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## **Impacts of the music festival Lovefest on the attitudes of the local population in Vrnjačka Banja**

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**Abstract:** The electronic music festival Lovefest, which has been held in Vrnjačka Banja since 2007, gathers a great number of domestic and international visitors. In addition to the positive impacts, which are primarily reflected in the generation of income that is important for the tourism economy and to the local population of Vrnjačka Banja, this event creates numerous negative impacts as well. The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in the local population's attitudes to the positive and the negative impacts of Lovefest based on their age, gender, educational level, occupation, and the relation between their job and tourism. To process the primary data descriptive statistical analysis, t-test, and ANOVA are used. The results indicate that the local population's attitudes to some positive and negative impacts of Lovefest differ regarding their socio-demographic characteristics.

**Keywords:** tourism impacts, local population, music festival, Lovefest, Vrnjačka Banja

**JEL classification:** L83, Z30, Z32

## **Utjecaji muzičkog festivala Lovefest na stavove lokalnog stanovništva Vrnjačke Banje**

**Sažetak:** Festival elektronske muzike Lovefest održava se u Vrnjačkoj Banji od 2007. godine i okuplja veliki broj domaćih i međunarodnih posetilaca. Pored pozitivnih uticaja, koji se pre svega ogledaju u stvaranju prihoda važnih za turistička preduzeća i za lokalno stanovništvo Vrnjačke Banje, ovaj događaj dovodi i do brojnih negativnih uticaja. Cilj ove studije je da utvrdi razlike u stavovima lokalnog stanovništva prema pozitivnim, kao i negativnim uticajima Lovefest-a na osnovu starosti, pola, nivoa obrazovanja, zanimanja i na osnovu povezanosti njihovog posla sa turizmom. Za obradu primarnih podataka upotrebljene su deskriptivna statistička analiza, t-test i ANOVA. Prema rezultatima studije, stavovi lokalnog stanovništva o pojedinim pozitivnim i negativnim uticajima Lovefest-a razlikuju se u pogledu njihovih socio-demografskih karakteristika.

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**Ključne reči:** uticaji turizma, lokalno stanovništvo, muzički festival, Lovefest, Vrnjačka Banja

**JEL klasifikacija:** L83, Z30, Z32

## 1. Introduction

Managers in tourism try to make a positive destination image (Marić et al., 2020), and such actions must be constant and careful to reach the market value of a brand (Brzaković et al., 2020). In order to attract more domestic and international tourists, many destinations organize festivals that represent their local traditional culture (Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2018). According to Novello and Fernández (2016), the important role in increasing destination competitiveness has tourism festivals, as they are an important element of destination brand (Novaković & Mandarić, 2019). However, Pranić et al. (2012) state that festivals in destinations bring positive and negative outcomes for the local community. Those impacts are linked and usually classified as economic, environmental, and socio-cultural (Mendes et al., 2017). Nevertheless, according to Woosnam et al. (2013), the socio-cultural impacts of festivals on host communities are ignored in scientific studies.

Since the sustainable development of tourism destinations depends on stakeholders' involvement and support, where the local population has an important role in tourism development (Lopez et al., 2018; Olya & Gavilyan, 2017; Podovac et al., 2019), this paper focuses on the impacts of the electronic music festival Lovefest (Lovefest) in Vrnjačka Banja and local population's attitudes towards them. The aim is to determine the differences in the local population's attitudes to the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest based on their socio-demographic characteristics. Lovefest is a music festival organized by a group of local youth, aiming to promote the music, art, and urban culture of youth. It is held every summer for 3 days in August in the park Jezero, Vrnjačka Banja, and has an average daily number of 20,000 visitors (Lovefest, 2020).

In view of the aim of the study, several hypotheses are set:

H: Based on the socio-demographic characteristics there are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the impacts of Lovefest.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive impacts of Lovefest, considering their gender.

H<sub>2</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering their gender.

H<sub>3</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive impacts of Lovefest, considering their age.

H<sub>4</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering their age.

H<sub>5</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive impacts of Lovefest, considering their education level.

H<sub>6</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering their education level.

H<sub>7</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive impacts of Lovefest, considering their occupation.

H<sub>8</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering their occupation.

H<sub>9</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive impacts of Lovefest, considering the relation between their job and tourism.

H<sub>10</sub>: There are significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering the relation between their job and tourism.

## 2. Literature review

Tourism development can stimulate the local economy and local business (Lopez et al., 2018), i.e. can attract great investments and new business chances for the local market (Hernández & de la Santísima Trinidad Mercader, 2015; Počuča & Matijašević-Obradović, 2020). Also, tourism has enabled the survival of the local population in small destinations (Vujko et al., 2021). On the other hand, tourism development and increased number of tourists can lead to higher prices of products and services, create greater costs of living for the local population, increased crime and conflicts, as well as negative environmental impacts such as crowding and traffic jams, greater litter and waste, pollution of water and air, and deterioration of natural goods, and damaging natural landmarks (MacKenzie & Gannon, 2019; Rasoolimanesh & Jaffar, 2017; Zdravković & Peković, 2020). According to Fredline et al. (2003), the negative impacts of tourism usually cause some changes in the daily life of the local population (e.g. behaviors and their habits). There are also a lot of negative changes in the local culture (e.g. customs) and local population's beliefs due to tourism development (Brida et al., 2011; Yun & Zhang, 2017). Various studies showed that the local population's attitudes to tourism, and the local population's subjective well-being generally depend on the net benefit of tourism (cost and benefits difference) and on the even allocation of those benefits among the local population (Bimonte & D'Agostino, 2020).

In tourism development, the local population has a role of a crucial stakeholder. Their attitude towards tourism must be observed and taken into consideration while tourism planning because the local population's support for tourism development depends on it (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). According to Olya and Gavilyan (2017), the extent of the local population's support for tourism depends on the balance between benefits and costs of tourism development. The same authors state that if tourism planners in destinations pay no attention to the local population's attitudes in making decisions probably the antagonistic attitudes and behavior towards tourism will emerge. Considering this, of great importance for tourism development is to know whether and how tourism impacts the well-being of the local population (Sharpley, 2014).

The local population's socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, professional status, education, earnings) are usually used as determining factors of the local population's attitudes towards tourism development (Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). For instance, the study results of Papastathopoulos et al. (2020) indicate that age and length of residency do not have a significant influence on the local population's attitudes and their support for tourism, while nationality, education, and gender, have an effect on them. Alrwajfah et al. (2019) found that determining factors of the local population's attitudes towards tourism are their gender and distance from tourism zones. Some authors indicate that members of the local population who live near popular attractions have less favorable attitudes about tourism in a destination. According to Harrill (2004) negative attitudes of the local population on tourism are increased if their living area is close to the central tourism zones in the destinations. However, Haley et al. (2005) revealed that a more positive perception of tourism have members of the local population who live closer to the tourism zones. Regarding gender, Jani (2018) states that male members of the local population in Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, support tourism development more than females. Similarly, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) state that women support tourism less because they may have a negative perception of tourism. Regarding the age, some authors find that younger members of the local population in Kusadasi, Turkey, have more positive attitudes about tourism comparing to older members of the local population (Cavus & Tanrisevdi, 2003). Also, Bagri and Kala (2016) point out that because of traditional understandings and unwillingness to accept social changes, older residents in India had more negative attitudes towards tourism development. Some prior

researches indicated that more educated residents have more positive attitudes and that they support more tourism development than lower educated residents (Long & Kayat, 2011; Tatoglu et al., 2002; Teye et al., 2002). Some studies have reported that the local population's attitudes towards tourism in a destination are affected by their length of residency. According to some authors, the local population tends to be less supportive of tourism and have negative attitudes towards it if they live for long in the destination (Banks, 2003; Haley et al., 2005).

Among numerous studies about impacts of tourism on the local population, the studies focusing on tourist events' impacts on the local population's attitudes have attracted special attention (Chen, 2011; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Weaver & Lawton, 2013). The results of the research by Milićević et al. (2020) indicate that the local population has positive attitudes about tourism events, and their socio-demographic characteristics are not determining factors for their attitudes. According to Jackson (2008), tourism events may have economic and social benefits for the destination, which is why the local population generally supports them. The local population tends to tolerate the negative impacts of tourism events as long as the perceived benefits exceed them. According to Getz (2010), although tourism festivals have different sorts of impacts on tourism destinations and the local population, in scientific studies, economic impacts are the most observed ones. Especially this is the case in small destinations when a great number of visitors come when festivals occur.

### **3. Research methodology**

In order to investigate the local population's attitudes towards the impacts of Lovefest the survey method is used. The questionnaire used in the survey is divided into two parts, where one part consists of the questions about the basic information of the respondents (gender, age, educational level, and occupation) as well as the question about the relation between their job and tourism. The next part consists of eighteen statements, which refer to the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest. Respondents used the Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree) to evaluate the degree of agreement with the proposed statements. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the research with the purpose to analyze the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of the local population on their attitudes about the impacts of the Carnival of Vrnjci (Milićević et al., 2020). Also, the authors based their research on similar empirical studies (Blešić et al., 2014a; Blešić et al., 2014b; Pivac et al., 2020; Tepavčević et al., 2019).

The survey was conducted from August until September 2019. The questionnaire, made by Google questionnaire form, was sent in the electronic form to the respondents with residence on the territory of the Vrnjačka Banja municipality. The convenience sample is used. In order to provide a representative sample of respondents, who meet the defined criteria regarding the place of residence, a question of elimination character was set about whether the respondents live in the study area. In case the answer to this question was negative, the questionnaire was no longer available for completion. In this way, it was determined with certainty that the research sample consists of the local population of the mentioned municipality. A total of 272 members of the local population completed the questionnaire.

The collected data were processed in the SPSS, version 26.0. The reliability analysis was performed by using the Cronbach's coefficient. Descriptive statistical analysis, t-test of independent samples, and analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) were used in the paper. In order to describe the research sample, descriptive statistical analysis was used (frequency and percentages). Measures of variability, from which the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to show the average scores of the respondents' answers and the average deviations of the respondents' answers from the arithmetic mean of the set. Using the t-test

and ANOVA, the statistically significant differences in local population's attitudes towards the positive, as well as to the negative impacts of Lovefest based on their age, gender, educational level, and occupation, and whether their job is tourism-related was examined.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample description

Female respondents have a higher percentage share in the sample (62.5%) compared to male respondents (37.5%). The most represented respondents in the sample are aged 20-30 years (41.2%). According to the educational level, 35.3% of respondents had completed faculty. When asked about their occupation, 72.4% of respondents declared that they were employed. Out of the total number of respondents, 65.4% stated that their job was connected with tourism (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (n=272)

Variable	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	102	37.5
Female	170	62.5
<b>Age</b>		
20-30	112	41.2
31-40	91	33.5
41-50	47	17.3
51-60	16	5.9
> 60	6	2.2
<b>Level of education</b>		
Secondary school	76	27.9
College	39	14.3
Faculty	96	35.3
M.Sc.	56	20.6
PhD	5	1.8
<b>Occupation</b>		
Employed	197	72.4
Unemployed	32	11.8
Student	37	13.6
Retired	6	2.2
<b>Tourism-related job</b>		
Yes	178	65.4
No	94	34.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Author's research

The analysis of the reliability showed that the statements, that refer to the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest, are reliable. The obtained values are acceptable having in mind that they are greater than 0.7 (Pallant, 2009). The Cronbach's coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.918 for positive and 0.893 for negative impacts of Lovefest. Table 2 also shows the average values of respondents' responses to the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest. The average values of respondents' answers on positive impacts of Lovefest range from 2.91 for statement p-9: The location at which Lovefest is held is adequate to 4.19 for statement p-7:

Local population may have additional earnings due to Lovefest. The average values of respondents' answers on the negative impacts of Lovefest range from 3.10 for statements *n-6*: During Lovefest cultural and historical values of the destination are endangered and *n-7*: Lovefest affects the local population to change negatively their moral principles and behaviour, to 4.28 for statement *n-4*: Huge crowds in the whole destination occur during Lovefest (in restaurants, cafes, stores, markets, etc).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for impacts of Lovefest and analysis of the questionnaire reliability

<b>Statements - Positive impacts (p)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
	<b>3.57</b>	<b>1.039</b>	<b>0.918</b>
<i>p-1</i> : Lovefest contributes to the destination having a rich and diverse tourism offer	3.24	1.460	
<i>p-2</i> : Lovefest contributes to the local population to feel very proud	3.13	1.388	
<i>p-3</i> : Lovefest contributes to a better image of the destination	3.81	1.362	
<i>p-4</i> : Just like tourists and visitors, the local population also may be present and enjoy Lovefest	3.88	1.264	
<i>p-5</i> : During the Lovefest, the local population have more opportunities for fun, as well as to meet and socialize with new people of different cultures	3.99	1.159	
<i>p-6</i> : Lovefest brings opportunities for the local population to present and promote their talents (music, acting, art)	3.35	1.377	
<i>p-7</i> : Local population may have additional earnings due to Lovefest	4.19	1.089	
<i>p-8</i> : Lovefest brings economic utility to the local population	3.63	1.349	
<i>p-9</i> : The location at which Lovefest is held is adequate	2.91	1.534	
<b>Statements - Negative impacts (n)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
	<b>3.71</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.893</b>
<i>n-1</i> : A huge number of Lovefest visitors annoy the local population	3.12	1.385	
<i>n-2</i> : During Lovefest, huge traffic crowds are created and there are insufficient parking places in the destination	4.25	0.967	
<i>n-3</i> : During Lovefest, the noise level is higher in the destination	4.24	1.048	
<i>n-4</i> : Huge crowds in the whole destination occur during Lovefest (in restaurants, cafes, stores, markets, etc)	4.28	0.976	
<i>n-5</i> : During Lovefest there is a huge waste throughout the destination and natural values are endangered	4.07	1.217	
<i>n-6</i> : During Lovefest cultural and historical values of the destination are endangered	3.10	1.389	
<i>n-7</i> : Lovefest affects the local population to change negatively their moral principles and behavior	3.10	1.302	
<i>n-8</i> : Lovefest affects the growth in local population costs of living, because of increasing prices in the destination during the festival	3.75	1.256	
<i>n-9</i> : Unlawful, immoral, and promiscuous activities occur during Lovefest	3.53	1.366	

Source: Author's research

#### 4.2. T-test results by gender and occupation of respondents

Differences between respondents' attitudes about the impacts of Lovefest considering their gender were examined by using the t-test. The results showed that there are significant differences in the responses of respondents of a different gender for the following positive impacts: *p-4*: Just like tourists and visitors, the local population also may be present and enjoy Lovefest; *p-5*: During the Lovefest, the local population have more opportunities for fun, as well as to meet and socialize with new people of different cultures and *p-6*: Lovefest brings opportunities for the local population to present and promote their talents (music, acting, art) at significance level  $p < 0.05$  (Table 3). It can be concluded that females rated higher positive impacts than male respondents. The results of the t-test pointed that there are no significant differences between respondents' attitudes with respect to gender about the negative impacts of Lovefest.

Table 3: Results of the t-test according to the gender of respondents

Positive impacts	Arithmetic mean		t-test
	Male (n=102)	Female (n=170)	
<i>p-1</i>	3.13	3.31	0.330
<i>p-2</i>	3.04	3.18	0.431
<i>p-3</i>	3.64	3.91	0.126
<i>p-4</i>	3.67	4.01	0.032*
<i>p-5</i>	3.77	4.12	0.022*
<i>p-6</i>	3.04	3.54	0.004*
<i>p-7</i>	4.15	4.21	0.636
<i>p-8</i>	3.51	3.71	0.267
<i>p-9</i>	2.77	2.99	0.254

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's research

T-test was also used with the aim of comparing the arithmetic value of respondents' answers depending on the relation between their job with tourism about the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest. The applied statistical analysis indicated that there are statistically significant differences in the respondents' answers according to the relation of their job with tourism for statement *p-7*: Local population may have additional earnings due to Lovefest at significance level  $p < 0.05$ . This statement is rated higher by the respondents whose job is tourism-related (Table 4). When it comes to the negative impacts of Lovefest, according to the t-test there are no significant differences in the attitudes of respondents depending on the relation of their job to tourism.

Table 4: Results of the t-test according to the relation between the job of respondents and tourism

Positive impacts	Arithmetic mean		t-test
	Relation between the job of respondents and tourism		
	Yes (n=178)	No (n=94)	
<i>p-1</i>	3.33	3.07	0.177
<i>p-2</i>	3.21	2.97	0.176
<i>p-3</i>	3.79	3.83	0.829
<i>p-4</i>	3.90	3.83	0.644
<i>p-5</i>	4.08	3.83	0.092
<i>p-6</i>	3.39	3.29	0.568
<i>p-7</i>	4.29	4.00	0.039*
<i>p-8</i>	3.74	3.44	0.094
<i>p-9</i>	2.99	2.76	0.222

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's research

### 4.3. Results of ANOVA and discussion

ANOVA was applied in order to analyze significant differences in respondents' attitudes about the impacts of Lovefest. The dependent variables are statements referring to the positive and negative impacts of Lovefest and the independent variables are socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (age, educational level, and occupation). Considering that the smaller number of respondents are represented in certain categories in the case of age, educational level and occupation, the analysis included those categories of respondents who have a percentage share in the sample of 10% and more. The results of ANOVA indicate that there are no significant differences between the respondents' attitudes of different age about the positive impacts of Lovefest for any of the nine offered statements. The results of the applied statistical analysis indicated that there are significant differences in attitudes of the respondents of different age about the statements, which are related to the negative impacts of Lovefest for six out of nine statements at a significance level  $p < 0.05$  (Table 5).

Table 5: ANOVA according to the age of respondents

Negative impacts	Middle value			F	p
	group 1 (20-30)	group 2 (31-40)	group 3 (41-50)		
<i>n-1</i>	3.51	2.78	2.96	7.751	0.001*
<i>n-2</i>	4.42	4.09	4.26	3.004	0.051
<i>n-3</i>	4.40	4.00	4.26	3.648	0.027*
<i>n-4</i>	4.45	4.11	4.28	2.983	0.052
<i>n-5</i>	4.37	3.88	3.85	5.392	0.005*
<i>n-6</i>	3.34	2.99	2.98	1.939	0.146
<i>n-7</i>	3.44	2.93	2.79	5.919	0.003*
<i>n-8</i>	4.01	3.62	3.55	3.439	0.034*
<i>n-9</i>	4.03	3.12	3.19	14.255	0.000*

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's research

Tukey post-hoc test is used in order to determine among which groups statistically significant differences exist. The results indicated that there are significant differences in attitudes of the respondents aged 20 to 30 and 31 to 40 for the statements: *n-1*: A huge number of Lovefest visitors annoy the local population ( $p=0.001 < 0.05$ ); *n-3*: During Lovefest, the noise level is higher in the destination ( $p=0.021 < 0.05$ ); *n-5*: During Lovefest there is a huge waste throughout the destination and natural values are endangered ( $p=0.011 < 0.05$ ); *n-7*: Lovefest affects the local population to change negatively their moral principles and behavior ( $p=0.016 < 0.05$ ); *n-9*: Unlawful, immoral, and promiscuous activities occur during Lovefest. ( $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ). The results of Tukey post-hoc test showed that there are significant differences in attitudes of the respondents aged 20 to 30 and 41 to 50 for the statements: *n-5*: During Lovefest there is a huge waste throughout the destination and natural values are endangered ( $p=0.036 < 0.05$ ); *n-7*: Lovefest affects the local population to change negatively their moral principles and behavior ( $p=0.011 < 0.05$ ) and *n-9*: Unlawful, immoral, and promiscuous activities occur during Lovefest ( $p=0.001 < 0.05$ ).

Table 6: ANOVA according to the educational level of respondents

Positive impacts	Middle value				F	p
	group 1 (Secondary school)	group 2 (College)	group 3 (Faculty)	group 4 (M.Sc.)		
<i>p-1</i>	3.49	3.38	3.02	3.20	1.611	0.187
<i>p-2</i>	3.54	3.10	2.89	3.04	3.413	0.018*
<i>p-3</i>	3.95	3.90	3.65	3.86	0.801	0.494
<i>p-4</i>	3.84	3.97	3.71	4.09	1.176	0.319
<i>p-5</i>	4.05	4.00	3.89	4.04	0.353	0.787
<i>p-6</i>	3.33	3.36	3.23	3.54	0.586	0.625
<i>p-7</i>	4.28	4.15	4.15	4.14	0.254	0.859
<i>p-8</i>	3.86	3.54	3.54	3.61	0.903	0.440
<i>p-9</i>	3.24	2.72	2.91	2.73	1.584	0.194

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's research

Applying the mentioned analysis, it has been found that there are significant differences in the attitudes of respondents regarding their different educational levels for the statement *p-2*: Lovefest contributes to the local population to feel very proud at significance level  $p < 0.05$ . It is determined that significant differences exist in attitudes of the respondents who completed secondary school and those who completed faculty ( $p = 0.011 < 0.05$ ) (Table 6). According to the ANOVA results, there are no significant differences in the respondents' attitudes with respect to their educational levels when it comes to negative impacts of Lovefest for any of the nine offered statements.

Table 7: ANOVA according to the occupation of respondents

Positive impacts	Middle value				F	p
	group 1 (Employed)	group 2 (Unemployed)	group 3 (Student)	group 4 (Retired)		
<i>n-1</i>	3.06	3.03	3.70	2.17	3.530	0.031*
<i>n-2</i>	4.24	4.06	4.57	3.83	2.686	0.070
<i>n-3</i>	4.22	3.91	4.59	4.50	3.798	0.024*
<i>n-4</i>	4.31	3.88	4.49	4.00	3.759	0.025*
<i>n-5</i>	4.03	3.84	4.54	3.83	3.532	0.031*
<i>n-6</i>	3.02	3.03	3.70	2.50	3.864	0.022*
<i>n-7</i>	3.00	3.09	3.78	2.00	5.846	0.003*
<i>n-8</i>	3.66	3.69	4.30	3.33	4.084	0.018*
<i>n-9</i>	3.41	3.44	4.27	3.33	6.531	0.002*

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's research

The results of the ANOVA showed that occupation does not influence the respondents' attitudes about the positive impacts of Lovefest. Using the mentioned analysis, it has been proved that there are significant differences in respondents' attitudes of different occupation about statements, which are related to the negative impacts of Lovefest for eight out of nine statements at a significance level  $p < 0.05$  (Table 7). The Tukey post-hoc test indicated that there are significant differences in the attitudes of employed respondents and students for the following statements *n-1*: A huge number of Lovefest visitors annoy the local population ( $p = 0.026 < 0.05$ ); *n-5*: During Lovefest there is a huge waste throughout the destination and

natural values are endangered ( $p=0.046<0.05$ );  $n-6$ : During Lovefest cultural and historical values of the destination are endangered ( $p=0.017<0.05$ );  $n-7$ : Lovefest affects the local population to change negatively their moral principles and behavior ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ) and  $n-8$ : Lovefest affects the growth in local population costs of living, because of increasing prices in the destination during the festival ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). The results of the mentioned test also showed there are significant differences in the attitudes of unemployed respondents and students for the following statements:  $n-3$ : During Lovefest, the noise level is higher in the destination ( $p=0.019<0.05$ );  $n-4$ : Huge crowds in the whole destination occur during Lovefest (in restaurants, cafes, stores, markets, etc) ( $p=0.025<0.05$ );  $n-5$ : During Lovefest there is a huge waste throughout the destination and natural values are endangered ( $p=0.045<0.05$ ) and  $n-9$ : Unlawful, immoral, and promiscuous activities occur during Lovefest ( $p=0.029<0.05$ )

## 5. Discussion

So far, a large number of authors have examined the local population's attitudes about the tourism impacts in their researches (Bastias-Perez & Var, 1995; Dorđević & Milićević, 2021; Eusébio et al., 2018; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Hadinejad et al., 2019; Ling et al., 2011; Milićević et al., 2020; Woosnam et al., 2018). In the era of mass tourism, it is very important to analyze the local population's attitudes, bearing in mind that they are a very important interest group in tourism development. Also, the quality of the local population's life is greatly under the influence not only by the tourism development but also by the impacts that arise from it. Despite a large number of scientific researches on the local population's attitudes about positive and negative tourism impacts, this topic is still not sufficiently examined when it comes to spa destinations and music festivals. Therefore, the authors of this paper examined the local population's attitudes of the Vrnjačka Banja as one of the most visited spas in the Republic of Serbia where the Lovefest is held, according to its characteristics is not typical for this type of destination. The purpose of this paper was to determine the differences in the local population's attitudes towards the positive, as well as to the negative impacts of Lovefest based on their socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, occupation, and education) and whether their job is tourism-related.

Referring to the research results, which were obtained with statistical processing of primary data, it can be concluded that the local population's attitudes to some positive and negative impacts of Lovefest differ regarding their socio-demographic characteristics. When it comes to the influence of gender on the local population's attitudes about the impacts of Lovefest, the statistically significant differences are present in only a few positive impacts of Lovefest whereby female respondents rated higher this impacts than male respondents. These results are inconsistent with the results obtained in the studies of Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) and Jani (2018) who concluded that male members of the local population express a greater degree of agreement with the positive tourism impacts in relation to women. However, in some other studies, it has been established that women have more positive attitudes about tourism impacts (Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Based on the research results, the hypotheses  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  have not been proven. Results of this study showed that members of the local population, whose job is tourism-related, expressed a greater degree of agreement with the statement that the local population may have additional earnings due to Lovefest compared to those who do not engage in a job related to tourism. Involvement of the local population in the tourism development through their job influence their attitudes about the tourism impacts as well as their support of tourism development (Yuan et al., 2019). Based on this study,  $H_9$  and  $H_{10}$  have not been proven.

When it comes to age, the obtained results showed the existence of statistically significant differences between local population's attitudes of different age about the six out of nine negative impacts of Lovefest, which are related to a huge number of visitors, the higher noise level, huge waste and natural values endangering, changes in moral principles and behaviour of local population higher costs of living and increased prices in the destination as well as to unlawful, immoral, and promiscuous activities in the destination. Some studies showed that the age of the local population influences their attitudes about tourism impacts (Bagri & Kala, 2016). Results of conducted research indicate that statistically significant differences are present in most cases between the local population's attitudes aged 20 to 30 and 31 to 40 as well between the local population's attitudes aged 20 to 30 and 41 to 50. The results of this study have not provided the support for hypothesis  $H_3$  while hypothesis  $H_4$  about the existence of the significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest, considering their age has been proven. Some studies showed that educational level influences the local population's attitudes on the tourism impacts (Almeida-García et al., 2016; Látková & Vogt, 2012; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). In this study, the authors concluded that educational level has an influence on the local population's attitudes towards the statement, which is related to the positive impact of the contribution of Lovefest to creating a sense of pride in the local population. This is very pronounced in the case of those who completed secondary school and those who completed faculty. Although, hypotheses  $H_5$  and  $H_6$  have not been proven. The most important conclusion of statistical analysis is that occupation influence the local population's attitudes about the negative impacts of Lovefest for seven out of nine statements. Significant differences exist in the attitudes of employed respondents and students as well as between the attitudes of unemployed respondents and students. One of the few studies, which included occupation as one of the socio-demographic characteristics, showed that occupation influences the local population's attitudes about tourism impacts (Feroni et al., 2019). Based on the results of this study, hypothesis  $H_7$  has not been proven but hypothesis  $H_8$  about the existence of the significant differences in the local population's attitudes towards the negative impacts of Lovefest considering their occupation has been supported by research results.

## **6. Conclusion**

Tourism impacts have been one of the most represented topics in empirical researches for many years. Recognizing the important role of the local population in tourism development, it is necessary to examine their attitudes to tourism impacts. Bearing in mind that tourism creates a large number of negative impacts on the local community, the involvement of the local population in the tourism development can contribute to more intensive sustainable tourism and better quality of their life. The purpose of this research was to examine if there are differences in the local population's attitudes towards positive and negative impacts of Lovefest, which is organized in Vrnjačka Banja, based on their age, gender, educational level, occupation, and the relation between their job and tourism. This research confirms that there are statistical differences in the local population's attitudes regarding certain positive and negative impacts of Lovefest based on their socio-demographic characteristics. Regarding some of the positive impacts of Lovefest, the local population's attitudes statistically differ concerning the local population's gender, their level of education and whether their job is tourism-related. When it comes to the negative impacts of Lovefest, the local population's attitudes differ regarding their age and occupation. Out of 10 special hypotheses, which were set in the paper, only two hypotheses were proved by the research results, while the others were rejected.

This research has certain limitations. Those are the small sample size, lack of interest of the local population to participate in the survey, and level of sample representativeness, considering the fact that a convenience sample is used in this study. Therefore, the period of conducting the data should be longer in future studies. In order to motivate the local population to participate, authors should use the combined method of data collection, which would involve the online distribution of questionnaires and the face-to-face technique. Future studies should look for statistical differences in their attitudes regarding their socio-demographic characteristics towards festival impacts, which should be presented, not only as positive and negative impacts but also as economic, environmental, and socio-cultural. The results of this study are of practical importance because they can be used by the festival management for future planning. Also, the results have practical implication for tourism destination management, because it gives the insights about the local population attitudes towards the impacts of Lovefest, that are generally part of overall tourism impacts in Vrnjačka Banja. Therefore, such insights are crucial for developing and planning sustainable tourism strategies in Vrnjačka Banja. On the other hand, the scientific significance is that besides the economic impacts of the festival, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts are also included. Moreover, there have been no research studies on the festival impacts depending on the basic characteristics of the local population in spa destinations.

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## **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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