

TOURISM VALORIZATION OF THE CARNIVAL AS A FACTOR OF COMPETITIVENESS OF VRNJAČKA BANJA TOURISM

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Abstract

Vrnjačka Banja is the symbol of spa tourism in Serbia. Healing mineral springs, favorable geographical position and pleasant climate have influenced the development of traditional medical and health caring tourism. In addition to spa tourism, Vrnjačka Banja develops event tourism. The most important manifestation is the Carnival, due to which Vrnjačka Banja has been a member of Federation of European Carnival Cities since 2006. Method used in the paper is tourist valorization by geographical and economic criteria. The Carnival attracts a large number of participants and visitors, which is assessed positively from the standpoint of income and negatively when one bears in mind the limited spatial capacity and environmental sensitivity of spa. It emphasizes the necessity of continuing research and application innovations in order to accompany the rapid changes occurring in tourism market for even better positioning in tourism offer of both Vrnjačka Banja and Serbia.

Key Words: *Vrnjačka Banja, carnival, tourism, valorization.*

JEL classification: *Z32, Z13*

Introduction

Vrnjačka Banja is one of the most visited tourist destinations in continental part of the Balkan Peninsula, and the symbol of spa tourism in Serbia (Stanković, 2001). For healing and recovery in Vrnjačka Banja came Roman legionaries, and the first official spa season was opened in 1870 (Štetić, 2007). Nowadays many tourists still don't understand the full meaning of spas and they don't find themselves in spa tourism (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015).

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Tourism as a comprehensive concept is increasingly gaining importance and has a strong reverse effect on society in general. The tourist market puts the spotlight on service whose number is constantly increasing (Vićentijević, 2016). In the economy of Vrnjačka Banja, tourism certainly takes the most significant place and it directly and indirectly influences the development of other industries. Although the wider area of Vrnjačka Banja is one of the richest and most interesting tourist areas in Serbia which can offer to the visitors a variety of cultural, entertainment, sports and recreational facilities, the emphasis is still exhibited at health and wellness tourism. In Vrnjačka Banja events, sport, recreation, cultural and conference tourism occupy an important place, in addition to healthcare and medical tourism. In this paper, the emphasis is on the International Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja which is the most important part of event tourism for the last 10 years in this spa. The aim is to reveal the role of the Carnival in tourism of Vrnjačka Banja and point to the fact that traditional medical tourism must be enriched with additional contents and complementary forms of tourism.

Carnival of Vrnjci

Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is fun tourist event which is, with the „Sabor trubača“, Guča and festival „Exit“, Novi Sad, the largest tourist event in Serbia. Besides Carnival of Vrnjci, as the youngest and the most visited, four carnivals have been held in Serbia: Carnival of Flowers in Bela Crkva, Carnival of boats in Belgrade, Carnival in Pančevo and Carnival in Vršac (Bjeljac & Ćurčić, 2007). From year to year program of Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is richer and brings together an increasing number of participants and visitors from the country, the region and even the whole world. The recognition of work so far is presented by the award „Turistički cvet“ given by Tourism Organization of Serbia for the best tourism event in the country. It should be mentioned that Carnival of Vrnjci is the biggest carnival of Southeast Europe (Turistička organizacija Vrnjačka Banja, 2017).

Program of the Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja consists of the various concerts, games, music, theater and comedy performances, folkloric clauses, cabarets, exhibitions of photographs and flowers, carnival of pets, sport competitions and numerous events for children. The Great International carnival parade is masquerade, which presents the essence of the entire manifestation (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017). It is interesting to mention the unusual competitions held during the carnival,

namely waiters' race, race in high heels, carnival race roller skates and bikes, street football, juggling evening, basketball masquerade etc.

Precursors of today's carnivals can be found in Ancient Greece and its famous celebrations held in the honor of the god of wine Dionysus. In ancient Rome, Street celebrations called Saturnalia were organized (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017). The word carnival is of Italian origin and consists of the word „carne“ which means meat and word „vale“ which could be translated as a goodbye. This meaning of word carnival becomes clearer when we consider the fact that in the Middle Ages, carnivals were associated with Christianity and especially Easter fasting (represented a last chance for different types of satisfaction, which people had to abstain during fasting²). Just then, in the Middle Ages in Italy the carnivals appeared in its present form (Mackellar, 2006).

History of occurrence of forerunner of Carnival of Vrnjci is related to the year 1868, when it was founded modern spa in Vrnjci. At that time, people of Vrnjačka Banja paid great importance to the Kermes³. Kermes held in Vrnjačka Banja were characterized by a rich cuisine, dances, music and masquerades. During Kermes streets were illuminated with decorative lanterns, and people were able to meet the singers, painters, poets and actors. Those were the days and nights when the population of all parts of Vrnjačka Banja was brought together (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017). In the middle of 20th century masked balls were the most visited events of Vrnjačka Banja. They were organized in hotels „Sloboda“, and „Zvezda“. According to the claims of old residents of Vrnjci, in the 60s of the 20th century, consolidating Kermes, balls and masquerades Vrnjačka Banja organized a carnival. More precisely, several carnivals were organized, but without significant success. In the 1980s, tradition of masked balls have continued in cafe „Lipa“, and in the 1990s, along with numerous performances, school of acting and music workshops, masquerades have been organized in cafe „Elegant Drašković“. Since 2002, masquerade has been traditionally organized in cafe „Savka“, (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017).

2 For this reason, for example, carnivals in Rio de Janeiro and Venice are held in February.

3 Kermes is a part of the Ottoman tradition - celebration, festival and feast in which people come together in the streets, trade and prepare various forms of entertainment, and all proceeds were given to impoverished.

In 2005, Touristic and sport center „Vrnjačka Banja“, established and organized the first International Carnival of Vrnjci. Carnival was held from 12-17 July 2005, and the central event of the carnival, The Great International Carnival Parade, was held on 14 July 2005 (Turistička organizacija Vrnjačka Banja, 2017). This date was chosen because the first tourism organization in Vrnjačka Banja, and the Balkans, called “Osnovatelno fundatorsko društvo kiselo vruće vode u Vrnjcima“, was founded precisely on July 14, 1868 (Stanković, 2001). The first Carnival included more than 40 entertainment, cultural and sport events, brought together 34 carnival groups from the country and abroad, and the carnival procession consisted of over 1500 participants. In the following year, the first Children's parade was organized, and the Carnival of Vrnjci became a member of FECC (Federation European Carnival Cities). As a result, in May 2011, in Vrnjačka Banja was held 31st Congress of FECC, with over 200 participants from 127 European cities (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017).

Method of tourism valorization according to geographic and economic criteria

Tourism valorization is one of the most significant and most complex issues of tourism, both in theoretical and practical terms (Stanković, 2008). In tourism, there is no set method of valorization. It is more often a combination of methods of other sciences adjusted to the needs of tourism. The aim of tourist valorization is determination of the current status of resources, thus realistic possibilities of tourism development could be set (Čomić & Pjevač, 1997). For the tourism valorization of the Carnival, it needs to be seen as part of the event tourism. Event tourism is a form of tourism that is related to the tourist events, or all events and performances with characteristics that bring material and immaterial tourism effects in different types of destinations (Jovičić, 2009).

In order to make a tourism product more successful, basic elements that improve the product should be determined (Hoyle, 2002). Those elements are: attraction, specificity, content, ranking, tradition, quality of organization, number of visitors, the location of organization, association with natural and anthropogenic tourist values of destination and the time or duration of manifestation (Bjeljac, 2010, Terzić et al., 2013).

Tourism valorization of Carnival of Vrnjci, in this paper, was done on the basis of these elements, which are classified into a group of geographic and economic criteria. Each of the criteria of a geographical groups is

evaluated in the range from 0 to 5 and finally the average value of all these indicators was given. On the basis of average value the degree of program quality for the tourist event can be seen (Bjeljac, 2010). All economic criteria were observed before and after the manifestation, and a grading scale went from 0 to 5 points. Through geographical and economic groups of criteria manifestations important for visits can be divided into three categories (Getz, 2004): the first category (manifestation that has standalone tourist value), the second category (events that are significant element in tourism offer) and third category (other events in which special attention is paid to events in less developed regions of Serbia). Adding up all the highest values of all indicators from geographical and economic groups of criteria, the sum of 115 is obtained. In the first category are manifestations which have 97 and more points, in the second category from 73 to 96, and in the third are manifestation that have less than 73 points (Bjeljac, 2010). In order to avoid partially subjectivity, when evaluating tourism attractions, several tourismologists were interviewed (they have no direct connection with the tourism sector of the spa, and they are familiar with this manifestation) and interviews with residents of Vrnjačka Banja (an employee in Municipality of Vrnjačka Banja, an employee of the Tourist Organization of Vrnjačka Banja, and a hotel manager in Vrnjačka Banja). On the basis of these interviews the ratings of geographical and economic criteria are presented. The research was conducted during April 2016.

Table 1: *Evaluation of geographic criteria for tourist valorization*

| Geographic criteria | Grades (0-5) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Content | 5 |
| Traditionalism | 5 |
| Ranking | 5 |
| Location | 5 |
| Traffic accessibility and links | 5 |
| Time of the event | 5 |
| Number of visitors and participants | 5 |
| Number of accompanying events | 5 |
| The organizers | 5 |
| Pleasure of visitors and participants | 3.85 |
| Artistic value | 2.71 |
| Total | 51.56 |

Geographical criteria in tourist valorization are evaluated from 0 to 5 and they include:

Content of manifestation in world literature, when referring to the content of manifestation the most commonly used is classification of Getz. He stands out manifestations in which content is dominated by the culture, arts/entertainment, business/commerce, show, sport, family events, social events, education and science, recreation or policy (Getz, 1991). In the case of Carnival of Vrnjci, we can say that dominated roll has the entertainment but individual events within the manifestation include artistic, commercial, recreational character, and social role is also significant. In Serbia, classification that gave Željko Bjeljac is also in use. According to him, manifestations can be classified into: artistic, economic, ethnographic, scientific, religious, sports, political, historical, entertainment, touristic and children (Bjeljac, 2010). According to this classification Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is entertaining event, as it aim is to amuse and entertain visitors. In practice the contents of event are often overlap, so neither Carnival of Vrnjci can be evaluate as a purely entertaining event, because it is partly artistic, touristic and child event, and elements of economic, ethnographic and historical significance can be also noted. Considering that the content of manifestation is rich and includes a lot of elements from the previous classification, this criteria can be evaluated with grade 5.

Traditionalism – in order to evaluate traditionalistic of manifestation it is necessary to determine the number of years and durability of the event. Bjeljac states that manifestation is traditional “if has a steady stream of at least five consecutive maintenance, with known date and location of it“, (Bjeljac, 2010). As Carnival of Vrnjci has a known date (it is held every year in the week around the 14th of July) and location (the center of Vrnjačka Banja), and besides of that it has been held for the last 10 years without interruption, traditionalism can be evaluated with grade 5.

Ranking – by ranking, objectives and program content, all manifestations can be divided into: local, regional (zonal), national and international (Bjeljac, 2006). Ranking is often directly proportional to the traditionalistic of the event, however this isn't always the rule. Therefore it is necessary to mention that the criteria which determinate the ranking of events. The criteria for determining the ranking are: geographic origin and number of visitors, the importance, and the size of funds allocated for organization, effects arising from the event determined by certain norms and rules set by the organizers, geographic origin of the participants and content of the event (Bjeljac, 2010). The event gets the appropriate rank, if it fulfills at least two of the above criteria. Origin of visitors designates

the area from which visitors come. In the case of Carnival of Vrnjci, the largest number of visitors come from Vrnjačka Banja. Also a significant number are visitors from other parts of Serbia, as well as foreign visitors, which is enough to determinate that criteria as international. Geographic origin of the participants has also international character, so the two criteria are fulfilled. In practice it is often that with the advent of several participants from the countries of former Yugoslavia the event is immediately declared international. Because of that, in order to gain a true picture of the range, it is significant that the event fulfilled at least two of the following criteria: the organizer is an international organization or association, organizing committee members are from a minimum of three different countries, the members of referees are from a minimum of three different countries, the total number of participants from foreign countries is at least one third of total event participants, or they come from a minimum of five countries (Bjeljac, 2010). Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is a member of FECC, the jury members are from three countries (sometimes more, depending on years), and the participants come from many countries from the region, Europe and the world. The requirements of this criteria is fulfilled and rank of Carnival is international, so the grade is 5.

Location of the manifestation – This criteria is significant because it shows the correlation between the event with anthropogenic and natural geographic tourism values and affects the previous criteria. The choice of location is important also because of the functionality of the event and the arrival of participants and visitors. Criteria for evaluation location are: vicinity of potential participants and visitors and easy accessibility for those traveling from further regions, availability of parking spaces, ambience and originality of the location, a good and practical logistical support for the organization, a favorable infrastructure for access to the surrounding tourist attractions and other auxiliary activities, the existence of interactive connections between audience and the organizers, the degree to which location corresponds to character of the event, the safety of participants and visitors of the event, the availability of surplus space (Goldblatt & Nelson, 2001). Carnival of Vrnjci takes place in the central streets of Vrnjačka Banja (on the promenade) and all the associated activities and events are in the center of the city (except Morava descent), where is the largest number of tourist attractiveness of the city. Availability is easy for both participants and visitors from the environment, and for those who come from afar, parking spaces in the immediate vicinity are provided, however since it is a mass event, with a

large number of participants and an even larger number of visitors, it is impossible to fully meet this criteria, the ambience of the spa is extremely pleasant and complements the event, the infrastructure is satisfactory, nature of the event corresponds to the location, the safety of visitors and participants is provided, and a number of accommodation capacity is also satisfactory Vrnjačka Banja has about 20.000 beds in official statistics (Štetić, 2007), which is enough, if we take into account that the majority of visitors of the Carnival are people from the surround. Bearing in mind all elements, mark for the location is 5.

Traffic accessibility and links – a criteria that is closely connected with the place when manifestation is held. Vrnjačka Banja belongs to a group of Serbian spas that are located close to major traffic communications (Jovičić, 2009). Favorable traffic position stems from a favorable geographical position, and the main roads are related to the Zapadna Morava valley. By regional roads, Vrnjačka Banja is connected via Kraljevo and the Ibar highway to the west and to the north with Kragujevac, and east through Kruševac connects with the highway E-75 (Belgrade-Niš). From Belgrade to Vrnjačka Banja it is possible to arrive by main road E-761 (Turistička organizacija Vrnjačka Banja, 2017). Center of Vrnjačka Banja is well connected with local roads, and general accessibility may be highly assessed. Assessment of this criteria is 5.

Time of the manifestation – this is an important criteria to determine the connection between organization of manifestation and leisure of visitors. Also, important issue is notification of the TOS, about the exact dates of the event, which is important for the promotion. Carnival of Vrnjci is held every year around the 14th of July and lasts for one week. Since it is held in July, which is exactly the peak of tourist season in Vrnjačka Banja and the fact that there is a coordination with the TOS (information about the Carnival can be seen on the website of the TOS months in advance in the calendar of tourist events in Serbia) mark for this criteria is 5.

The number of visitors and participants of manifestation – this criteria is in causal connection with the range, time and place of the event. In practice, it is difficult to predict precisely and determine the number of visitors, and therefore, in Serbia, the number of visitors is often exaggerated, especially when there is no ticket sale (Bjeljac, 2010). It is even more difficult to certainty determine the structure of visitors (whether they come from the region, the country or abroad). For now, the

number of visitors is estimated on the basis of spatial capacity and the assessment of Ministry of Interior of Serbia.

Table 2: *The number of tourist arrivals during the season in Vrnjačka Banja*

| Year | June | | | July | | | August | | |
|------|----------|---------|-------|----------|---------|-------|----------|---------|-------|
| | Domestic | Foreign | Total | Domestic | Foreign | Total | Domestic | Foreign | Total |
| 2006 | 18174 | 809 | 18983 | 16902 | 1041 | 17943 | 12357 | 797 | 13154 |
| 2007 | 21390 | 1211 | 22601 | 19667 | 1217 | 20884 | 15246 | 1216 | 16462 |
| 2008 | 18224 | 1183 | 19407 | 17660 | 1257 | 18917 | 18442 | 1273 | 19715 |
| 2009 | 14834 | 2561 | 17395 | 17945 | 1517 | 19462 | 19435 | 1905 | 21340 |
| 2010 | 14460 | 2844 | 17304 | 16938 | 1651 | 18589 | 19934 | 2389 | 22323 |
| 2011 | 16276 | 2906 | 19182 | 19675 | 3547 | 23222 | 22422 | 2872 | 25294 |
| 2012 | 12942 | 3605 | 16547 | 16878 | 2752 | 19630 | 19678 | 2660 | 22338 |
| 2013 | 14719 | 2999 | 17718 | 18903 | 3334 | 22237 | 21797 | 3909 | 25706 |
| 2014 | 13140 | 2566 | 15706 | 16390 | 3143 | 19533 | 27805 | 7483 | 35288 |

Source: *Department of finance, local public revenues and economy within the Municipal administration of Vrnjačka Banja, 2016.*

From the data in Table 2, it can be seen that the total number of visitors during the month of July, when a Carnival of Vrnjci is held, is not significantly increased compared to other two seasonal months, even it is smaller. In 2006, 2007 and 2011, the number of foreign tourists in the season is the largest in July, but in 2009 and 2010, the number of foreign tourists in July was lower than in June and August. This is explained with the fact that current tourism statistics of Vrnjačka Banja, which is based primarily on registration of visitors when accommodating in hotels and other accommodation facilities, does not include all visitors of the Carnival, so it is imprecisely to determine the participation of visitors of the Carnival in the total number of tourists of Vrnjačka Banja in July. From the above it can be concluded that Tourism Organization of Vrnjačka Banja, as well as the municipality itself should pay more attention to the introduction of new statistical methods that would give more precise information about Carnival visitors themselves and their share in the total number of visitors of spa. The number of visitors of the Carnival of Vrnjci is estimated at about 200.000 (in the record year 2008, the number of visitors is estimated at 300.000). Regarding participants of manifestation, information about them is much easier to get, because

there is application and registration for the participants. The average number of participants of the Carnival is 1500-2000 (in 2008 the parade of the Carnival included 3.000 people) (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017). Given the fact that Carnival of Vrnjci is one of the biggest events in Serbia grade for this criteria is 5.

The number of accompanying events – a criteria that indicates the variety and attraction of the program which includes the manifestation into the tourist offer (Bjeljac, 2006). During the carnival choreographies, cabarets, exhibitions of photographs and flowers, sports competitions, Morava descent, various uncommon races (of waiters, in high heels, roller skates and bicycles), juggling night are organized. The carnival program contains rich program for children (children choirs, theater performances, children's costume party and number of events for children, including the Children's carnival parade). On the website of Carnival of Vrnjci (Vrnjačka Banja Karneval, 2017) it is mentioned that this is "a manifestation with the richest program in Serbia", and considering to that and a really big variety of accompanying events the grade for this criteria is 5.

Organizers of the event – allocated criteria for determining the objective of organization of manifestation (Bjeljac, 2010). The organizer of the Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is Tourist sports center "Vrnjačka Banja" in cooperation with TOVB. Assessment of this criteria, given because of the touristic importance of the carnival is 5.

Satisfaction of visitors and participants with the manifestation program – an important criteria for evaluating the successfulness of an event. Factors affecting the assessment of manifestation of the visitors are: ambience, tourist activity in the region, the quality of event like tourism product (authenticity, quality of program content), the attitude of the local community to visitors of the event and vice versa, the relationship between the visitors and the local population, the security at the destination, social impact of manifestation (Hadžić, 2005). Each of these factors is evaluated in the range 0-5 and at the end it gives medium grade, which represents the satisfaction of visitors (Bjeljac, 2010). The ambience of Carnival of Vrnjci could be evaluated with 5, since it is a spa which is one of the most popular tourist resorts in Serbia, mark of tourist activity in the region is also 5, the quality and authenticity of event program could be assessed with 3 (it's not the unique carnival in Serbia and the program is rich in content, but it has elements in common with other events), the

attitude of local community towards the visitors was estimated to 4, the ratio of visitors to the population 3 (if we take into account the crowd, which creates a mass visit and problems it brings with it), security stay at the destination is on the middle-lower level, since there is security for participants, while the visitors are completely free access (no search of visitors such as the case of "Beer Fest" visitors in Belgrade), the assessment of this sub-criteria is 3, social impact of the Carnival is significant and can be evaluated to 4. GPA for this criteria is 3.85.

Artistic value of manifestation – in order to evaluate this criteria, it is necessary to do tourism valorization by the method of Hillary du Cros, which was modified for the purpose of valorization of manifestation. Each indicator is scored from 0 to 5 and at the end obtained value is important for the evaluation of artistic manifestations (Bijeljic, 2010), but also for the quality of certain parts of popular and touristic manifestation which refers to Carnival of Vrnjci. Sub-indicators which are important for the evaluation of artistic value of the event are (Cros, 2000): Ambience – ambience of Vrnjačka Banja is adequate, touristic very attractive and can be evaluated with 5. Well known outside the local area – Carnival of Vrnjci is the biggest carnival in South Eastern Europe and an event that has an international character, however due to the fact that promotional activities related to the Carnival could be improved the given mark is 4. Important national symbol or icon – Carnival of Vrnjci is one of the most popular events in Serbia (instantly after the "Sabor trubača" in Guča and "Exit" in Novi Sad), however, it could not be said that it represents a national symbol, so the mark is 1. Can tell an interesting story – evocative place – about the Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja can it can be definitely told a lot of interesting stories, so the grade is 4. Has some aspect to differ it from the nearby attractions – Carnival of Vrnjci is quite different from other tourist motives in Vrnjačka Banja (spa tourism is mainly linked to the health and recreation motives), and on the other hand, some parts of the program (e.g. concerts and music events), can be seen under other manifestations. Also, this is not the only carnival in Serbia. The grade is 3. Appeals to special needs or uses – the main character of the event is entertainment, but it can be found program components that can satisfy some special needs (e.g. sports competitions). Mark is 2. Manifestation associated with culture or heritage – the program of the carnival present different cultural events (exhibitions, performances, concerts, folklore), and learning more about foreign participants of Parade, different cultures and customs are learned. The assessment shall be 4. Complements other tourism products in area/region/destination – although Vrnjačka Banja

has a long history and definitely possesses anthropogenous tourist values, they are not so much expressed to prevail over natural values. In the vicinity of Vrnjačka Banja one can visit significant monasteries such as Ljubostinja, Stubal and Žiča. The evaluation is 3. Educational value – within of the Carnival are held various art and children's workshops, as well as numerous exhibitions, so there is an educational value, although not the primary. The grade is 2. Historical value –Carnival of Vrnjci is an event which has been held for the last 10 years. Although the precursors of today's Carnival dates back to the 19th century, one cannot say that it has a very long history, and therefore no historical value. The mark is 1. Social value – The carnival in Vrnjačka Banja has positive influence on development and tourist income, and hence on the quality of life of the local population, so it can be said that the social role is visible. The grade is 3. Scientific and research value – Carnival of Vrnjci is mostly entertainment event so we cannot talk about scientific research value. Hardly anyone goes to the carnival to deal research. The evaluation is 0. Rare or common cultural assets (locally, regionally, nationally) – Carnival of Vrnjci is the biggest carnival in Serbia and Southeastern Europe, but not the only one (in Serbia are held Carnival of Flowers in Bela Crkva, Carnival of Boats in Belgrade, Carnival in Pančevo and Carnival in Vršac). Some parts of program are not rare (concerts, competitions, exhibitions) and Great International Parade is the specificity. The mark is 3. Potential for ongoing involvement and consultation of key stakeholders – in the organization of the Carnival of Vrnjci participate numerous sponsors and financiers who are changing from year to year. Since the organizers (TOVB and Touristic and sport center "Vrnjačka Banja") are open to cooperation and potential investors can obtain a well-placed advertisement (given the mass of the visit), and certainly all investment opportunities are not exhausted, we can say that the mark is 3. The GPA of all sub-indicators, and hence the mark of artistic value of Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is 2.71.

The total score of the economic criteria for tourism valorization of the Carnival of Vrnjci is 45.

Economic criteria of tourism valorization are observed before and after the manifestation and they are evaluated from 0 to 5. Those criteria are:

Table 3: *Evaluation of the economic criteria in tourism valorization*

| Economic criteria | Grades (0-5) | |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Before | After |
| | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Capital investments | 3 | 4 |
| Ecological impact | 2 | 2 |
| Media-promotional impact | 5 | 4 |
| Social and political impact | 4 | 4 |
| Economic impact | 4 | 5 |
| Stakeholder impact | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 45 | |

Capital investments – as for capital investments, you cannot say that Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja has great influence on the overall infrastructure and other investments. However some improvements in the form of repairing lights in the center, marking the faded labels for parking spots and renovation of certain buildings are noted. The mark before is 3, and the mark after is 4.

Ecological impact – for the tourism significance in Vrnjačka Banja ecological impact is very important. As regards the impact of the Carnival on ecology of Vrnjačka Banja certainly is quite negative, primarily because of very large number of visitors and participants. If we have in mind setting up additional litter bins, signposts and signs that should not endanger the nature and the park, which are set before the carnival, score before and after would be 2. Further increasing awareness of the importance of this influence and protection of the environment is very important, since Vrnjačka Banja is a very sensitive area whose ecology can greatly be endangered by massiveness.

Media-promotional impact – this criteria referring to the representation of the carnival in print and electronic media and promotional activities can be evaluated before with grade 5 and after with grade 4. Carnival of Vrnjci has its own website, it is present on the website of the TOVB, it is promoted at tourism fairs in the country and abroad, it is presented on the national television (TV program „Žikina šarenica“, Dnevnik RTS), included in the calendar of events of TOS and articles related to this manifestation can be found in numerous print and electronic media.

Social and political impact – tourism manifestation in some way shows the quality of living standards and the level of services of the state and local sector. This influence can be seen through the fact that Carnival of Vrnjci affects the development of tourism, development of tourism affects in economic development, which is suitable for the political sphere, and

indirectly influences on the quality life in the community. However the difference before and after is small and this impact can be assessed with

Economic impact – direct influence of manifestation to economy is still impossible to measure due to lack of adequate legislation. For Carnival of Vrnjci there is no ticket sales, no entrance charge, so it cannot be able to talk about direct revenues. Certainly, there are revenues from the sale of different souvenirs and a substantial income from restaurants in carnival time, but again it cannot be precisely measured. The marks are: 4 before and 5 after the Carnival.

Stakeholder influence and cooperation of the organizers with tourism organizations, tour operators and travel agencies – This factor includes the effect of all participants in organizing manifestation on the course of its planning and maintenance and it is extremely important in the development of tourism (Bjeljac, 2010). In close relation to this criteria is a criteria of cooperation between the organizers, tourism organization, tour operators and travel agencies. In the case of the Carnival organized by the Touristic sport center "Vrnjačka Banja" and TOVB is seen mutual cooperation of the two organizers and TOS, part of which is TOVB. For now, the impact of all participants of the organization is satisfactory, but there is always room to improve relations between organizers. Assessment before and after is 4. The total score of the economic criteria for tourism valorization of the Carnival of Vrnjci is 45.

Cumulative value of score of geographic and economic criteria is 96.56, which can be rounded to 97, so that the Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja can be placed in the first category, which means that this manifestation is an independent tourist value, which is recognizable in the tourist offer of Serbia.

SWOT analysis of Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja

"SWOT" analysis of the Carnival of Vrnjci includes analysis of its current strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities and threats.

Table 4: *SWOT analysis of Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja*

| STRENGTHS: | WEAKNESSES: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ambience of Vrnjačka Banja -A rich and various content of the accompanying program -The international character of the manifestation and its membership in Federation European Carnival Cities -The interest of the local population for the manifestation -The uniqueness of the event at the local level -The hospitality of locals towards visitors and participants of the event -The growing offer of additional facilities (souvenirs, handicrafts, arts, gastronomy) -The wealth of mineral resources and tradition of spa tourism -Positive attitude of the Municipality towards the further development of tourism -A large number of participants and visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of European road corridors to the location of the manifestation -Insufficient number of parking places -Insufficient environmental awareness of the need for greater environmental protection -Failure to implement the law and penal policy in the field of environmental protection -Lack of cooperation and interaction of all the institutions involved in the organization of manifestation -Insufficient involvement of cultural institutions in the organization of extra activities of the manifestation -Insufficient marketing of the carnival oriented to foreign countries via the Internet and social networks (multi-language web site) |
| OPPORTUNITIES: | THREATS: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Existence of tourism infrastructure (road signs, labels, directions, info centers) -Positive opinion about Vrnjačka Banja and entire Serbia in international market -Creating plan of marketing and presentation of Carnival of Vrnjci in foreign markets -Improving service quality and motivation for the further development of event tourism in Vrnjačka Banja -The possibility of joint appearance of Carnival of Vrnjci with other carnivals from European cities in the world market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Insufficient number of local sources of funding -Lack of professional tourist products for foreign tourists -Lack of human resources for further development of extra activities in manifestation (animators of recreation, guides) -A large number of participants and visitors (negative impact on the capacity of the area and the environment) -Strong competition of carnivals with built image in the world market (Rio de Janeiro, Venice) |

Ambience and location of the Carnival of Vrnjci stand out as special advantage, because Vrnjačka Banja is one of the most popular tourist resorts in Serbia. Perhaps precisely for this arises the greatest weakness and that is insufficiently developed awareness and the absence of more stringent legal regulation in the field of environmental protection, bearing in mind that this is a very sensitive natural area. At present Carnival of Vrnjci cannot match famous world carnivals by building its own brand so it would be desirable that, as a member of FECC, Carnival of Vrnjci be more active and involved in cooperation with other European carnivals in order to promote its own offer on the world market.

Conclusion

Vrnjačka Banja is known for its health caring medical effect and primarily development of spa tourism. Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja is the manifestation held for over the past 10 years, which significantly manages to present Vrnjačka Banja in a different way. Although Carnival of Vrnjci can be presented as an independent tourist value, on which TOVB draws special attention, this event is significant as a complementary form of health care, medical and spa tourism. Carnival of Vrnjci, the biggest carnival of South Eastern Europe and one of the biggest manifestations in Serbia, attracts large number of visitors from abroad and thus, of course, can influence on the creation of positive image of Serbia in the world. However, although this carnival has numerous and evident advantages both for Vrnjačka Banja and its surroundings as well as for Serbia, there is still a lot of manifestation elements that need to be upgraded and improved. The main disadvantage of organization of Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja certainly is lack of multilingual website of the Carnival and TOVB, because current contents are available only in Serbian. Since the Vrnjačka Banja, in ecological terms, is place of limited spatial capacity, it need to be worked on the establishment of stricter legislation in this area, because as far as attendance of the event has a positive effect on the overall development of tourism, one cannot deny the negative impact of massiveness of visitors and participants. It should be pointed some positive reviews regarding the pleasure of visitors, varied offer of accompanying programs, the relatively high media coverage of the Carnival and the whole atmosphere in Vrnjačka Banja during Carnival. Commendable is the designation of membership of Carnival within FECC, which is positive for the positioning of Vrnjačka Banja in the tourist offer of European Carnival Cities, with whom would certainly be considerable larger, more organized and planned cooperation.

For Carnival in Vrnjačka Banja, in the future, certain innovations are necessary, because tourism of today, operates according to the principles of the modern era, in which the changes are very rapid and continuous, and one should not be satisfied with the current situation, but constantly strive for better positioning in the tourist offer.

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