





Article

Development of the Concept of Sustainable Agro-Tourism Destinations—Exploring the Motivations of Serbian Gastro-Tourists

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Abstract: One of the key elements for the development of an agro-tourism destination can be specific gastronomy. In this context, research and understanding of the motivation of tourists who visit those destinations can influence the development of the concept of their sustainability, which was the goal of this research. The research was conducted during 2022 on a total sample of 607 respondents who stayed in agro-tourism destinations in the Republic of Serbia. The paper presents motivational factors that potentially influence the frequency of gastronomic tourists to try local gastronomic specialties and food in agro-tourism destinations. The results indicate that the cultural experience dimension, excitement dimension, interpersonal, relation dimension, and sensory appeal dimension show a significant influence on the visitation of agro-tourism destinations by gastronomic tourists, while the health concern dimension factor does not show statistical significance. The results undoubtedly indicate that certain socio-demographic characteristics of gastro-tourists have an impact on the development of an agro-tourism destination, in the direction that the more educated as well as women have more positive attitudes towards the influence of motivational factors on the development of an agro-tourism destination.

Keywords: gastronomy; motivation; agro-tourism; Serbia

1. Introduction

The development of sustainability of all forms of tourism is a current topic in the world, so understanding the components of sustainable development of agro-tourism is essential for a destination's survival in the tourist market and meeting the demands of the modern tourist consumer [1,2]. Success in agro-tourism through the principles of sustainability requires knowledge in many economic areas, including organization, management and marketing, and among other things, knowledge of consumer motivations [3]. Agro-tourism, as an important economic and social phenomenon in the world, is related to the period of 200 years ago [1,4,5]. When looking at Europe, it is known that the first forms of development of this type of tourism were recorded in France, with the establishment of

the first agro-tourism association, Agriculture de Tourisme [2,3]. After that period, agro-tourism became widely developed in all parts of Europe. There are different definitions and explanations of agro-tourism; however, for the purposes of this paper, the most acceptable is that of McGhee and Kim [6]. They point out that the main characteristic of agro-tourism is the combination of agriculture and rural tourism. Agro-tourism is considered an effective means of supporting local communities because it represents an important source of income for farmers and other stakeholders [4], but also a way of contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage in rural areas [5,7]. Given that agro-destinations are marked by the presentation of the rural way of life and traditions, it is certain that part of the creation of the concept of sustainable agro-tourism is the gastronomic offer [7,8]. Gastronomic tourism also has many definitions, and the main characteristic of this type of tourism is that it is an attractor for tourists who want to enjoy the food and drink of different cultures and peoples, through different ways of visiting agro-destinations and many festivals within the offer [6,8].

In today's Serbia, agro-tourism became more significant in the 80s of the last century, and it is considered one of the best forms of tourism on the market where the needs of gastronomic tourists can be met [3,9,10]. One of the reasons why Serbia must market the concept of sustainable agro-tourism is precisely the fact that in this country, over 55% of the population lives in rural areas and is engaged in agriculture and food production [9–11]. As the number of tourists in agro-tourism destinations in Serbia is increasing, it is assumed that they are interested in the consumption of gastronomic products that are characteristic of certain popular destinations [9–11]. Accordingly, the ability of agro-tourism to attract gastronomic tourists can take a leading role in the development of the entire economy of a certain agro-destination, but also contribute to increasing the value of products of local farms [12].

Taking all of this into account, the goal of this study is to identify the primary motivations of tourists when it comes to the consumption of local food in Serbian agro-tourism destinations. Given the importance of food in the selection of a tourist destination, the findings of this study could contribute to the enrichment of the literature on gastronomic tourism as well as the initiation of agro-tourism operators who want to shape their business model in order to satisfy consumers. At the very beginning, two questions are asked, which will receive specific answers at the end of the study, along with an analysis of the hypotheses.

RQ1—What are the key motivation factors for visiting Serbian agro-tourism destinations?

RQ2—Is gastronomy a dominant factor that can increase the sustainable development of an agro-tourism destination?

The significance of this research is primarily related to the analysis of the influence of sociodemographic factors of gastronomic tourists on the development of an agro-tourism destination as well as other factors. This research points to the implications that gastronomy can influence sustainability in the field of agro-tourism offer in Serbia, which is known as an underexplored destination with its specific range of dishes, traditional food preparation, and specific rural area as a natural resource.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Agro-Tourism and Gastronomy in the Concept of Sustainability—Previous and Latest Research

Slocum and Curtis (2018) [13], in their book "Food and Agricultural Tourism", point out that gastronomy and rural areas are an inseparable link in the joint success of development. In their research, Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) [14] dealt with the impact of gastronomy on the development of certain forms of tourism, especially agro-tourism areas. In their work entitled "Local food: A source for destination attraction", they came to significant results that gastronomy can influence the development of agro-destinations. Similar results were obtained by Beltrán et al. (2016) [15] in his research on gastronomy in Spain "Gastronomy and tourism: Profile and motivation of international

tourism in the city of Cordoba". During its development, gastronomic tourism becomes a new alternative to mass tourism, since gastronomic tourists increasingly try to acquire new experiences in an active, differentiated, and unique way rather than choosing to reach standardized tourist destinations [16]. Some research points out that many tourist destinations around the world stand out because they are highly sought after by tourists precisely because of traditional food and drinks, i.e., gastronomy, but also other factors such as cultural [17–19]. Agro-tourism emerged as trend in the 1980s [20], as a recognizable factor influencing the economic and social development of Serbia [21]. The authors Cvijanović and Gajić (2020) [22] highlight agro-tourism as a potential tourism product of the future of the Serbian market, which is largely unused, which is its greatest advantage in tourism and economic development. Moreover, the same authors state that there is an inseparable connection between agro-tourism and gastronomic offer. Tasić (2018) [23], in his research entitled "Future trends and directions of development of rural tourism in Serbia and the world", claims that agro-tourism is one of the new directions that will dictate the tourist consumption of domestic consumers in the future, but also that gastronomy is an integral part of the agro-tourism offer.

Authors Chaney and Ryan (2012) [24] point out that gastronomic tourists, especially those who visit agro-destinations, are called gourmets because they are people who truly enjoy food and are looking for an unforgettable experience with gastronomy. In several scientific studies, the authors determined that the most important factor that attracts tourists to specific agro-destinations is precisely the desire to try local gastronomy [25–32]. Some authors were engaged in the research of gastronomy from a slightly different aspect. In the research, the authors Green and Dougherty (2009) [33] pointed out that gastronomic tourism is a part of cultural tourism. They found that food and drink are expressions of specific cultures. They also pointed out that farmers often combined sales of fresh food to local retailers and large food consumers. One of the problems related to production for local facilities dealing with gastronomic tourism was low prices and very challenging logistics.

When looking at the importance of gastronomy in terms of the sustainability of the development of agro-space, a great contribution was made by Migliore et al. (2019) [34], through the research "Beyond Alternative Food: Understanding Motivations to Participate in Orti Urbani in Palermo". Green and Dougherty (2009) [33], claim that the sustainable development and preservation of tradition and identity is one of the tasks of the gastronomy of rural areas. In some parts of Serbia, agro-tourism is recognized by the local community as a factor in the sustainable development of the rural environment [35]. Ferrari and Gilli (2015) [36] emphasize the fact that quality gastronomic products create authenticity and recognition and influence the sustainable development of rural areas ("Authenticity and experience in sustainable food tourism"). Gastronomic tourism is a growing part of tourism in which tourists experience the local food and drink of other destinations and cultures [37]. Other than these, gastronomy tourism is more than just the union of travel and cuisine. The food's location should be prioritized to achieve sustainability since it will impact regional development and help the destination compete with other countries on a global scale [38]. As a result, places that want to use cuisine to draw tourists must strengthen their culinary identity. One of the main topics is using local ingredients and characteristics [39,40]. Expertise of the local population is necessary for the transformation of food tourism activities. It means knowledge of cooking techniques and recipes, as well as other instances that make gastronomic tourist experiences easier [41,42].

According to some studies, guests believe that local food is better for the environment and for society than some other foods [43]. According to several studies, rising consumer interest is frequently linked to the belief that food supplied locally is higher quality, healthier, and more nutrient-dense than food sold elsewhere in the primary supply chain [19,44–46], also because the products traveled a short distance to reach the consumers table [47]. The study by Aleksić et al. (2020) [48] proves the importance of food safety in catering. In the conclusion of this study, there are recommendations on how catering establishments can protect their consumers in terms of health and safety of food, among other things, that

protocols are clearly defined and consistently implemented. However, the most frequently mentioned reasons for consumers' expressed preferences for local food are environmental protection and support for the local economy [47,49]. Agro-tourism participants help to preserve ethno-culinary legacy by inheriting native foods and their ancestors' agro-cultural skills [50].

2.2. Motivation of Gastronomic Tourists—Impact on Agritourism

Although to date not enough efforts have been made to understand the motivations of gastronomic tourists [51,52], there are significant studies in European countries [53]. According to the authors' knowledge, there are very few such significant studies in Serbia. There are numerous studies in the existing literature on agro-tourism, but they were mainly focused on the food supply on the market and the motivation of entrepreneurs, but not tourists [54,55]. In addition to these studies, they also related to the motivation of tourists to visit agro-tourism destinations with a focus on the recreational component of agro-tourism [56,57].

Hornig and Tsai (2010) [39] point out that gastronomic tourists have different motives and experiences. Many authors point out that the center of interest of gastronomic tourists is experiencing new tastes, researching history and culture, and other aspects related to the food and traditions of a certain people in a destination [24,58]. As this type of tourism has become a new form of tourism, in addition to the motivation, it is necessary to determine the characteristics of the gastronomic tourists themselves. Typical gastronomic tourists are adults between 30 and 50 years of age with above average monthly income [59]. According to a 2009 study by Smith and Costello [60], couples are more likely to travel together, they have greater levels of education, spend more money than other types of tourists, stay longer, and stay in hotels, and their primary goals are to take a holiday, relax, and enjoy themselves. Similarly, Chaney and Ryan (2012) [24] confirm that gastro-tourists have a need and awareness to experience different cultures.

The market is getting more heterogeneous as domestic and foreign travelers seek adventures where exceptional culinary events give the opportunity to experience new and diverse tastes [60] and to be more receptive to new and unusual food experiences [61]. McKercher et al. (2008) [62] divided the market into three segments. The first group visits a place specifically for culinary reasons and attempts to sample local cuisine. The majority of their activities throughout their stay revolve around gastronomy. Food is vital, but not so crucial, according to the second group. It plays an essential role, although it does not influence holiday decisions. The last group ranges from few to no gastronomic activities. Authors Dann and Jacobsen (2002) [63] pointed out that a very important part of gastronomic tourism is paying attention, especially to all the senses that a person uses to enjoy food and drink, because the tastes and smells of local gastronomy, i.e., food and drink, are different from those in the place of residence of that same person. This means that tourists are particularly motivated to visit agro-tourism destinations precisely because of food, that is, gastronomy.

Food tourists make up 6–8% of the sample and are interested in culinary concerns and local delicacies. Food is an aspect of the holiday that influences satisfaction with the holidays for interested purchasers, accounting for one-third of the sample [64]. For interested buyers, food is a part of the holiday that affects the satisfaction with the holidays and represents one-third of the sample. While foreign visitors seldom purchase local cuisine, gastronomy does not play a significant role in their vacation. The fourth and fifth categories of gourmet tourists are the uninterested and laggards, who have little to no interest in culinary concerns and who also avoid trying local cuisine [65]. Different motivations are recognized in the literature that influence the choice of tourists to experience local food [53,66,67]. Culture, in fact, seems to be an important motivator that influences culinary tourism. Eating is one of the most basic human requirements. Eating, according to Maslow, is one of the primary stages in the hierarchical pyramid of needs as a physiological requirement [68]. According to Fields (2002) [52], tourists' desire to taste local food and

drink in a tourist location is strongly tied to cultural objectives, because eating new food and experiencing new cultures are inextricably linked. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2009) [69] showed that healthy eating is another major motivator that influences visitors' interest in local food. They confirmed that visitors see experiencing local cuisine and drinks at their place of origin as a way of boosting psycho-physical health since they are deemed healthier and better. Tourists consider culinary tourism as a shift in daily routine and eating habits in order to sample new food experiences and earn a certain level of status among family and friends [52,69]. According to Schultz (2015) [70], today's visitors are searching for authentic travel and culinary experiences, owing in part to the role of the media, which has positively changed travelers' perspectives on the link between tourism and cuisine [71]. Several studies have shown that social networks may make a significant contribution to the promotion of cuisine and gourmet tourism [72]. In addition, it is important to point out that many previous studies have proven that gastronomic tourism can be an opportunity to socialize with other people, informally at gastronomic festivals and similar events, which all contribute to the tourist experience being even more complete [71,73,74]. A study conducted in Missouri (USA) revealed that being in nature with family and enjoying natural resources are very important motivators for visiting agro-tourism destinations [57].

Barbieri et al. (2016) [75] found that the experience of living in agro-tourism places as well as learning about agriculture are key motives for visiting an agro-tourism destination for recreation. The same applies to tourists' perception that the agro-tourism environment is related to the authenticity of the experience [76,77]. Therefore, there is a need to research how the motivations for visiting agro-tourism destinations are related to the choice to consume local food and drinks. A study by Kline et al. (2016) [78] found that there is a connection between tourists' concerns about the humane treatment of animals in agro-tourism destinations and the impact on the environment, which is all related to tourists' interests in experiencing local food in these destinations.

The motivational factors that drive consumer choice, including environmental and social sustainability objectives, are highlighted through research on consumer preferences for local food [47]. In earlier studies on visitors' incentives to consume local cuisine, these reasons, which highlight the ethical component associated with consumption, have not been fully addressed and require further study [78].

The literature highlights the importance of environmental conservation in influencing local food consumption. According to Migliore et al. (2015) [79], customers are frequently compelled to purchase local food in order to reduce the environmental costs of food production and delivery [80]. Based on the given literature and similar research, the authors started from the initial hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The proposed motivational factors of gastronomic tourists have an impact on the visitation of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *The cultural experience dimension has a significant impact on visiting agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The excitement dimension has an impact on higher attendance of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *The interpersonal relation dimension has an impact on greater attendance of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *The health concern dimension has an impact on higher attendance of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *Age shows a statistically significant difference in the perception of the influence of tourists' motivation on the development of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 7 (H7). *The material condition shows a statistically significant difference in the perception of the impact of tourists' motivation on the development of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 8 (H8). *The level of education shows a statistically significant difference in the perception of the influence of tourists' motivation on the development of agro-tourism destinations;*

Hypothesis 9 (H9). *The gender of the respondents shows a statistically significant difference in the perception of the influence of tourists' motivation on the development of agro-tourism destinations.*

The combined research approach was used to assess the previously established conceptual model (Figure 1), identify the supposed connections between the variables, and keep the research's aim in mind. Combined research is the combination of primary and secondary data, more specifically quantitative and qualitative methodologies, in order to gather more thoroughly valid, trustworthy, and objective data.

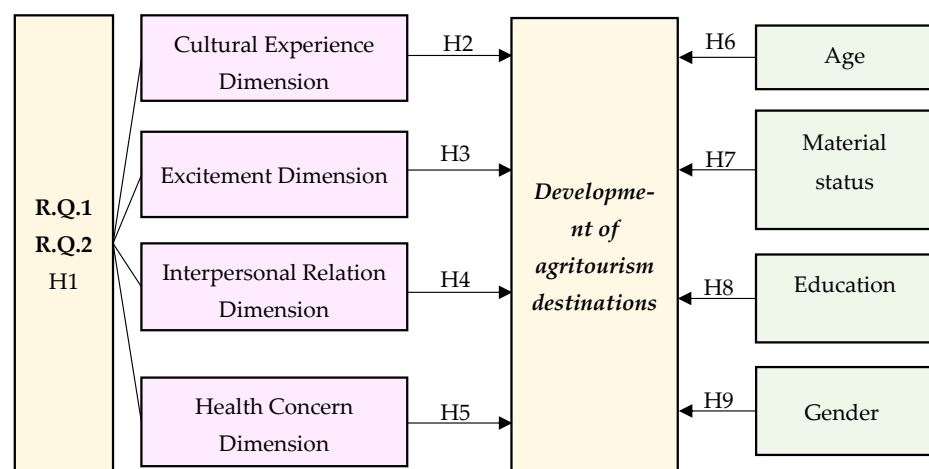


Figure 1. Hypothesis setting. Source: authors' research.

3. Methodology

3.1. Operationalization and Measurement Model

The concept of the research method can be seen in the following diagram (Figure 2).

Before the actual research, a pilot study was carried out. It was attended by 15 voluntary respondents who are visitors (guests) of selected agro-tourism households located near Vrnjačka Banja in Central Serbia. All 15 respondents are between the ages of 31 and 60, and most of them have completed college or high school. They stayed in an agro-tourism household for more than 3 days, and one of the main reasons for the visit was the local gastronomy, which gave importance to this pilot research. The aim of the pilot research was to determine whether the questionnaire is clear, whether the questions are clearly formulated and unambiguous, as well as whether further analysis of the obtained data is possible. Some of the questions were reformulated and adapted from the questionnaire presented by Testa et al. (2019) in their paper [53]. During the research itself, 700 questionnaires were distributed. There were 607 fully filled and valid questionnaires, and they were analyzed in detail.

As the original survey had five factors, and when creating the factor analysis in this paper, seven factors were obtained, the authors decided to approach the creation of a higher-order factor analysis or hierarchical factor analysis in order to obtain the mentioned five factors, whose predictive influence will be determined by regression analysis.

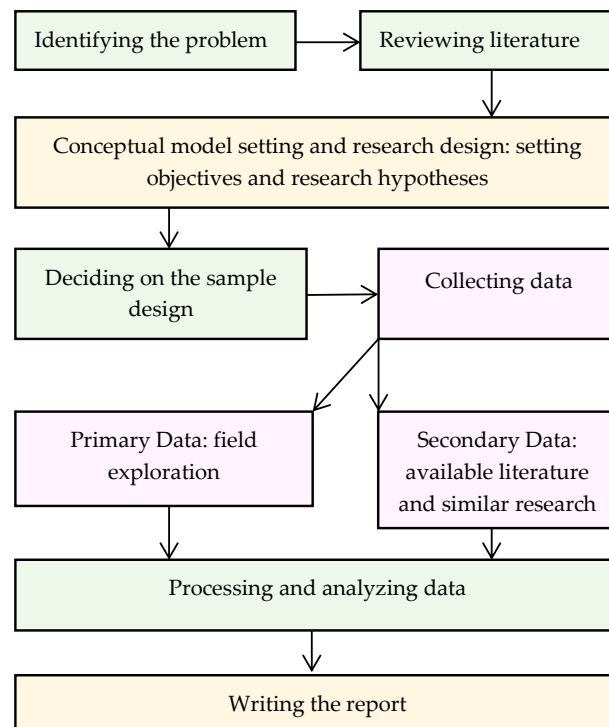


Figure 2. Diagram of research methodology concept. Source: authors' research.

The combination of research data analysis with multivariate data analysis is known as exploratory multivariate data analysis. When there are too many variables in the study, some of them “overlap” because they have identical meaning and behavior. Factor analysis is an interdependence approach because it seeks a set of variables that are comparable in the sense that they “move together” and hence have a high degree of interdependence. When one variable has a high value, the other variables in the group have a high value as well. Because the elements are statistically separated, they are originally unconnected (orthogonal). This simplifies the comprehension of a vast variety of factors that characterize a service or industrial sector category. A framework for additional data analysis was also developed. Then, to get the appropriate number of factors, a higher-order factor analysis was done, followed by the following analysis. After identifying the relevant factors, the authors conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine whether the relevant factors have strong predictive power in determining the score on the criterion variable and the influence of the motivation of gastro-tourists on the choice of an agro-tourism destination. If the problem at hand can be viewed as one with a single dependent variable and a number of independent variables, we have a situation that lends itself to data analysis using multiple regression. If the relationship between them is linear, the problem reduces to multiple linear models. Multivariate analysis was used to determine differences in responses in relation to sociodemographic factors. SPSS software version 26.00 was used. Respondents had the opportunity to express the degree of agreement or disagreement for each statement, as a rule, on a five-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) classified all items into a total of five factors, which is shown in the table with data on the saturation of all factors. With the help of multivariate analysis of variance, the authors determined the differences in responses in relation to sociodemographic factors, as well as the differences in responses according to all factors in relation to gender structure, with the help of canonical discriminant analysis.

3.2. Study Sample and Area of Research

The research was conducted in several districts in the Republic of Serbia that have a significant visit of gastro-tourists in agro-tourism destinations (Figure 3): Srem Dis-

trict (Sremska Mitrovica—113 respondents), Mačva District (Ljubovija—105 respondents), Braničevo District (Veliko Gradište—95 respondents), Raška district (Vrnjačka Banja—149 respondents), and Bor district (Kladovo—145 respondents). The survey of guests in agro-tourism households lasted from March to September 2022.

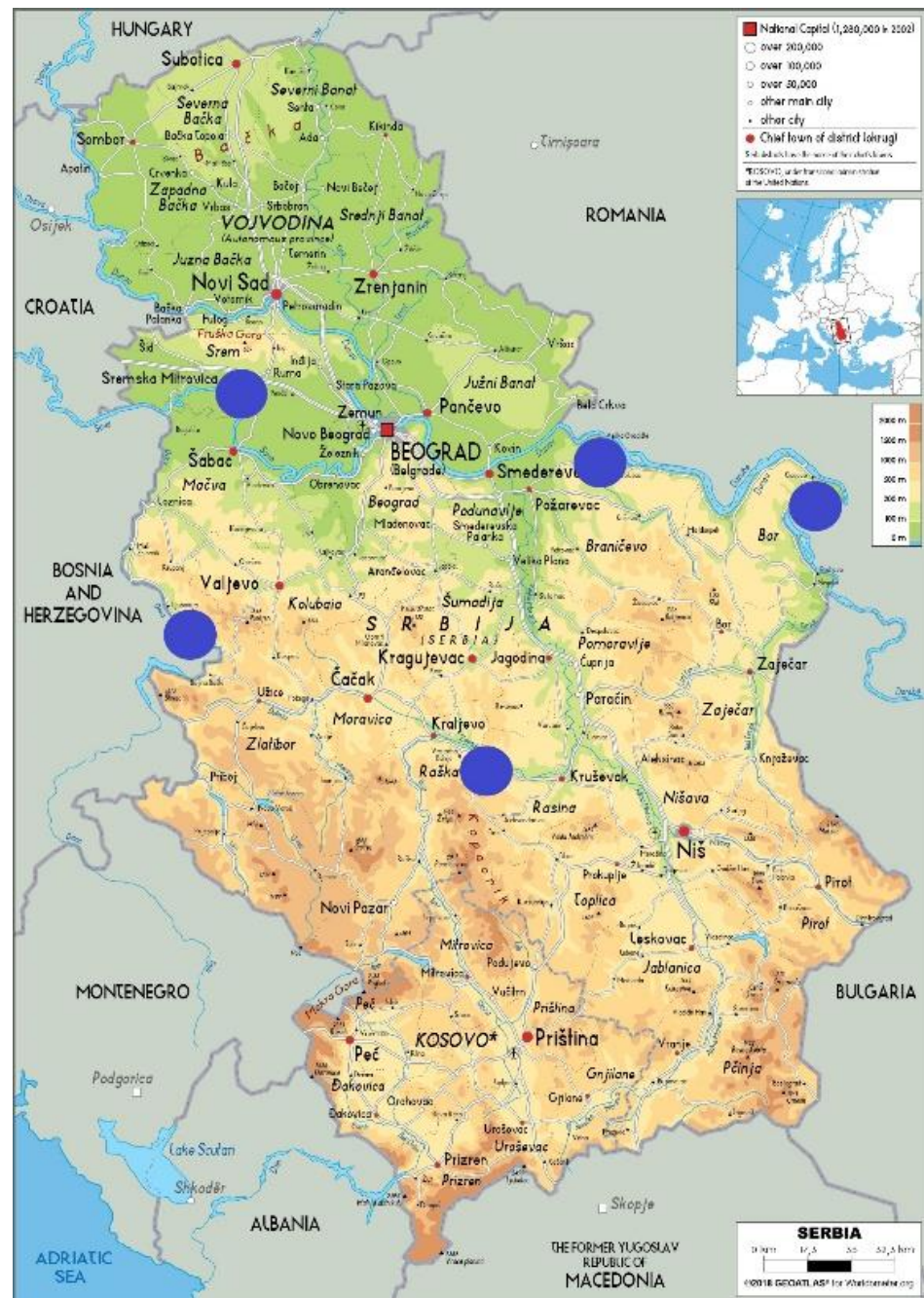


Figure 3. Study area. Source: authors' research. (Source of the map: www.worldometers.info).

The sample in the research was composed of about 51.6% men and 48.4% women. The largest number of respondents, 41% of them, are between the ages of 31 and 60, followed by 32.9% who are 61 and over, and a slightly smaller number of respondents, 26%, between 18 and 30 years old. The largest percentage of research participants have a university degree, 43.7% of them, while a total of 40.2% have a high school diploma, and 16.1% have a Master's or PhD degree.

4. Results

According to the goal of the research and the acquired conditions, the parametric methodology was used. All values were normally distributed. Skewness and kurtosis values ranged from minus 1.5 to plus 1.5, which are values of normal data distribution; for this reason, the authors used parametric models of the results analysis.

4.1. Descriptive Values of Quality Items of Gastronomic Offer

Table 1 presents the average scores for all questions from the modified questionnaire as well as the reliability values for each item.

Table 1. Descriptive values of all items and reliability values. Modified version Testa et al. (2019) [53] motivation scale.

	m	sd	α
Experiencing local food gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different local cultures	4.02	1.281	0.841
Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local culture	4.38	1.137	0.811
Experiencing local food enables me to learn what this local food tastes like	4.49	1.118	0.745
Experiencing local food helps me see things that I don't normally see	4.06	1.316	0.710
Experiencing local food helps me see how other people live	3.64	1.256	0.839
Experiencing local food allows me to discover something new	3.92	1.335	0.890
Tasting local food in its traditional setting is a special experience	4.08	1.395	0.844
Tasting local food in an original place is an authentic experience	4.28	1.226	0.728
Experiencing local food in its original place make me excited	3.85	1.482	0.748
When tasting local food, I have an expectation that it is exciting	3.66	1.672	0.743
Tasting local food makes me feel exhilarated	4.07	1.457	0.653
Tasting local food on holiday helps me to relax	3.67	1.593	0.759
Tasting local food on holiday makes me not worry about routine	3.75	1.278	0.800
Tasting local food on holiday takes me away from the crowds and noise	3.84	1.335	0.890
Tasting local food enables me to have enjoyable time with friends and/or family	3.79	1.579	0.700
Having local food increases friendship or kinship	4.06	1.417	0.679
I want to give advice about local food experiences to people who want to travel	3.66	1.639	0.642
I like to talk to everybody about my local food experience	3.78	1.524	0.850
It is important to me to taste local food in its original regions	3.93	1.517	0.638
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday tastes good	4.19	1.272	0.642
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday smells nice	3.75	1.479	0.646
It is important to me that the local food I eat in agro-tourism looks nice	3.28	1.551	0.744
The taste of local food in its original countries/regions is different from the taste of same food in own country/region	3.67	1.540	0.645
Local food is nutritious	3.56	1.673	0.690
Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area	3.44	1.514	0.713
Tasting local food keeps me healthy	3.66	1.586	0.641

Source(s): authors' research. m = arithmetic means; sd = standard deviation.

4.2. Extraction of Items and Presentation of the Influence of Factors on Visits to Agrotourism Destinations

Although the majority of items were evaluated with approximately similar ratings, slightly lower ratings were observed for items that denote motifs related to the nutritional value of food. It is assumed that this is because the respondents assume that food is healthier in agro-tourism places, so they did not attach too much importance to these items [10,33,74]. Therefore, the items that are rated somewhat worse are: "Local food is nutritious" (m = 3.56, sd = 1.673), "Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area" (m = 3.44, sd = 1.514), and "Tasting local food keeps me healthy" (m = 3.66, sd = 1.586).

4.3. EFA Analysis Values

The results indicate that all conditions for EFA analysis are met, the KMO test result of 0.852 indicates a high degree of correlation between the factors ($df = 325$; $sig = 0.000$).

In order to prove the strength of the partial correlation between the variables, the KMO and Bartlett's Test is used, which in this case was 0.852, which is a high degree, and for this reason, factor analysis was started. The factor structure matrix comprises factor loads that indicate the correlation coefficients between the factors and variables that have been chosen. The importance of each variable for each factor is shown by factor loads. Saturations less than one are not considered. All goods are divided into seven categories. The first factor has the greatest satisfaction rate (21.69%). The model explains 75.4% of the variation (Table 2). All validated model fit values are within acceptable bounds, allowing the EFA analysis to proceed.

Table 2. Descriptive factor values and percentage of their extraction (EFA).

Component	m	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	4.43	5.642	56.699	56.699	5.642	56.699	56.699
Factor 2	3.80	3.072	11.816	33.516	3.072	11.816	33.516
Factor 3	3.84	2.327	8.950	42.466	2.327	8.950	42.466
Factor 4	3.72	1.871	7.197	49.663	1.871	7.197	49.663
Factor 5	3.55	1.485	5.712	55.374	1.485	5.712	55.374

Source(s): authors' research. m—arithmetic means. F1 cultural experience dimension; F2 excitement dimension; F3 interpersonal relation dimension; F4 sensory appeal dimension; F5 health concern dimension.

When a factor analysis with five factors was performed, it was observed that 56% of the variance was explained. Five factors were obtained whose reliability value is $\alpha = 0.610$: F1 cultural experience dimension; F2 excitement dimension; F3 interpersonal relationship dimension; F4 sensory appeal dimension; F5 health concern dimension. After that, a multiple regression analysis was performed to determine whether the factors can have a strong predictive power in predicting the score on the criterion variable—the influence of motivation on the choice of an agro-tourism destination.

4.4. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

After the multiple regression analysis, it was determined that this model explains R 78% of the variance. The table of this analysis (Table 3) shows the contribution of each factor and its statistical significance when it comes to predicting how much the gastronomic offer affects the development of the agritourism destination. Moreover, one can see how well the predictor is related to the criterion variable (β).

Table 3. Coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.227	0.287		11.235	0.000
F1 Cultural Experience Dimension	0.119	0.056	0.114	0.349	0.022
F2 Excitement Dimension	0.083	0.033	0.107	2.505	0.012
F3 Interpersonal Relation Dimension	0.315	0.032	0.284	0.475	0.009
F4 Sensory Appeal Dimension	0.569	0.033	0.588	2.110	0.001
F5 Health Concern Dimension	0.039	0.026	0.074	1.508	0.125

Note(s): Dependent variable: Development of agro-tourism destination. Source(s): Authors' research.

Given factors have a certain influence on the criterion variable. The strongest impact on the development of an agro-tourism destination can be seen with Factor 4 sensory appeal dimension, which is positive and strong ($\beta = 0.588$). A strong influence of Factor

3 interpersonal relation dimension ($\beta = 0.284$) was also observed, while the influence of the other factors cultural experience dimension, excitement dimension, and health concern dimension was observed to have a slightly weaker but positive influence on the development of the agro-tourism destination.

4.5. Results of the Influence of Demographic Characteristics on Visits to Agro-Touristic Destinations by Gastro-Tourists

In order to determine the differences in the perception of attitudes towards the development of agro-tourism in relation to socio-demographic factors, the authors used a multivariate analysis of variance. Looking at the obtained results, a statistically significant difference can be observed only in the variables of education and gender ($F(2,605) = 3.646$, $p = 0.02$, $\lambda = 0.98$), while their interactions (gender/education) were not significant. When looking at the individual results for the dependent variables, it is observed that there is a statistically significant difference in the development of agro-tourism destination and education ($F(2) = 4.098$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta = 0.01$). The results indicate that the best perception about the development of agro-tourism was in the highly educated category, in the direction that the more educated they are, the better they rate the development of the destination ($B = 0.246$, $t = 1.430$, $p = 0.00$, $\eta = 0.03$). Regarding the significant differences in the gender structure, the results indicate that women gave more positive attitudes towards the development of the agro-tourism destination ($B = 0.22$, $t = 18.243$, $p = 0.00$, $\eta = 0.02$).

Thus, the hypothesis H8 was confirmed because the level of education shows a statistically significant difference in the perception of the influence of tourists' motivation on the development of an agro-tourism destination. Hypothesis H9 was also confirmed because the analysis shows significant differences between the responses of men and women. Women gave more positive views when it comes to the development of an agro-tourism destination, so it is considered that the answers between men and women show statistically significant differences in the perception of the influence of motivation on the development of an agro-tourism destination.

Furthermore, the discriminative canonical analysis determined the difference in the perception of the corresponding gender structure for all factors ($p = 0.03$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Results of canonical discriminant analysis.

Factors	Discriminant Function	Group Centroids
F1 Cultural Experience Dimension	−0.109	
F2 Excitement Dimension	−0.082	
F3 Interpersonal Relation Dimension	0.018	Male = −0.082
F4 Sensory Appeal Dimension	0.540	Female = 0.088
F5 Health Concern Dimension	−0.768	
F6 Development Agro-tourism Destination	0.380	

$p = 0.03$, $\lambda = 0.9$; Classification 59.9%. Source(s): Authors' research.

5. Discussion

Understanding all five factors, according to Kim and Eves, 2012 [53,80], that were analyzed (cultural experience dimension, excitement dimension, interpersonal relation dimension, sensory appeal dimension, health concern dimension) and how they influence tourists' choice to consume local gastronomic products in agro-tourism destinations can contribute to the definition of competitive marketing strategies of these destinations in order to better match the needs and wishes of tourists.

There is very little research on the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of gastro-tourists on visits to agro-tourism destinations. Some authors believe that gender and age differences have a significant impact on the perception of the development of agro-tourism [44,81]. In addition, the works dealing with this issue point out that there are statistically significant differences among subjects of different material or educa-

tional status [31,32,44,82,83] and some authors point out the necessity of researching this issue [44,84–86].

After descriptive values of quality items of gastronomic offer, it is noted that in the first factor, the item “Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local culture” received the highest score, which is related to the fact that guests like to taste the food served by the hosts, because that is how they get to know them best local culture [53,84]. Getting to know the culture can be one of the key motives for visiting agro-tourism destinations. In the second factor, it is noted that the item “Tasting local food makes me feel exhilarated” was rated with the highest rating, and it is emphasized that food is in the foreground as a motive for visiting these destinations. When it comes to the third factor, the item “Having local food increases friendship or kinship” received the highest rating, so it can be concluded that guests who visit agro-tourism destinations expect to meet new people and make new friends through tasting food [53,84].

Then, in the fourth factor, which was related to different sensory preferences of food, it can be noted that the first item “It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday tastes good” was rated the highest. This item can be linked to other items that were rated highly, because in this segment of the research, guests just confirmed that food is an extremely important motive for visiting a certain agro-tourism destination, because its taste is crucial for the guest’s experience on vacation. The last factor, which refers primarily to health food safety, had three items and all were rated similarly. However, the item that stands out as the best rated is “Tasting local food keeps me healthy”, so it can be concluded that guests are extremely aware that local, homemade, and traditional food prepared in agro-tourism households is healthy and can maintain their health [53].

The results undoubtedly show that each of the stated factors can influence the development of an agro-tourism destination. Therefore, all these motives can give guidance to all actors working in this sector on how to improve their business. By connecting all the factors and motives of gastronomic tourists, actors in agro-tourism will certainly attract more tourists and thus directly or indirectly influence the development of gastronomy itself and agro-tourism, not only in Serbia but also beyond [7,21,52,53].

According to the data presented, it was established that women better rate the factors of sensory appeal dimension, interpersonal relation dimension, development agro-tourism destination, while men better rate the factors of cultural experience dimension, excitement dimension, health concern dimension. The total percentage of correct classification of respondents by gender is 59.9%. The above confirms that gastronomic motivation can influence the development of agro-tourism in Serbia [53].

6. Conclusions

As the tourism industry has been developing rapidly in recent years, many studies have analyzed the influence of various aspects on its development. Agro-tourism, which takes place at the local level, i.e., experiences with food and drink, i.e., local gastronomy, can contribute to rural socio-economic development, creating new jobs and so on. In this regard, agro-tourism destinations also have traditional values associated with the development of new trends, such as respect for culture and tradition, a healthy lifestyle, authenticity, etc. Accordingly, the promotion of culinary tourism in agro-tourism represents an ideal combination that can positively influence the development of agro-tourism destinations, but also the entire tourism of a destination, country, or region.

In addition to the fact that gastronomic activities can be the main ones in an agro-tourism destination, they can also be accompanying. It is suggested that future researchers take this segment into account when researching topics related to these forms of tourism. In order to better understand the complete impact of gastronomy on the development of agro-tourism, the authors of this research conducted a survey of gastronomic tourists, i.e., tourists whose main motive for visiting agro-tourism destinations was precisely food. It

was concluded that all five factors, that is, a group of motives that gastronomic tourists may have for visiting an agro-tourism destination, can greatly influence its development.

Gastronomic tourism should certainly be seen as an important factor for the development of the region. It should be borne in mind that the consumption behavior of gastronomic tourists is influenced by the factors discussed in this study. In addition to them, future researchers can also base themselves on other factors such as religious, cultural, or personality traits related to food and many others because gastronomy in agro-tourism is an inexhaustible source of information for research.

The results of this study primarily refer to the influence of sociodemographic factors of gastronomic tourists on the development of an agro-tourism destination. Of all the investigated sociodemographic factors, only gender and education proved to be statistically significant, which was determined by multivariate analysis of variance. Furthermore, the results indicate that more educated gastronomic tourists have a much better perception of the development of agro-tourism, that is, they evaluated the development of the destination much better. Moreover, women rated better and gave more positive views when it comes to the development of an agro-tourism destination than men who, according to the analysis, had somewhat more neutral or negative answers.

The findings in this study can certainly enrich the existing literature on gastronomy, gastronomic tourism and agro-tourism. In addition, the originality of this study can strengthen the business literature and knowledge that have certain responsible attitudes towards the motivation of tourists. The results can help managers and owners of facilities in agro-tourism destinations to better understand the tourists who visit them in order to have a more positive impact on business. This study faced limitations inherent in the methodological nature and the sample used in the study, which was based on voluntary participation. Therefore, this study does not present conclusive evidence but helps to better understand the trend of gastronomic tourism in agro-tourism destinations. Since this study was based on the motivations of tourists, which are part of psychological factors, it is necessary to base some future research on the attitudes or consciousness of tourists of a personal nature, but also some other social or cultural factors.

7. Limitations and Future Implications

There were some limitations during the research. Some of the limitations are procedural and analytical. This study concentrated solely on motivations, which are among the psychological factors known to influence behavior, and excluded other individual factors such as attitudes, consumer awareness, and personal values, as well as cultural and social factors. Furthermore, some of the limitations were physical distance and poor infrastructure. That is why the investigation lasted longer than planned. Many tourists, visitors to agro-tourism households, were not in the mood for disturbance because they came on vacation and did not want anything to disturb their much-needed peace. Future research should relate to the wider area of research, not only in Serbia but also in other destinations and they should relate to other factors, not only the ones that influence the development of agro-tourism. Based on all variables and our findings from all factors and sub-factors, we recommend creating a strategy to promote the awareness of tourists of the importance of preserving the facilities in the tourist destinations they would like to visit.

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