	6.433
– All of the above	-1.569	.126	.208	.028	1.558
Gastronomy is a very important segment for tourism development and destination branding?	1.201	.000	3.324	2.074	5.329
Constant	-2.746	.017	.064		

Source: Author's calculation

The explanation of the role of freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products in the satisfaction of staying at a certain destination is significantly contributed by the assessment of the importance of gastronomy for tourism development and destination branding, $p < 0.05$. The greater the agreement with the statement "Gastronomy is a very important segment for tourism development and destination branding?", The chance increases by 3.32 times that the freshness and uniqueness of gastronomic products plays a role in satisfaction with staying in a particular destination (OR = 3.32; 95 CI = 2.07-5.33; $p = 0.00$).

5. Conclusion

According to the respondents, gastronomic tourism is considered as an important aspect of the tourism industry and as such deserves special attention and monitoring. Based on the conducted research, it seems that the respondents from Serbia have more positive opinion that gastronomic tourism in attracting and retaining visitors compared to the respondents from Montenegro. Also, respondents in both countries have different opinions about which are the main cities that have a gastronomic position, power and recognizability that can be used in the promotion of a tourist destination. In addition, gastronomic products can greatly contribute to the recognizability of the destination. Furthermore, according to respondents in both countries, the freshness and

uniqueness of gastronomic products plays a key role in destination branding and visitor satisfaction.

The research was conducted in the period from July to September 2022. Total number of respondents was 248. An online survey was employed in Serbian and in Montenegro. Based on the conducted research we see that the opinions of respondents from Serbia and Montenegro regarding gastronomic tourism and gastronomic products differ slightly on some questions. Consequently, periodic research is needed to gain a better insight into what the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro think about gastronomic tourism and its importance to better brand the destination and satisfy domestic and foreign visitors needs. The lessons that can be learned from this research are that the potential and possibilities of gastro tourism in the function of branding, visitor satisfaction and destination promotion are an exceptional opportunity that can be used more and better in Serbia and Montenegro to attract more domestic and foreign visitors to increase the recognizability of the destination by authentic dishes and drinks.

Recommendations for future research of gastronomic tourism in Serbia and Montenegro can focus on the opinions of foreign visitors to gain a better and broader insight into the thinking of foreign guests, what distinguishes, influences and attracts today's guests. With those answers we can better understand our guests and what needs to be change and/or improve in the

gastronomic offer of both countries and thus adapt the gastro offer to today's requirements and wishes of guests.

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