



Possibilities for active tourist holidays in rural areas in the region of AP Vojvodina, Serbia

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ABSTRACT

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The subject of the article is to research the possibility of active rural holidays in region of AP Vojvodina (Autonomous Province), with the goal of determining how it can improve tourist competitiveness. The aim is based on the outcome of practical research conducted on the attitudes of tourists and potential tourists about the quality of the supply and the possibilities for active holidays; to identify the elements of tourist supply chain that can have an influence on the active and potential future supply of rural destinations and propose strategic directions for improving their competitiveness. The obtained results of survey provided the opportunity to identify elements in tourist supply chain that are strongest and weakest; analyze current problems pointed out, and suggest strategic ways for further growth of rural tourism. They also suggested the ways to it the competitiveness of rural destinations. AP Vojvodina was selected as the target area for the following reasons: a high level of rural tourism development; the presence of numerous attractive factors that can favor active tourism holidays; high level of economic and social development; and a high level of local population awareness regarding the importance that rural tourism can have for the rise of local economy.

Contribution/Originality: The study focuses on exploring opportunities for active tourist vacations in rural Vojvodina, Serbia. Only a handful of studies have examined this issue in Serbia to date. The focus is on empirical research of the attitudes of active and potential tourists, with the aim of improving rural tourism competitiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern tourists are more sophisticated and demanding, which is influenced by their better education, the increased number of media sources on which services of various tourist destinations are offered, the growth of income of certain segments of tourist demand, progress in the field of traffic, etc. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Baloglu, 2017). Tourists' needs for new experiences are constantly increasing, and today, tourists are ready to pay more for new experiences (Peric, 2015). Activities that can be practiced in tourist destinations provide new experiences for tourists and can influence their decision to come, as well as repeat their tourist consolation which can have a long-term effect on the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

The World Tourism Organization (UN WTO, 2023) highlights that more and more tourists are interested in different activities during their trips and represent the main objective of travel.

Mackenzie and Hodge (2020) argued that contact with nature results in an increase in the subjective well-being of tourists and argued that state with examples. They conclude that role of nature is very important for human health (for

physical and mental human condition). The possibility of staying in nature and rural areas has a positive effect not only on the psycho-physical condition of people, but it also has a positive effects on family bonding.

National Program for Renewial Villigies of Serbia – State Problems and Priorities (2020) argued that more than 80% of Serbian teritory covers rural areas; results of Serbian Census 2011 show that 43.6% of total population lives in rural areas; of the Serbia, there are 4.702 villages; territory of Serbia has high level of geographical diversity; also, in Serbia, there are 28 different nationalities with great anthropogenic heritage, etc.

All these facts influence the conclusion that possibilities for developing various types of rural tourist products can be offered to the the first market. One of the advantages is the possibility of active rural tourist vacations.

In Serbia, the issue of analyzing different opportunities for active vacations in rural tourist destinations has been investigated in several strategic and planning documents (Master Plan for Sustainable Development Rural Tourism in Serbia, 2011; Program for Development Tourism in AP Vojvodina for the Period from 2023 to 2025, 2023) and also in the planning documents of some local communities.

Considering the current trends in the tourist market, it was interesting to research the situation, starting with the facts that:

- The number of rural tourist destinations increases every day, especially in areas that have favorable conditions (natural, soicial, or anthropogenic) for their development, such as the region of the AP Vojvodina in Serbia.
- Achieved a level of rural tourism development in Serbia. its intensity, forms, and character differences between regions.
- The tourist market is continuously developing. Its main characteristic is the high elasticity of demand and constant progress in the quality of the tourist offer.
- Characteristic of the modern tourist market is the increased level of competition among rural tourist destinations that offer similar or almost identical tourist supplies.
- Different activities that could be practiced in rural areas are seen as one of the important elements of the tourist offer, which can make differences between rural tourist products and between rural tourist destinations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, rural areas are burdened with numerous problems (decrease in macroeconomic indicators, depopulation, in the process of accelerating population aging, migrations, etc.). Numerous authors, Barbieri, Sotomayor, and Aguilar (2019); Fotiadis, Yeh, and Huan (2016) and Sgroi, Donia, and Mineo (2018) are researching these negative trends and suggesting a process of diversifying economic activities to ensure household income and promote the rural environment. They suggest “rural tourism initiatives” as a way to improve these negative trends through the empowerment of local entrepreneurship.

Rural tourist destinations attract people from urban city centers to come and rest (Vuković, 2017). Numerous organizations that follow the process of development and characteristics of rural tourism have their own definition of rural tourism. Nowadays, one of the most cited definitions is the one given by the World Tourist Organization: “Rural tourism represents a type of tourism activity in which the visitor experience is linked to a wide range of products related to activities based on nature, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, hunting, fishing, and sightseeing. Rural tourism activities take place in rural areas, i.e., not urban areas characterized by: 1) low population density; 2) landscapes and land use dominated by agriculture and forestry; and 3) traditional social structure, and rural way of life” (UN WTO, 2017).

Vanhove (2022) distinguished the attitude of tourist destination management and named it “old” and “new.” The first type of tourism is mass and standarised; the tourist product is rigidly packed; there is a high regard for consumers, technology, processes, and production resources. The "new" ones characterized as flexible, segmented, ecologically

responsible, and with a strongly integrated tourist offer. Tendencies on the tourist market nowadays go beyond the concept of bed and breakfast (B&B), in addition to developing non-boarding tourist activities.

Lakičević and Sagić (2019) analyzed the offer in rural tourism and stated that the characteristics of the tourist product must be such as to attract tourist demand and make it loyal. In this sense, he underlines that the quality of the tourist product must be in correlation with tourist expectations, even more so than exceeding them.

Farmers who are hosts to tourists, must be educated in a way to respond to their needs and demands. Their obligation is to help improve the economic and social life of the local community by investing in the quality of the rural environment (Fotiadis et al., 2016).

Some authors, Khairabadi, Sajadzadeh, and Mohamadianmansoor (2020) and Shaken, Mika, and Plokhikh (2020) analyzed possibilities for generating extra income and how to attract visitors in rural areas. In that sense, Khairabadi et al. (2020) stated that rural tourism, in addition to the fact that it contributes to increasing the economic income of farmers, it also has positive effects for tourists. He underlines the possibility of staying in a preserved natural environment, which leads to a reduction in the stress of tourists and a rise of their health and wellbeing. He insists on traditional local values such as the local natural and cultural environment, food, anthropogenic heritage, etc.

Rural areas have favorable conditions for the construction of various types of infrastructure that can be used for different types of active tourist holidays and serve the purpose of tourism development. The healthy and preserved natural environment of rural areas especially attracts tourists from urban (city) centers. The idea and motivation to enrich the usual tourist supply, which includes B&B with different kinds of activities in tourist destinations, has attracted attention in the literature (Bošković, Satić, & Poropat, 2010; Kotler et al., 2017; Roberts & Hall, 2003; Vanhove, 2022). Each of these authors tried to make their own list of activities that can be practiced in tourist destinations. Also, in certain adopted strategic documents in Serbia, such lists were developed (e.g., (Master Plan for Sustainable Development Rural Tourism in Serbia, 2011; Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2016-2025, 2016)).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subject of the article is to survey possibility of active rural tourist holidays in the AP Vojvodina with the aim of pointing out ways in which it can improve the competitiveness of rural tourist destinations.

The goal established on the results of the realized practical survey of the attitudes of tourists and potential tourists about the quality of the tourist supply and the possibilities for active tourist holidays in the region of AP Vojvodina; to identify the elements of tourist supply chain that can have influence on the current and potential future offers of rural destinations and propose strategic directions for improving their competitiveness.

Based on conducted research, the article identifies elements in tourist supply chain that reached highest and lowest score and represents the basis for further management processes to improve the competitiveness of rural tourism and give possibilities to establish strategic directions for further development.

Process of researching consists of two phases: desk and field research. Desk research represents the *first phase* and includes process of studying and analyzing actual official planning and strategic documents dedicated to the process of developing tourism important for AP Vojvodina (Master Plan for Sustainable Development Rural Tourism in Serbia, 2011; Program for Development Tourism in AP Vojvodina for the Period from 2023 to 2025, 2023). Also, process included research on actual laws of tourism (The Law on Tourism, 2019) as well as the Law about planning system (The Law on Planning System, 2018) and other important local regulations.

In order to enable the identification of the strongest and weakest elements in the chain of non-boarding tourism offers, i.e., to enable the assessment of the corresponding elements, the authors created a suitable list adapted to the natural-geographical characteristics of the AP Vojvodina area, as well as its social and anthropogenic characteristics. This list was created as a result of the synthesis of different lists, i.e., the combination of different elements of the non-boarding tourist offer suggested by certain authors who researched the tourist competitiveness of destinations and measured it (Bošković et al., 2010; Kotler et al., 2017; Roberts & Hall, 2003; Vanhove, 2022) as

well as the list of elements of the tourism supply suggested by the World Economic Forum when evaluating countries tourism competitiveness on an annual basis. Also, the list of elements was created on the basis of the author's desk research on the level of development of rural tourism in the region of AP Vojvodina.

The targeted region was AP Vojvodina, Serbia, which possesses natural and social characteristics that give positive presumption for development different kinds of tourist activities that can be practiced in rural areas.

The research was conducted by the authors in the period from April, 18th to July 03rd, 2022. The survey included a total of 308 respondents. The research was carried out as volunteer pilot research. Considering the number of inhabitants and villages that AP Vojvodina possesses, the sample could be larger, but the existing limiting circumstances influenced the fact that the answers obtained can be considered representative, taking into account that it was a pilot study. On average, it was necessary to allocate up to 10 minutes per respondent in order to collect the required data. The research was done in two ways; via the Internet and directly in the field via a "face-to-face" survey. Respondents were stakeholders (tourists, potential tourists and different persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the business of rural tourism).

Second phase involved the direct collection, processing, and analysis of data. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the survey, we used quantitative and qualitative methods. In data collection, the authors used a questionnaire as a tool, which was structured as an appropriate combination of structured (Likert scale) and unstructured questions, the so-called "open questions." The authors first conducted a conversation with the interested parties, checked the obtained data, and then initiated their electronic verification process. This approach allows the obtained data to be cross-referenced according to different bases and criteria (using tables, graphics, etc.).

After this, final considerations were given with appropriate evaluations and recommendations, which made it possible to improve the conditions for active vacation when tourists stay in rural tourist destinations in AP Vojvodina. The questionnaire is designed in such a way that it has two parts. The first part provided respondents with the opportunity to provide general assessments of the state of rural tourism in the region of AP Vojvodina. The second part asked respondents to evaluate individual elements of non-boarding tourist supply, using the developed list of elements as a reference.

Survey goals were to evaluate opportunities for active vacations in rural tourist destinations, namely:

- 1) Possibilities for organized tours of rural areas.
- 2) Possibilities to develop events in local communities. This event must be in accordance with specific local communities.
- 3) Possibilities for active vocations related to water bodies (rivers, lakes, etc.).
- 4) Opportunities for activities related to airspace.
- 5) Possibilities for practicing active sports-recreational activities in rural areas.
- 6) The article discusses the conditions and opportunities for cultural activities in rural areas.
- 7) Opportunities for health-related activities.
- 8) There are certain conditions for engaging in passive activities in rural areas.

Basic assumption of research was:

- H_0 : *There's no distinction in perception of tourists and potential tourists when they evaluate general tourist offer of rural areas and when the overall evaluation of all individual elements of rural tourism supply is considered summary; $H_0: \mu_d = 0$.*
- H_1 : *There is distinction between perception of tourists and potential tourists when they evaluate general tourist offer of rural areas and when the overall evaluation of all individual elements of rural tourism supply is considered summary; $H_1: \mu_d \neq 0$.*

In order to obtain the most reliable results of the analysis, computer technology was used with the statistical software SPSS.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Considering that today there are numerous tourist destinations that offer similar or almost identical contents that are based on overnight stays and breakfasts (meals), it can be concluded that the possibility for tourists to engage in non-pansion activities in rural areas has become crucial for gaining market competitive advantage. In process of creating rural tourist products, it is important to ensure the appropriate infrastructure that will enable sports and recreational activities. Rural tourism started to develop rapidly after 2008. The reason is that the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management allocated 91,580,2015 dinars (approximately 1,103,370 euros according to the official average exchange rates of the National Bank of Serbia) for its rise. This year can be considered a turning point in the process of developing rural tourism. Namely, from that period on, rural Serbia entered the second phase of development and that phase can be called "phase of purposeful development." Main characteristic of that phase is that rural tourism has started to develop more intensively in all parts of Serbia (Vuković, 2017). The basic characteristics of the research pilot area are that the entire region of AP Vojvodina belongs to the Pannonian Lowland and that more than 80% of the territory is rural. Bearing in mind current trends in tourism (return to nature, active vacation through a healthy lifestyle, etc.), the most favorable and well-known natural attractiveness suitable for the complementary development of rural and active (recreational) tourism stands out: National Park „Fruška Gora“; numerous protected areas of nature (such as: 9 nature parks, 21 nature reserves, 2 landscapes of exceptional characteristics, 85 natural monuments, etc.) (data from the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia (2024)) Danube River (European Corridor 7); etc. Considering the Census 2022 results in AP Vojvodina lives 1,740,230 inhabitants, of which 26 are ethnic groups, and 6 are in official use by the local administration. Table 1, shows the data for the sample on which the research was conducted.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents in the observed sample (n = 308).

Variables	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
a) Gender			
Female	161	52.27	52.27
Male	147	47.73	100.0
Total	308	100.0	-
b) Age			
Up to 20	2	0.65	0.65
21-30	26	8.44	9.09
31-40	107	34.74	43.83
41-50	125	40.58	84.41
51-60	34	11.04	95.45
61 and more	14	4.55	100.00
Total	308	100.0	-
c) Education			
Primary education	3	0.97	0.97
High school	98	31.82	32.79
University education	186	60.39	93.18
In progress (Pupil, student)	19	6.17	99.35
Other	2	0.65	100.0
Total	308	100.0	-
d) Profession			
Worker	46	14.94	14.94
Clerk	137	44.48	59.42
Businessman	17	5.52	64.94
Pupil, student	19	6.17	71.11
Sportsman	3	0.97	72.08
Unemployed	24	7.79	79.87
Professor	11	3.57	83.44
Pensioner	28	9.09	92.53
Scientific worker	6	1.95	94.48
Researcher	14	4.55	99.03
Other	3	0.97	100.0
Total	308	100.0	-

Table 1 reveals that we surveyed a total of 308 respondents. The gender structure showed that 147 males, or 47.3%, and 161 females, or 52.27%, were surveyed. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 41 to 50 or 40.58%, followed by the group of respondents aged 31 to 40, etc. We conclude that three quarters of respondents belong to these two age categories. Also, the research showed that the largest number of respondents belonged to the categories of higher education (60.39%) and secondary education (31.82%). None of the respondents had only primary education. The research showed that 44.8% of respondents declared themselves employed. Workers are in second place in the structure of respondents, with 14.94%. The research revealed that 7.79% of respondents declared themselves unemployed. The respondents in the research were researchers (4.55%), scientists (1.95%), pensioners (9.09%), business people (5.52%), and pupils and students (6.17%).

Based on the respondents' presented structure, we can conclude that they were capable of assessing the current state of rural tourism and its potential for active vacations.

The following categories of respondents were included in the research:

- Former tourists: persons who had opportunity to stay in a rural tourist destination in AP Vojvodina;
- Potential tourists: persons who show interest in vacationing in a rural tourist destination;
- persons directly or indirectly involved in development of rural tourism (owners of tourist farms, pupils employed in local and regional administration, persons who research rural development problems, such as researchers in the institutes, professors, etc.).

The largest number of respondents (58.5%) had the opportunity to stay in one of the rural tourist destinations in AP Vojvodina. It is also interesting that a large number of respondents (18.2%) never spent holidays or part of holidays in one of the rural tourist destinations, while almost the same number of respondents stayed once or twice (10.6% and 8.7%).

The results revealed that more than half of the respondents had the opportunity to stay in one of the rural tourist destinations in AP Vojvodina. Based on this, we can conclude that they were satisfied with the tourist offer and that they wanted to repeat the positive rural tourist experience. Also, the obtained data showed that a high percentage of respondents (18.1%) did not have the opportunity to stay in one of the rural tourist destinations until now. We conclude that marketing activities must be increased in order to animate this part of the potential tourist demand and to attract them to visit rural tourist destinations.

This primarily refers to investments in all means of the promotional mix that must be in the function of rural tourism development, which must be the task of local tourist organizations, tourist offers, as well as all other policy holders of tourism development.

The research showed that the vast majority of those who had already stayed (94.8%) independently organized their vacation in rural tourist destinations of the AP Vojvodina. The fact that only 1.7% of those surveyed answered that they organized their stay through a travel agency corresponds to the well-known fact that domestic travel agencies do not or very little deal with receptive tourism, which can also be considered a criticism of their work.

An important segment of the research was the study of the length of stay of tourists in rural tourist destinations. The obtained results indicate that 86.1% of respondents spent up to 3 days. Specifically, the research showed that 17.3% would stay for 1 day, and 67.9% of the respondents said they would stay for 2 to 3 days. One of the goals of the survey was to establish the respondents' first association with rural tourist destinations in AP Vojvodina. The conducted research provided results that indicate that the respondents had different associations about rural tourist destinations in the region of AP Vojvodina, i.e., that there is a big dispersion in their responses. Those surveyed showed that they have a positive attitude most often about the following elements related to rural destinations: preservation of the environment, a wide range of food and drinks that are produced in an organic, healthy way. On the other side, as limiting conditions for the development of rural tourism, they cite poor rural infrastructure, i.e., poor quality of local roads, as well as criticism directed at poor rural hygiene.

Starting with the research results, the authors were able to develop a list of 74 rural tourist destinations in AP Vojvodina that the respondents had heard of and named. Based on the answers obtained in this way, the authors are

able to conclude that the respondents are well informed about the rural tourist offer. However, this answer should be understood conditionally, i.e., it can also be understood as one of the limiting factors in the conducted research. Namely, we are talking about subjective evaluations, because numerous of those surveyed in their answers mentioned villages or rural areas that are located in the neighborhoods of their cities, or villages that are their "birthplaces."

The core of the survey that was carried out was an evaluation of the elements of the rural tourist supply, which are the function of the possibility of providing active tourist holidays in rural areas in AP Vojvodina.

The list of elements of the non-boarding tourist offer is made as a combination of elements suggested by professional literature and the author's personal assessments with the aim of improving the quality of local rural tourist supply. The results of the survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Assessment of the elements of the non-pansions tourist supply that influence the creation of conditions for engaging in active tourist holidays in rural areas in the region of AP Vojvodina, Serbia.

Elements of the non-pansions tourist supply that influence the creation of conditions for engaging in active holidays in rural areas in the region of the AP Vojvodina, Serbia.	Freq.	Mean	SD
I. Possibilities for organized tours of rural area (Touring)	304	4.06	1.105
Village and small town tours	305	3.94	1.217
Tours by village carriages, carts, etc.	299	3.72	1.298
Horseback riding	296	3.52	1.077
Cycling tours	277	4.01	1.059
Hiking trails (Fitness tours, health trails, national park tours, etc.)	300	3.96	1.119
Adventure vacation, vacation in wild nature, etc.	295	3.65	1.223
II. Events/Manifestations which are characteristic for rural areas	294	4.02	1.112
Rural events and manifestations (Events)	283	4.33	0.907
Agricultural fairs	305	4.098	1.198
Different types of rural sports and recreational events	287	4.04	1.149
III. Activities related to water bodies	293	3.39	0.937
Fishing	307	3.69	0.672
Tourism related to staying on rivers and waterways	278	3.48	0.851
Staying in "aqualand" type facilities	265	3.43	1.193
Swimming	253	3.33	1.036
Boat races	294	0.98	1.094
Boating	296	3.18	0.991
Sailing	292	2.68	1.138
Wind based surfing	295	2.64	1.115
IV. Activities related to airspace	291	3.09	1.013
Kite sailing, hot air ballooning	296	3.03	1.007
Air-craft sailing	277	2.99	0.954
Paragliding	274	3.17	0.927
V. Sport-recreational activities related to the rural area	289	3.58	1.512
Hunting	291	3.97	1.063
Photo safari	272	3.66	1.102
Orienteering	308	3.78	1.143
Golf	297	2.92	1.121
VI. Cultural activities	308	4.05	0.896
Folklore	303	4.18	0.847
Archaeology	306	3.69	1.086
Visits to rural/Village museums	254	3.65	1.042
Study of rural cultural heritage	244	3.42	1.069
Acquaintance and study of old crafts and tools	221	3.88	1.019
Workshops of various artistic expressions	203	3.79	1.101
VII. Activities related for the improvement of health	305	3.92	1.027
Fitness trainings	307	3.77	1.056
Spa and wellness	308	3.64	1.227
Weight loss programs	306	3.55	1.254
VIII. Passive activities in rural areas	300	3.88	1.037
A relaxing holiday in a rural setting	92	4.09	1.009
Studying nature in the open space (Flora and fauna)	254	4.12	1.046

Specifically, the following elements of the tourist supply garnered the highest average rating from the group evaluation: Possibilities for organized tours of rural areas (*touring*) 4,06; Cultural activities: 4,05; Events or manifestations that are characteristic of rural areas: 4,02; Activities related to the improvement of health: 3,92; Passive activities in rural areas: 3,88; Sport-recreational activities related to the rural area: 3,58; Activities related to water: 3,39; Activities related to airspace: 3,09.

The research revealed that the following elements of the tourist offer, which pertain to the possibility of active vacations in rural areas, received the highest ratings: Rural events and manifestations (events) 4,33; Folklore 4,18; Studying Nature in the Open Space (Flora and Fauna) 4,12; Agricultural Fairs 4,1; A Relaxing Holiday in a Rural Setting 4,09; etc.

The obtained results support the well-known fact that manifestations (tourism of events) in AP Vojvodina are developed and that almost every rural area can boast of some specific manifestation that is characteristic of that local area and environment. Hence, the highest rating received by the element of the tourist offer for rural events and manifestations (events) was 4.33. Additionally, the ecological system of AP Vojvodina is relatively well-preserved, making it suitable for the variety of passive tourism activities. This is why respondents gave the element of the tourist offer, "Studying Nature in the Open Space (Flora and Fauna)," a very good rating of 4.14.

Hunting is also a long-standing tradition in AP Vojvodina. One of the characteristics of this area is its caring attitude towards flora and fauna. Unfortunately, due to the socio-economic crisis in which Serbia found itself in the last thirty years, the most famous hunting grounds were abandoned: Karađorđevo, Morović, Karakuša, Plavna, Sombor forest, Apatinski rit, Subotica, and Delibrato sandstone areas, and perhaps maybe the greatest hunting potential of Vojvodina - Fruška Gora Mountain.

Fruška Gora was once a diplomatic hunting ground at the highest level. With its natural beauty, it provides very good terms for habitation of game, such as wild boar, roe deer, deer, as well as small game. Survey results showed that the respondents were familiar with favorable conditions for the development of hunting tourism, and the obtained score of 3.97 indicates the possibilities for further improvement of the hunting infrastructure and the activation of all the potentials that exist.

The survey revealed that elements of tourism offering related to water-related activities received the lowest individual ratings. It is sailing (2.68) and wind based surfing (2.64). Notably, we note a difference when we compare these individual score of water-related activities. Namely, the group rating of water-related activities is almost very good (3.39). Hence the conclusion that additional investment should be made in these elements with the aim of improving tourist supply.

The aim of the realized research was to evaluate elements of tourist offer for active tourist holidays in rural areas of AP Vojvodina. By examining each component of the tourist supply separately, we can draw the following conclusions (Table 2):

- Events (manifestations) in AP Vojvodina are well developed. Almost, every rural area can boast of a local manifestation or event that is characteristic of the local environment and ambience. Hence the 4.33 rating given by the respondents to this element of the tourist offer;
- Given that Vojvodina is home to 26 different nations and nationalities, it makes sense that respondents rated folklore highly as an essential component of tradition and anthropogenic heritage (4.18);
- Vojvodina, with its preserved rural ambience, provides ideal conditions for relaxation and rest from urban (city) life, which is rated very good (A relaxing holiday in a rural setting, 4.09);
- Photo-safari and education programs about flora and fauna are a trend in recent years in almost all highly developed countries in Western Europe, America, and Japan, etc. With its rich and preserved natural resources, AP Vojvodina provides ideal opportunities for various nature study programs in open space. Therefore, the respondents gave the pond element, "Studying Nature in the Open Space (flora and fauna)" with an average score of 4.12;

- Agricultural fairs are rated 4,098. This is understandable because they have a long tradition in this region of Serbia. Almost every larger rural settlement has an agricultural fair where both agricultural and food products are presented, as well as all other products that are characteristic of the local rural area;
- The respondents were familiar with the good conditions that this region possesses for developing hunting tourism. Obtained result (3.97) indicates the possibilities for further improvement of the hunting infrastructure and activation of all the potentials that exist for this type of sports-recreational tourism.
- It is interesting that, despite the rich water resources that the Vojvodina area has (a large number of rivers and lakes), fishing as an opportunity for active recreation for tourists in a large number of different water bodies received an average rating of 3.69. Obviously, the respondents are not primarily motivated by fishing when they come to one of the rural tourist destinations. This evaluation points to the conclusion that additional work is needed to improve the fishing infrastructure, which would strengthen this segment of the tourist offer and make it more attractive for people visiting rural areas;
- Activities related to airspace received noticeably low marks: Kite sailing, hot air ballooning (3.03); aircraft sailing (2.99), and paragliding (3.17). It should be noted that in recent years there have been some efforts to further improve this segment of the tourist offer; This is how attempts are made both in the vicinity of Vršac (on Vršački breg) and in the Fruška Gora National Park.

It is important to highlight that AP Vojvodina has rich water resources, of which the Danube River (European Corridor 7) should be mentioned, as well as numerous other rivers (Tisa, Begej, Timiš, Karaš, etc.). Among the other water resources, it is worth mentioning the lakes: Paličko, the lakes in Bela Crkva (seven large and a large number of small ones), Zasavica, the Special Nature Reserve "Upper Danube" (consisting of: Monoštorski rit, Apatinski rit and the areas of Štrpac, Karapandža), etc. All of these attractions have the potential to attract the corresponding segment of tourist demand.

It usually happens in research that when the evaluations of the total tourist supply are analyzed with the summarized individual evaluations of the elements of the tourist supply, there is a difference. In this sense, the paper collected data in order to be able to perform this analysis (Tables 3, 4 and 5).

Table 3. Score of total tourist offer for active holidays in AP Vojvodina.

Answer	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent	
Valid	Insufficient (Score 1).	12	4.3	4.5	4.5
	Sufficient (Score 2).	69	23.9	24.5	29
	Good (Score 3).	135	41.5	42.6	71.6
	Very good (Score 4).	62	21.4	21.9	93.5
	Excellent (Score 5).	25	6.4	6.5	100.0
	Total	303	97.5	100.0	-
Missing	System	5	2.5	-	-
Total		308	100.0	-	-

The results of the research showed that most respondents, almost 43% (42.6%), rated the overall tourist offer with a rating of 3. This score is followed by a rating of sufficient 2. 24.5% of the respondents rated it as sufficient. The score, very good 4, was given by 22% (21.9%) of the respondents, etc.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Total score	303	1.29	4.49	3.035	1.126

Table 5. Paired samples statistics.

Variables	Mean	N	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Average score of the respondents' perception of the quality of the overall tourist supply for active vacations in the rural areas	3.036	303	1.126	0.035
Average scores of individual elements of the offer of rural tourism and their summation	3.001	303	0.332	0.011

H_0 : There's no distinction in perception of tourists and potential tourists when they evaluate general tourist offer of rural areas and when the overall evaluation of all individual elements of rural tourism supply is considered summary; $H_0: \mu d = 0$.

H_1 : There is distinction in perception of tourists and potential tourists when they evaluate general tourist offer of rural areas and when the overall evaluation of all individual elements of rural tourism supply is considered summary; $H_1: \mu d \neq 0$.

Table 6. Descriptive measurs for variable average score of the respondents' perception of the quality of the overall tourist supply for active vacations in the rural areas and average scores of individual elements of the offer of rural tourism and their summation.

Pair 1	Paired differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Average score of the respondents' perception of the quality of the overall tourist supply for active vacations in the rural areas and average scores of individual elements of the supply of rural tourism and their summation	0.115	0.800	0.054	0.027	0.265	2.51	298	0.027

Note: $p = 0.014 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Table 5 presents the average score that shows the respondents' perception of the quality of the overall tourist supply for active vacations in the rural areas of AP Vojvodina, which is (3.036). The analysis of the scores of individual elements of the offer of rural tourism and their summation gave a total value of (3.001).

Table 6 presents that it was statistically tested whether the ratings of the tourists' perception of the total rural tourist offer (3.036) and the rating obtained by summing up the individual scores of the rural tourist offer (3.001) are the same. The conclusion reveals a 95% reliability in rejecting the null hypothesis, indicating that tourists and the potential tourists view the overall tourist offer as superior to the summation of individual elements related to the possibility of an active tourist vacation in the AP Vojvodina. Depending on their own overall tourist experience during their stay in rural tourist destinations, respondents individually evaluated certain elements with a higher or lower score. Also, the individual importance of each of the elements on the respondent's attitude during the survey influenced the obtaining of such scores (tables 5 and 6).

We can conclude, based on the obtained scores, that AP Vojvodina has respectable resources for the development of various types of activities that can enrich the stay of tourists in rural tourist destinations. About 70% of respondents evaluate these possibilities as satisfactory or very satisfactory. The differences in the obtained individual and group scores point to the conclusion that it is necessary to do more promotional activities related to the possibility of active vacations in rural tourist destinations, in order to familiarize the tourist demand with them.

Additionally, there were appropriate limitations in conducting the research:

- The sample on which the research was conducted was convenient.

- Obtained results from the survey can't be compared with official data, which can be taken from Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), because SORS doesn't collect data by types of tourism, or by the place from which tourists come to certain destinations.
- The responses provided by respondents were subjective in nature.
- Various types of open-ended questions.
- Possible errors in respondents' answers, etc.

5. CONCLUSIONS

AP Vojvodina possesses favorable natural and anthropogenic (social) attractions that are suitable to develop rural tourism. Many different program activities based on the lives of the local population can be an inspiration for making different types of rural tourism products. The conducted research showed that about 70% of respondents evaluated these possibilities as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Bearing in mind the actual level of development of rural tourism in Serbia, it is reasonable to expect that by improving the development of the basic infrastructure on which it is based in the next phase, investments should be made in appropriate infrastructure that will provide conditions for non-boarding and active vacations for tourists in rural areas.

The obtained individual scores of tourist supply elements, which are related to active tourist holidays, indicate the strongest and weakest elements in the chain of tourist offer, that is, they show exactly which elements of tourist supply need to be invested in in order to improve and increase level of tourist satisfaction. This is a task at all levels of tourism development management, from local, regional, and national. It is also important to mention the strategic commitments presented in the document "Strategy for Development Tourism for the Period 2016-2025" (p. 22), in which rural tourism is recognized as one of the perspective types of tourism in Serbia. Also, the same document states that the trends that should be followed in further development are: "fitness and sports," "possibilities for trying new experiences," "ways of living like a local population," etc. Therefore, we anticipate that these two complementary forms of tourism will become increasingly significant in the upcoming years.

Based on the statistical methodology applied in the research, it has been shown that with a reliability of 95%, the hypothesis that there is no distinction in the perception of tourists and potential tourists when evaluating the conditions for an active tourist vacation in the rural areas of AP Vojvodina can be rejected, i.e., that the respondents have a better perception of the overall conditions for an active tourist vacation (3.036), than when all the components of the tourist offer are evaluated individually and when they are summarized (3.001). Depending on individual experience and preferences, respondents rated various elements of the tourist offer as higher, i.e., lower scores. Also, the individual importance of each of the elements of the tourist supply influenced the level of individual ratings obtained.

Based on the above, it is concluded that AP Vojvodina has respectable resources that can be put to the function of developing various types of active tourist holidays that can enrich the stay of tourists in rural tourist destinations. Considering the obtained data and conclusions based on the conducted research, recommendations for further research in this area related to the region of AP Vojvodina could refer to the following:

- Research related to determining the preferences of potential home tourists when they are making decisions in process of choosing a rural tourist destination. In other words, the study aims to establish preferences for those elements of the tourist supply that are crucial for making a positive decision when choosing a rural tourist destination.
- Future research can be dedicated to researching the preferences of foreign tourists regarding the possibility of an active vacation in rural areas in region of AP Vojvodina;
- In future studies, attention can be given to the possibility of combining the obtained results with appropriate qualitative research methods;
- The survey can be aimed at extracting competitiveness factors for rural tourist destinations using the method of multivariate analysis;

- We can repeat the research to compare the obtained data after a certain period of time.

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