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AND TOURISM IN VRNJAČKA BANJA**



QUALITY OF MANIFESTATION "LOVE FEST" AS A TOURIST PRODUCT OF VRNJAČKA BANJA

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze the quality of manifestations happening at one destination. The goal is to see how the visitors grade the quality of a manifestation. Through the Google questionnaire, 110 respondents with different demographic characteristics were interviewed and gave their assessment of the quality of the mass event. The survey concluded that the manifestation quality is high. It also came to the conclusion what target group of consumers is the most present, and which type of promotion is most effective. These conclusions can be of high importance to event organizers and local governments, as they provide specific guidelines for further development of tourism at the destination level. The high quality grade of the manifestation, as a result of the research, is an additional motivation factor for investing in the development of a manifestation that contributes to the increase in the number of visitors and the creation of a better competitive position of Vrnjačka Banja as a destination for the domestic and international market. One of the limitation of this work is that only one event, "Love Fest", instead of several such or similar music festivals.

Key Words: *quality, tourist product, manifestations, destination*

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Introduction

Tourism as a very comprehensive, broad term becomes more significant. The tourist phenomenon has a strong reverse influence to society as a whole. Tourism, as the fastest growing industry in the world in modern

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conditions, can have significant implications for the competitiveness and development of the national economy (Krstić & Stanišić, 2015). The tourism market, as a special type market, puts services into the forefront, bearing in mind that users value their quality very much. The number of tourist products and services is growing.

Changes in the demands as the dominant factor on the tourism market are almost regular and obvious, in the sense that tourists want to carry out a series of activities and get some unforgettable experience (Đurađević, 2017). The pluralisation of the "tourist taste" in modern tourism has led to the development of "6E" of tourism - experience, excitement, escape, education, entertainment and ecology (Majstorović et al., 2013), unlike the former 3S (sun, sand and sea). Tourists of the future will have the following characteristics (Živković, 2011, p. 59):

- Expressing a desire for new experiences and events;
- Being more aware of the quality offered;
- Possessing a developed sense of preservation of nature and ecology;
- Preferring social, cultural and ecological community, but with an emphasis on autochthonous elements;
- There will be a greater emphasis on the fragmentation of holidays by increasing the short-term holidays and diversification of destinations. The seasonality of tourism will be less marked, as tourists will go on holiday several times a year (partly due to the recession in the emission markets);
- New market groups will emerge, travel motifs will be diversified;
- Tourists will be more informed on the Internet;
- New selective offer elements will be implemented (nautical, sports, wellness, hunting, fishing, rural, religious tourism ...).

Changes in many elements on the offering side cause secondary elasticity of demand (Bakić, 2010). The selective elements of the offer include tourist trips motivated by special interests for certain attractions and activities such as: sports, unspoiled nature, traditional crafts, wellness, culture, rural tourism, events, festivals, nautica, etc. These types of tourism have the highest growth rates (Unković & Zečević, 2009). The key products according to the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia are health, spa & wellness, manifestations, MICE tourism, circular tours and special interests (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2016, p. 55). Manifestations as a selective form of tourism in our country are very developed and have a great impact on the promotion

of the destination (both on the domestic and foreign tourist market), the growth of tourism traffic and tourism income, especially international manifestations, while the manifestations of low ranking have great importance for the preservation of the cultural identity of the local population (Stevanović & Malinić, 2015).

The goal of this paper is to analyze the quality of a destination from a tourist point of view. The list of destinations is being updated, and today the whole planet is in the tourist offer, while the tourist offers and passenger affinities have changed and become complicated, including even space travel (Jovanović & Delic, 2010).

Vrnjačka Banja, recognized in the past as one of the destinations of health, spa and healing tourism, has greatly changed its image on the tourism market today. It is one of the spas that have begun to introduce innovations in its offer (Đurađević, 2017) and in that way has become a destination that, through a set of different components by their joint activities, ensures the satisfaction of various needs of tourists. The paper considers tourists' or visitors' assessment of the quality of the manifestation "Love Fest" as an organized event. The demands of the modern tourist are changing with the always present demand for a wider choice of manifestations. Those are manifestations that make the tourist offer richer and without seasonal restrictions (Jovanović & Delić, 2010). In the last ten years, tourist activities manifestations are also of high significance for the growth of tourist traffic and the improvement of the economic effects (Stevanović & Malinić, 2016).

The paper analyzes the manifestation "Love Fest" traditionally held in Vrnjačka Banja from the viewpoint of visitors.

Manifestation as an element of the tourist destination offer

A tourist destination is described as the location with a lot of attractions and related tourist facilities and services that a tourist or a group of tourists chooses to visit or which are promoted, as well as an area with different natural features, characteristics or attractions that attracts non-local visitors-tourists and excursionist (Popesku, 2011). A tourist destination can also be defined as a "set of experiences acquired by a tourist", and can be understood as a package of products and services which is partly created by public and partly by private employees. The essence is not a single attraction in itself, but a combination of them

created through the experience of tourist consumption (Popesku, 2011). Attractive factors from the environment encourage tourists to travel and to a large extent determine the destination's choice. When deciding to go on a trip a tourist is influenced by different facts- whether he/she goes on vacation, whether it is a journey abroad, which the destination country is (Nikolau & Mas, 2008). It is necessary to constantly introduce innovations in the offer at the destination level in order to meet the needs of present and future generations and achieve the competitiveness of the destination (Petrovic et al., 2016). Innovation is a specific instrument of entrepreneurship and it is an action that enriches the resources with new capacities for making profit. It creates resources and it represents everything that brings about the changes in the potential of creating wealth in already existing resources (new observation) (Draker, 1996). Consumers will prefer those products that offer the best quality characteristics, performances and innovations (Vidović & Broćeta, 2016).

Manifestations are an integral part of tourism, but also a permanent part of human civilization and culture since its creation. Manifestations are a global phenomenon that is gaining importance through the industry of events (Jovanović, 2013). According to the register and calendar of the manifestations of the Tourist Organization of Serbia in our country, about 600 events are held throughout the year in Serbia. According to unofficial information, this number is much higher, amounting to as many as a thousand. In relation to the number of inhabitants, we are one of the leading countries in the world, which leads us to conclude that Serbia could use the slogan "Serbia – the country of manifestations" in one of its promotions (Jovanovic & Delic, 2010).

According to content or character, events can be classified into four categories: business events, sports events, events based on entertaining contents such as concerts, various art competitions and similar, and festivals and other cultural events (Getz, 2014). Events can be specialized on the basis of the following criteria: certain types of food and beverages; music and dances; religious festivities; sports events; folk art and old crafts; historical (Jovanovic & Delic, 2010). According to Bijelac (2010), manifestations can be divided according to tradition, massiveness and location. Planned events are usually related to a particular location, indoor or outdoor or on a number of locations. Future activities, promotions, high quality tourist products, among others also manifestations, are real potentials that can accelerate the massive arrival of foreign tourists in great number and thus realize a significant foreign currency income in the

Serbian tourism industry (Jovanović & Delić, 2010). The tourist market makes the current state and the developing tourism trend (Plavša & Kuzmić, 2002). The aim is to find the key determinants of competitiveness and to improve them through efficient tourism development strategies in the future (Krstić et al., 2016).

Hallmark tourist manifestations such as main fairs, exhibitions, cultural and sports manifestations of international status have the primary function to provide the better positioning in the tourism market to the local community, host (Hall, 1989). One of such events that contribute to the attraction of foreign tourists to our country is certainly the "Exit" festival. As the festival was promoted with new ideas each year, in 2003, it became the Exit state. Exit became more than a festival and state - it became a state of mind (Brkic, 2005).

The quality of a service is a social act that is realized in direct contact between the user and the service provider. A service meeting is the interaction of users with living and non-living objects which is in the heart of the service delivery process (Ljubojević, 1995, p. 52). Kano's quality model, that is, one its dimension refers to a market segment that implies that if something is attractive in one segment, it does not mean that it will be attractive in some other, but expected or basic. Social norms or rituals in excessive spending affect the expectations of the users and their behavior in the purchase of products and services, where a higher level of education is associated with a higher degree of satisfaction. Also, men are much satisfied with purchased products and services than women, etc. (Maričić, 2011).

The Kano model implies the use of different parameters that help to transfer the user requests into the so-called "design parameters". According to numerous authors, the model allows minimizing errors in the placement of products and services and increasing customer satisfaction, which leads to loyalty. It is believed that the Kano method is unique in the quality system with such a degree of orientation towards the user (Mont & Plepus, 2003).

Based on the GAP model of quality, the determinants of quality of services in the order of importance are (Kotler & Keller, 2006):

1. Reliability - ability to deliver the promised service exactly and in accordance with expectations

2. Responsibility - willingness to help customers and provide quick services
3. Credibility - knowledge and kindness of employees, as well as their ability to build trust and confidence.
4. Empathy - customer care and individual attention to users
5. Perceptibility - the outlook of rooms, equipment, personnel and promotional material.

The basic standard of quality of tourist service is the satisfied tourist, while ensuring the satisfaction of the users ensures the stability of sales and profits in the long term. Quality determinants establish a minimum level of protection for users below which quality cannot be achieved: safety, hygiene, accessibility, unambiguous offer, authenticity (Živković, 2009).

Consumer satisfaction with the service results in increased users' loyalty and positive mouth-to-mouth propaganda. Service quality and customer satisfaction are concepts that have always been connected (Kuintela et al., 2010). Positive mouth-to-mouth propaganda leads to an increase in the number of new users. Oral propaganda or "word of mouth" (WOM) is the one that is the most trusted by consumers, while more and more e-WOM propaganda is discussed (Đjuradjević, 2017).

The area of quality objectives is the subject of numerous discussions, debates, misunderstandings (Arsovski et al., 2009) and is the key to the success of a single product on the market, including events as a product of a tourist destination. The satisfaction of visitors is an essential element of the success of an event, so the focus should be on creating value for the consumer and its satisfaction (Getz et al., 2012).

Quality evaluation of the manifestation "Love fest"

The tourist traffic of Vrnjačka Banja has changed over the centuries. This was greatly contributed by events of different types that became recognizable on the international market also as part of the overall tourist offer of this once exclusively health healing destination. There are a lot of manifestations or organized events, festivals in Vrnjačka Banja. The manifestation in modern terms includes a carnival, festival, ritual, ceremony etc (Getz, 2005).

The "International Vrnjci Carnival", which was first organized in 2005 and included 40 different entertainments, cultural and sporting events, is highly recognizable. It is particularly distinguished by an international carnival procession, including the one for children. The first time there were about 1500 participants coming from Serbia and abroad. It is traditionally held every year and gathers a large number of visitors from July 14 and lasts for next seven days.

However, according to the total number of visitors, in particular of foreign visitors, the musical event "The Love Fest" is dominant. "The Love Fest" in Vrnjačka Banja is a musical event when the audience can enjoy different music genres, with special emphasis on promotion of electronic music. The idea for this festival was born in 2006 in response to an insufficient number of cultural events in central Serbia. The name "Love Fest" came from the fact that Vrnjačka Banja is an increasingly frequent destination for lovers who come to visit the Bridge of love. The Bridge of love - one of about 20 bridges over the Vrnjačka River - is unique in Serbia and is in a way a monument of love. Taking this fact into consideration, the first party, the forerunner of the festival, was organized on this bridge. The first official "Love Fest" was held in 2007 on the summer stage and lasted for two days until 2011, when it was extended for the first time for one more day. The "Love Fest" manifestation is the subject of the analysis and evaluation carried out in this paper.

a) Methodology and research questions

The survey was done through the social network Facebook, more precisely through the messenger, where 110 respondents selected by the random sample method, gave their answers. The questions first relate to general information about respondents such as gender, age, education level, whether they have visited Vrnjacka Banja, whether they have attended the manifestation "Love Fest", how they rate the quality of the manifestation and whether they would visit this manifestation again. The survey was conducted in January 2018.

For the needs of the research carried out in the work using a survey, more precisely Google questionnaire, two hypotheses were used as starting points:

H1: Manifestations contribute to the increase of the number of visitors to Vrnjačka Banja as a tourist destination.

H2: The satisfaction of visitors with a massive, traditional manifestation "Love Fest" is at a high level.

b) Research results and discussion

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. *The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents*

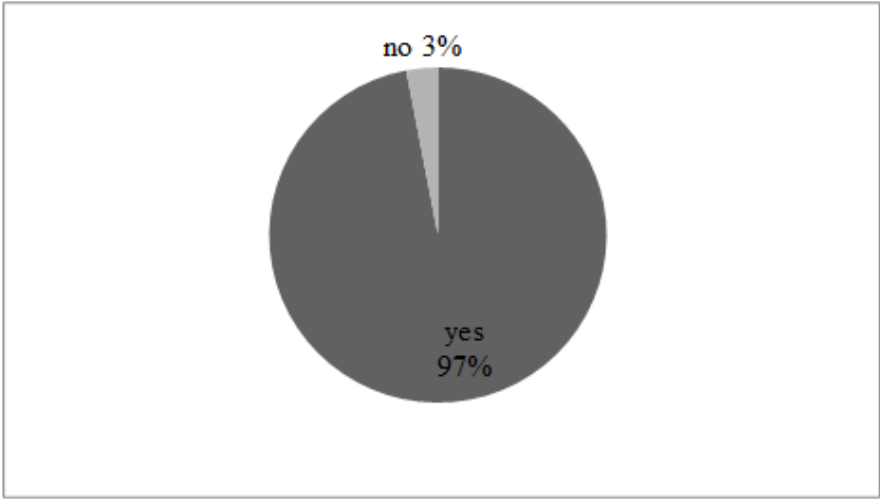
Variables	Number of respondents	Number of respondents, percentage %
<i>Gender</i>	<i>110</i>	
Male	56	50,9%
Female	54	49,1%
<i>Age</i>		
up to 18	30	27,27%
18-25	28	25,45%
26-35	16	14,54%
36-45	18	16,36%
46-55	16	14,54%
56-65	2	1,81%
<i>Education level</i>		
III degree	18	16,36%
IV and V degree	70	63,63%
College	7	6,36%
Bachelor	7	6,36%
In the process of education	8	7,27%

Source: *Author's research*

Answers to questions in the survey were given by 110 respondents. It can be seen that there are 56 males and 54 females. The respondents are mostly members of the younger population, most of them have the level IV and V of education, while 6,36% have a college degree, 6,36% have a bachelor degree, and 7,27% are still in the education process.

The largest number of respondents visited Vrnjačka Banja, which is based on their answers to the question shown in Figure 1, while 3% did not. It is necessary to see who the respondents that did not visit Vrnjačka Banja are, although their share is small, and find a way to motivate them to visit it in some future period.

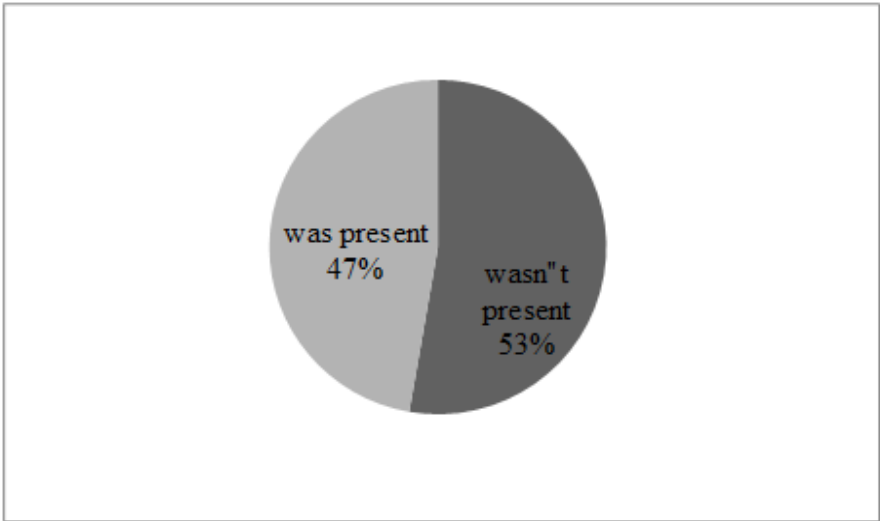
Figure 1: *The structure of answers given by the respondents to the question "Did you visit The Love Fest?"*



Source: *Author's presentation*

Figure 2 shows that 53% of respondents visited the "Love Fest" manifestation, while 47% did not. The reason for 47% respondents not attending this event can be found in the fact that they may not have been informed or were prevented from coming for some other reason, having in mind the answers they gave later, which are shown in Figure 3.

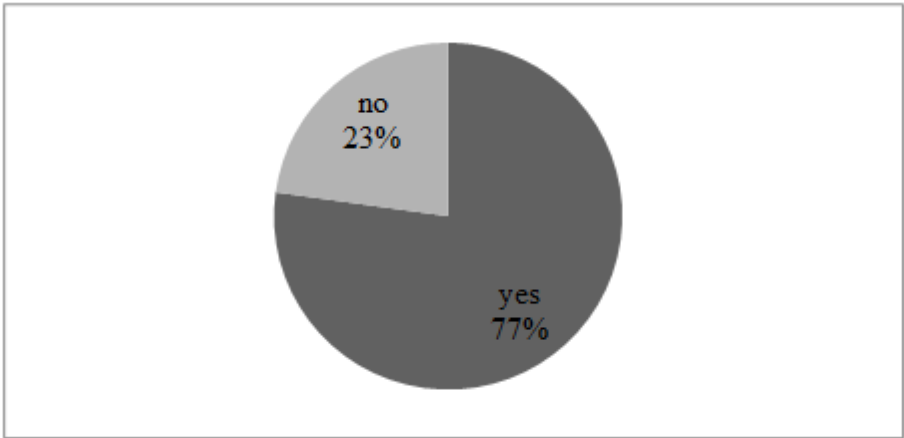
Figure 2: *The presence of respondents to the manifestation "Love Fest"*



Source: *Author's presentation*

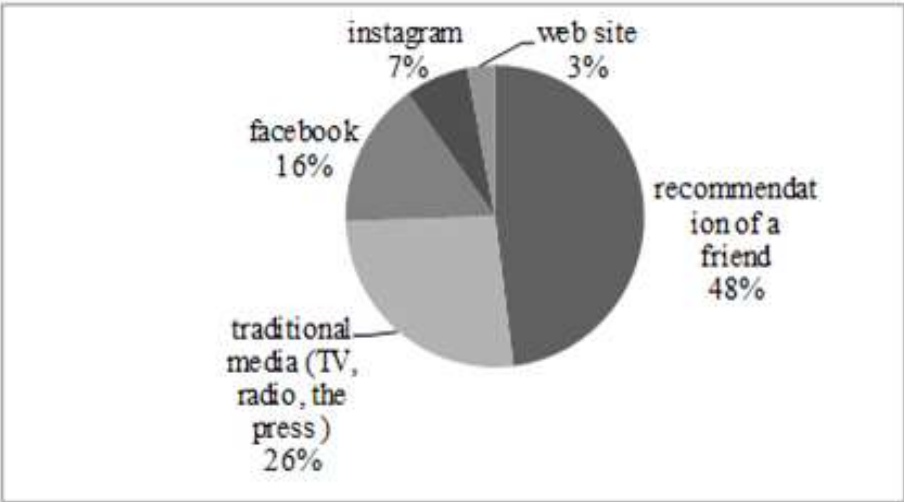
Figure 3 shows that 77% of respondents would visit the manifestation, while 23% would not visit it next year. Considering that the number of respondents who did not attend the event is 47%, and now only 23% of them said that they would not visit it, the previously stated reason for not having attended the event, which is certainly positive, because the reason is not the discontent of visitors, is confirmed.

Figure 3: *Structure of respondents' answers to the question "Would you attend the" Love Fest" manifestation?"*



Source: *Author's presentation*

Figure 4: *Method of providing information to the respondents*



Source: *Author's presentation*

When it comes to the way of informing the respondents, it can be concluded that the recommendation of friends is a key way to get information about the "Love Fest" event (Figure 4).

Tourist demand is very elastic and influenced by a number of factors: economic (price, income, propaganda), political, social, other factors (Cvijanović, 2016). In the case of this tourism product, it is obvious that demand is elastic on propaganda and thus on oral propaganda or recommendation from a friend.

Table 2: *Quality evaluation of the "Love Fest" by the respondents*

<i>Grade xi</i>	<i>Number of tourists fi</i>	$f_i * x_i$	$x_i - x$	$(x_i - x)^2$	$(x_i - x)^2 * f_i$
1	8	8	-3	9	72
2	8	16	-2	4	32
3	13	39	-1	1	13
4	28	112	0	0	0
5	53	265	1	1	53
<i>Sum</i>	110	440			170
Mean value		4			
Dispersion		1,55			
Deviation		1,24			

Source: *Author's research*

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that a large number of respondents rated the "Love Fest" event with a high grade. More precisely, 53 respondents rated it with the grade 5, 28 respondents with the grade 4 and 13 of them with the grade 3. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents' satisfaction with the quality of the event is high. This conclusion can also be made on the basis of the high mean values shown in the table. This suggests that the management performs the job of organizing the event very well. What is needed to keep the quality at the same level and improve is to create a sustainable product for more seasons, not just one, which can be achieved by introducing innovations as one of the key elements of quality. It means the care for the product not to become obsolete and comes to the level of decline, which is even more complex with the tourist product due to its specificity. Characteristics of services such as intolerance, inseparability, simultaneous creation and consumption, heterogeneity, lack of ownership, which are basic differences comparing to the product, means to find the way to manage

them in the most effective way (Cvijanović et al., 2016). Management also has to provide constant care for consumers by examining their wishes, needs, taking into consideration all their suggestions. The big part of business success depends on the relationship with costumers. Thus it is one important question in the marketing (Cvijanović, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary for managers to choose and employ proper staff, kind and capable people and to lead such a policy that will entail positive relationships between employees and guests. They need to stimulate all employees to think about customer satisfaction, as even the smallest details related to personnel management policy can have a significant impact on product quality (Kotler et al., 2010). This creates a loyal user who becomes the best advertisement, which is present here, as the percentage of respondents is informed through a friend.

Conclusion

The subject of this paper is the analysis of the quality of the event "Love Fest", which is traditionally held in Vrnjačka Banja in August every year. The quality analysis is based on the quality assessment by visitors who gave their grades by filling in the questionnaire. According to the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2016), the number of trips within the country recorded growth within the major cities of Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, mountain centers Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Tara, Divčibare etc., as well as in spas where Vrnjačka Banja takes the first place, then Sokobanja, Bukovička Banja, Banja Koviljača and so on. Based on the data provided by the TO of Vrnjačka Banja, the number of visitors in Vrnjačka Banja increased over time, while their staying time was shortened. This can certainly be the result of manifestation tourism that is in expansion. The number of events in Vrnjačka Banja has increased over time, and "Love Fest" is certainly one of the leading events that can already be considered as a synonym for the destination itself, not only on the domestic but also on the international market. Based on the above stated, it can be said that the H1 hypothesis, that manifestations contribute to increasing the number of visitors to Vrnjačka Banja as a destination, has been proven. As a proof to the hypothesis, the conclusion based on the opinion of the respondents can also be taken. It says that the number of visitors to the next "Love Fest" event will increase. The fact that a larger proportion of respondents who attended the manifestation is in the overall sample can be taken as a proof to the H1. The results of the quality evaluation of the manifestation by the respondents, shown in

Table 2, confirmed the second hypothesis that the satisfaction with a traditional, massive manifestation "Love Fest" is at a high level.

The practical contribution of the paper is reflected in the knowledge that has come to light in the paper, which, above all, can represent guidelines to the management in terms of further organization of the manifestation, not only this one, but of all manifestations of this type. One should pay attention to the target audience of the consumer who gave the highest grade, the age of that audience and direct marketing activities in order to achieve even greater satisfaction level of the same. The theoretical contribution of the paper is precisely reflected in the fact that the research has come to that knowledge. It is necessary to follow their desires that are constantly changing on the market and introduce contents that will beat their expectations. Also, it is necessary to see who the respondents who gave the lowest grades are, and see if something can be done to raise their satisfaction to a higher level, no matter how small their share is.

The limitations of the paper are certainly reflected in the selected random sample as well as the size of the sample. The limitation is also in the way in which the survey is carried out. It is also necessary to set the survey using the other ways, not only through the messenger, because a certain part of the visitors is not available on this social network at all. It is necessary to analyze another similar manifestation. Attention should also be paid to the respondents, as well as generally people who are not covered by this survey, who did not visit the destination of Vrnjačka Banja and determine the reason for motivating them to visit this destination. Taking into consideration the large number of contents the destination offers, where there are manifestations of different types, this can be achieved by using good propaganda activities.

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