

TENETS OF THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT AS MOTIVATION FOR TOURISTS TO VISIT RURAL TOURIST HOUSEHOLDS IN SERBIA

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Abstract

Local cuisine is one of the foundations for how Serbian rural communities are presented to tourists. The desire for regional cuisine has recently increased, which has created opportunities for the promotion of regional and, most importantly, traditional production. The changing behaviours of travellers, who are becoming more conscious of the value of authenticity and quality when travelling, offer opportunities for rural areas to thrive while also creating a new horizon for tourism centered on the discovery of traditional cuisine and rural communities. This kind of travel can be compared to slow travel, which was developed in conjunction with the Slow Food movement. The Slow Food movement is a political and cultural movement with the goal of opposing the industrialisation of food production, promoting locally made, high-quality, sustainable food, and making a significant contribution to rural areas. Three guiding principles – good, clean, and fair – define what food should be and form the foundation of this movement. The major objective of this paper is to present the driving elements that have the biggest impact on tourists' enthusiasm to visit rural tourist houses in Serbia. The research also seeks to determine how much the respondents' desire to return to Serbia's rural tourist households is influenced by motivating factors.

Key words: slow tourism, slow food, rural tourist households, motivation, Serbia.

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НАЧЕЛА СПОРЕ ХРАНЕ КАО МОТИВАЦИЈА ТУРИСТА ДА ПОСЕТЕ СЕОСКА ТУРИСТИЧКА ДОМАЋИНСТВА У СРБИЈИ

Апстракт

Локална гастрономија представља један од основа туристичке презентације руралних подручја у Србији. Потражња за локалном гастрономијом је последњих година у порасту, чиме се отвара простор за пласирање локалне и пре свега традиционалне производње. Нове навике туриста који су све више свесни важности аутентичности и квалитета током путовања стварају шансу за развој руралних предела, али и за дефинисање новог хоризонта за туризам који је заснован на откривању традиционалне хране и руралних заједница. Овај вид туризма може представљати спори (енг. *slow*) туризам који је настао у оквиру покрета споре хране (енг. *slow food*). Покрет *Slow food* представља културни и политички покрет који има за циљ да се супростави индустријализацији производње хране, да промовише мале занатске производе и квалитетну и одрживу храну, и да постане снажан допринос у подршци руралним заједницама. Овај покрет се темељи на три принципа која описују каква храна треба да буде, а то су: добра (енг. *Good*), чиста (енг. *Clean*) и поштена (енг. *Fair*). Стога, главни циљ овог рада је да испита који од фактора покрета у највећој мери утичу на мотивацију туриста да посете сеоска туристичка домаћинства у Србији. Такође, циљ рада је испитати у којој мери су фактори мотивације повезани са жељом испитаника да понове посету сеоским туристичким домаћинствима у Србији.

Кључне речи: спори (*slow*) туризам, *slow food*, сеоска туристичка домаћинства, мотивација, Србија.

INTRODUCTION

One of the tourist goods that travellers are increasingly appreciating as a break from established and pre-planned vacations based on a fast-paced and modern lifestyle is rural tourism (Bratić et al., 2021). People tend to: choose shorter vacations and journeys, look for fresh experiences, get in touch with nature and original values again, and restore regional customs and culturally significant landmarks (Božović et al., 2022). The value of rural tourism is complex, and largely seen in the preservation of a region's natural environment and cultural heritage, as well as in the enhancement of the socioeconomic profile of that region (Demirović et al., 2020). According to Banjac et al. (2016), rural places may have the best-preserved gastronomic history and authenticity.

An increasing proportion of tourists is drawn to destinations because of the food available there (Mak et al., 2017). The knowledge that a country's cuisine and gastronomy are essential components that can help it establish a well-known brand is becoming more and more apparent in tourist destinations (Bratić et al., 2021). By promoting authentic foods and beverages, each region has the potential to develop into a major tourism destination. Various gourmet events may serve as one of the primary platforms for their presentation and marketing (Stojanović et al., 2018).

Gastronomy is becoming more and more important in contemporary culture. According to certain scholars, cuisine is a reflection of a location's culture (Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020).

Stanišić et al. (2018) feel that Serbia offers a sizeable gastronomic offer. Given the fundamental characteristics of gastronomic tourism as an increasingly popular form of travel, the villages and rural households where food is produced are the focus of interest, despite the diverse offerings of large cities (Baum, 2011; Kalenjuk et al., 2014; Vuksanović et al., 2016).

Previous studies in Serbia have largely focused on rural tourism and gastronomy as factors influencing travellers' decisions to travel there (Cvijanović, Gajić & Vukolić, 2022; Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Vukolić et al., 2023). Additionally, slow tourism has recently gained popularity in Serbia (Božović, Miljković & Mikulić, 2021; Božović, Pivac & Milojica, 2021; Božović et al., 2022; Lunić et al., 2020). Rural tourism and the Slow Food movement are both unified by the idea of slow tourism.

Given that the subject has not been thoroughly researched in Serbia, the objective is to familiarise the general public and small, local manufacturers with the advantages they could possibly gain from this movement. The subject has not been researched in this region, particularly in light of the potential link between the Slow Food movement and the growth of rural tourism in Serbian rural areas through the visitation of rural tourist households. Investigating which of the variables (principles of the Slow Food movement) has the biggest impact on tourists' enthusiasm to visit rural tourist houses in Serbia is the primary objective of this paper. This research also seeks to determine how much the respondents' desire to return to Serbia's rural tourist households is influenced by motivating factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gastronomic experiences offer numerous possibilities. Currently available literature states the importance of: trying regional cuisines (Duarte, 2013), markets as a place where you can best get to know the traditional culture of a place (Castello-Canalejo et al., 2020), visiting a historically significant location in an area recognised for its goods (Guzel & Apaidin, 2016), and visits to local farms (Ammirato & Felicetti, 2014).

It is well known that gastronomy has a big impact on where visitors choose to travel based on studies done on tourists' culinary experiences so far (Chang et al., 2011). If visitors enjoy the cuisine, they will spread the word about the regional cuisine of that location (Janković, Ćirić & Vujasinović, 2020; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019). Food may also serve as a symbol of a country's identity; therefore, it is important to use it properly while promoting a place. According to food producers, local governments, and other managers of tourism development, food is being used as a justification for holding various activities and events (Hall & Sharples,

2008). In addition to developing a new category of tourism based on the discovery of traditional foods and rural communities, a new market is opening up for traditional and local products (Garibaldi, 2018). Local foods are viewed as ‘authentic’ goods that represent the location and culture of a certain location, and local identity and local cuisine are believed to be intimately related (Frew & White, 2011). As a result, even if eating is a big part of traveling, it stands to reason that foods that are strongly linked to a place’s culture will be consumed more frequently there.

Slow Food Movement and Projects

The Slow Food movement was started with the initial intention of highlighting the importance of preserving heritage, local cuisine, and overall gastronomic enjoyment by adopting a slow pace of living (Lowry & Lee, 2016). The movement was created as a reaction to the globalisation of national cuisine and the growth of the fast food trend that began in the 1980s. The Slow Food Association, which works to restore the true worth of food in respect to the person who makes it, in relation to the land, and in reference to local tradition, is responsible for this culinary certification’s success on a global scale (Corvo, 2015; www.slowfood.it). Carlo Petrini (2013), the movement’s creator, outlined the fundamental ideas of the movement using three concepts – good, clean, and fair food, which addresses both social and political dimensions, as well as the aesthetic and sensuous component (Payandeh et al., 2020).

The Slow Food movement advocates for and supports small, artisanal food producers, emphasising the value of their close ties to the local environment and culture, increased production sustainability, and significant support for the growth of rural communities, particularly the most marginalised ones (West & Domingos, 2012). The movement is linked to slow tourism, a new alternative kind of travel. The broadest definition of slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Corvo & Maticena, 2017) explains it as a conceptual framework that comprises travelers who travel more slowly and closer to their home destination, but attempt to remain longer at the chosen place.

Therefore, this research began with the following hypotheses: (H1) the Good factor is a strong driver of respondents’ visits to Serbian rural tourist households; (H2) the Clean factor is a strong driver of respondents’ visits to Serbian rural tourist households; (H3) the respondents’ strong desire to visit Serbian rural tourist households is significantly influenced by the Fair factor; (H4) the respondents’ willingness to return to Serbia’s rural tourist households is highly correlated with the Good factor; (H5) the respondents’ desire to return to Serbia’s rural tourist households is substantially correlated with the Clean factor; (H6) the respondents’ desire to return to Serbia’s rural tourist households is highly correlated with the Fair factor; and (H7) there is a strong correlation between the variables Good, Clean, and Fair

METODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The only requirement for participation in the study was that the respondents had visited one of the Serbian rural tourist households. A definition of a rural tourist household was provided at the start of the survey. The sample consisted of a total of 251 respondents. The study was carried out in February 2023. The primary method was an online survey (Google Docs), which was disseminated via Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Instrument

Closed-ended questions make up the research questionnaire, and a list of 25 criteria was compiled for the study's aims using data from other studies (Payandeh et al., 2022). The assertions connected to why tourists choose to visit Serbian rural tourist households are evaluated in terms of the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements. A five-point Likert scale (1 = entirely disagree, 2 = partially disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = partially agree, and 5 = completely agree) was applied to this section. The IBM SPSS 23 programme was used to analyse the acquired data using exploratory factor analysis, descriptive statistical analysis, and correlation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The scale of motivation of the respondents showed high statistical significance ($\alpha=.842$). An exploratory principle components analysis (EFA) using Promax rotation was carried out to isolate the motivational elements. The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) data goodness-of-fit criteria, with a recommended value larger than 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974), and a statistically significant value of Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) were used to evaluate the suitability of data for exploratory factor analysis. As anticipated, the item analysis revealed a high KMO value of .949, and a statistically significant Bartlett's test value ($\chi^2=4330.98$; $df=300$; $p=.000$). Three significant factors were identified, accounting for a combined 61.57% of the variance. Three significant factors with a total of 61.57% of variance explained were singled out. Factor 2 (9 items) refers to motives that include features connected to food quality, factor 3 (5 items) relates to respect for food and its producers, and factor 1 (11 items) refers to motives that include characteristics associated to the sustainability of food and rural tourist households. All three factors meet adequate scale reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994): factor 1 - Clean (0.942), factor 2 - Good (0.894), and factor 3 - Fair (0.782). The aforementioned three factors are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Rotated matrix of components (motives)
and descriptive display of factors*

Factors	F1	F2	F3	Mean	Standard deviation
Motives	$\alpha=.942$	$\alpha=.894$	$\alpha=.782$		
The surrounding natural environs are the main factor in my decision to return to the rural tourist households there.	.872			4.3	.9930
The rich cultural heritage of the area serves as an inspiration for the rural tourist household's wish to return.	.869			4.1	1.1013
During my visits, I enjoy exploring the area around the rural tourist house.	.846			4.3	1.0853
Eating food that has been cooked traditionally is satisfying.	.823			4.4	.9155
For rural areas, environmental protection and the preservation of native foods are the most important challenges.	.819			4.3	.9441
Rural tourist households achieve greater financial profit when they use products from their own cultivation in their business	.816			4.2	1.0588
The time spent in a rural tourist household improves my mood.	.745			4.3	1.0052
The pleasant climate is one of the reasons why I visit rural tourist households.	.683			4.1	1.0448
I like to eat fresh, locally produced food since I know that the leftovers will be properly utilised (as cattle feed or organic fertilizer, for example).	.601			4.1	1.1382
Regarding the ambiance and service I experience in a rural tourist households I think the price to quality ratio is appropriate.	.398			4.0	1.0411
Regardless of the expense of such a journey, the time I spend vacationing in a rural tourist home has a long-term favorable impact on my disposition.	.314			4.1	1.0745
Eating local cuisine has an impact on my pleasure and contentment.		.829		4.1	1.0826

I visit rural areas and rural tourist households for traditional local dishes.	.808	3.6	1.1464
For me, the taste of local and traditional cuisine is the main motive for going to rural tourist households.	.716	3.9	1.1115
I place more value on the standard of organic and healthful prepared foods than on the restaurant's look.	.692	4.3	.9038
For me, the quality of the ingredients from which the dishes are prepared is of great importance.	.675	4.4	.9289
During a visit to a rural tourist household, it is important to me who, when, how and where prepares the food that I consume.	.626	4.3	1.0208
I travel to rural areas with my family to preserve my childhood memories and at the same time promote a healthy country and local culture.	.538	3.7	1.2946
I believe that the food grown in rural areas is of good quality.	.510	4.2	.9730
My financial situation allows me to buy local products and visit rural tourist households.	.302	3.9	1.0952
Consuming autotoni and local goods, in my opinion, is not financially advantageous for me.	.884	3.4	1.2204
The simplicity of the packaging and the favorable price are the main motivations for buying local products.	.730	3.4	1.2840
I want to visit rural areas in my country to increase their economic profit (earnings).	.574	3.7	1.3263
When I visit rural tourist homes, I don't just consider my personal costs; I also consider the income (profit) of those homes.	.557	3.4	1.2204
I believe that food in rural tourist households is cheaper than in city restaurants due to the accessibility of domestic products.	.410	3.8	1.2261

As in the study from which the scale was derived (Payandeh et al., 2022), three factors were highlighted. When compared to the first investigation, the results showed a small variation. While the Fair factor differs from the Good factor and the Clean factor in this study in a number of aspects, they both perfectly match the same components from the original research. In particular, while eight variables were included in the original research, only five variables are included in our study's Fair factor. In our study, the variable "My financial situation allows me to buy local products and visit rural tourist households" is categorised under the Good component. The variables "I believe that the ratio of price and quality is correct in relation to the atmosphere and service I receive in a rural tourist household" and "The vacation I spend in a rural tourist household has a long-term positive effect on my mood, regardless of the costs of such a trip" are grouped together with the Clean factor. In contrast to the original research from which the scale was taken, factor analysis determined that the above mentioned variables in this research sample show a higher correlation with the variables from the Clean and Good factor. The results of factor analysis serve precisely to show groups of variables with highly correlated variables within a specific sample (Pallant, 2011). The three specified essential factors include the key terms 'Good', 'Clean', and 'Fair', which identify categories helpful for further study and categorising various visitor motivations. The objective of the study was to identify the elements that most strongly influenced the respondents' desire to visit rural tourist houses in Serbia.

All concerns relating to environmental sustainability and biodiversity preservation fall under the Clean factor. According to the findings in Table 1, which demonstrate the significance of this aspect as a motivation for respondents to keep dogs in rural tourist households in Serbia, all stated justifications have high mean values. The most significant motivating factors are the importance of the natural environment in which the rural tourist household is located ($M=4.3$; $SD=.9930$), the preservation and diversity of traditional food ($M=4.3$; $SD=.9441$), the value provided by consuming food prepared in a traditional manner ($M=4.4$, $SD=.9155$), and concern for environmental protection. However, despite having a high mean score, the respondents' evaluation of the purpose connected to the relationship between price and quality in regard to the ambiance and service offered in rural tourist houses is the lowest ($M=4.0$; $SD=1.0411$). From the aforementioned, it can be inferred that the respondents place the least value on money and are more concerned with the safe, hygienic, and natural surroundings that a rural tourist households is located in.

All factors relating to quality, taste, health, and social distinctions are covered under the motivation factor Good. This aspect also takes into account the reasons why respondents travel for food – notably, its quality and flavour. The importance of the ingredients used in food preparation

($M=4.4$; $SD=.9289$) and the respondents' preference for natural and healthy food products over the facility's aesthetics ($M=4.3$; $SD=.9038$) are among the main drivers of the survey (Table 1). Additionally, the majority of respondents ($M=4.2$; $SD=.9730$) agree that food produced in rural areas is of high quality. The aforementioned findings support the idea that motivation may be broken down into its component parts and explain the significant role that meal quality plays in driving travel motivation ($M=4.1$; $SD=.78638$).

Factor 3 – Fair – addresses both fair conditions for producers and prices for consumers in order to ensure the sociocultural sustainability of production. The economic components of factor 3 were generally scored somewhat lower than the previous two categories, as seen in Table 1 ($M=3.4$; $SD=.94494$). Respondents gave the highest rating ($M=3.8$; $SD=1.2261$) to the claim that the availability of local items makes food in rural tourist residences less expensive than in metropolitan eateries. In contrast, the respondents claimed that the ease of the packaging and the affordable price of purchasing local goods were the factors that least inspired them ($M=3.4$; $SD=1.2840$). The purpose of this study was to determine, using descriptive analysis, if three separate criteria are connected to the respondents' intention to return to Serbia's rural tourist households. Consequently, a study of statistical correlations was carried out. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to express the relationship between the chosen factors (F1-3) and the desire for a follow-up visit. The relationship between the parameters (F1-F3) and the respondents' recurring desire to visit one of the rural tourist houses in Serbia was examined using correlation analysis.

Table 2. Average correlation values according to Pearson, at the level of the F1-3 ratio and the desire to revisit rural tourist households in Serbia

	A return visit	Factor 1 (Clean)	Factor 2 (Good)	Factor 3 (Fair)
A return visit	1			
Factor 1 (Clean)	-.222**	1		
Factor 2 (Good)	-.205**	.793**	1	
Factor 3 (Fair)	-.166**	.643**	.676**	1

No element is positively associated with the respondents' desire to visit a rural tourist household again, according to the findings and the exhibited correlation values. This can be understood to mean that the elements are what drive respondents to visit rural tourist households, but they are not what drive respondents to want to return. However, it is clear from the correlation matrix that all three of the previously indicated components exhibit a very high positive correlation at a significance level less than 0.01 (F1 and F2 equal to 0.793; F1 and F3 equal to 0.643; F2 and F3

equal to 0.676) (Table 2). According to how this can be read, respondents who have a more positive image of any of the three factors will have a more positive image of the other two factors, and this relationship will be extremely strong. Whether the research hypotheses were fully confirmed, somewhat confirmed, or rejected can be concluded from the aforementioned findings. The research hypotheses are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Response to research hypotheses

Hypotheses	(+); (+/-); (-)	Explanation
H1 A significant driver of respondents' visits to Serbian rural tourist households is the <i>Good</i> factor.	Confirmed (+)	The factor's mean value is an extraordinarily high 4.0527.
H2 The <i>Clean</i> factor is a significant driver of respondents' visits to Serbian rural tourist households.	Confirmed (+)	The factor's mean value is an extraordinarily high 4.0527.
H3 The <i>Fair</i> factor is a significant driver of respondents' visits to Serbian rural tourist households.	Partially confirmed (+/-)	The mean value of the factor is slightly above the average and is 3.3857.
H4 The respondents' desire to return to Serbia's rural tourist households is highly correlated with the <i>Good</i> factor	Rejected (-)	The correlation's statistical value is negative.
H5 The respondents' desire to return to Serbia's rural tourist households is highly correlated with the <i>Clean</i> factor	Rejected (-)	The correlation's statistical value is negative.
H6 The respondents' desire to return to Serbia's rural tourist households is highly correlated with the <i>Fair</i> factor.	Rejected (-)	The correlation's statistical value is negative.
H7 The Good, Clean, and Fair standards are intimately related.	Confirmed (+)	All three of the above listed factors have very strong statistical correlation values.

Factor 1 – Clean, which has the highest mean value among the isolated criteria, and consequently reflects the biggest motivation among the respondents to visit one of the rural tourist households, should also be emphasised. The component 2 – Good – came in second, and element 3 – Fair – had the lowest mean value and, thus, the least motivation among the responders.

CONCLUSION

Food is becoming a more important topic in the tourism industry, but even more crucial is the value placement of food within a larger tourist offer that will satiate the needs of cultural tourists, sports tourists, and green (responsible) tourists, or what is known as a slow tourist.

The Slow Food ideology promotes traditional lifestyles, local food, local producers, sustainability, and the pleasure of food in response to becoming accustomed to a fast-paced, modern way of life. If we consider the organisation's origins and evolution, as well as tourists' rising desire to travel to rural areas, experience local cuisine, and appreciate local products, food may be the primary draw for visiting rural tourist households in Serbia. It follows that food would immediately contribute to the growth of tourism and the overall development of rural areas in Serbia, where a great gourmet offer is given through rural tourist residences and neighborhood village markets. The most significant driving forces behind visiting a rural tourist household stand out as a concern for environmental protection, the preservation and diversity of traditional food, the consumption of food prepared in a traditional manner, as well as natural surroundings. It is clear that visitors place the least value on money and are more concerned with the rural tourism household's healthy, clean, and natural surroundings. Priority is also given to the quality of food produced in rural areas in comparison to the facility's look.

The authors can conclude that none of the three Slow Food movement criteria are directly related to the respondents' intention to return and visit a rural tourist household, based on the research and the main goal of the work. The examined factors are significant for the respondents' desire to visit rural tourist households, but they do not significantly impact their decision to return. The significance of this work is increased by the fact that there has not yet been any research in Serbia on the topic of a direct link between tourist motivation and the tenets of the Slow Food movement.

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НАЧЕЛА СПОРЕ ХРАНЕ КАО МОТИВАЦИЈА ТУРИСТА ДА ПОСЕТЕ СЕОСКА ТУРИСТИЧКА ДОМАЋИНСТВА У СРБИЈИ

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Резиме

У раду су приказани резултати истраживања којим је посебан вид туризма, спори (енг. *slow*) туризам, настао у оквиру покрета споре хране (енг. *slow food*), повезан са факторима који утичу на мотивацију туриста да посете сеоска туристичка домаћинства у Србији. Покрет *Slow food* настао је у Италији осамдесетих година као отпор индустријализацији производње хране и има за циљ да кроз промовисање аутентичних локалних производа пружи снажну подршку развоју руралних заједница. Заснива се на три принципа која описују каква храна треба да буде, а то су: добра (енг. *Good*), чиста (енг. *Clean*) и поштена (енг. *Fair*). Основни циљ рада је био да се испита у којој мери ови фактори утичу на жељу испитаника да посете или понове посету сеоском туристичком домаћинству. Локална гастрономија све више добија на значају и представља битан фактор за туристички развој руралних подручја Србије.

Туристи имају нове навике и све више су свесни значаја аутентичности и квалитета током путовања, и као такви стварају нову шансу за развој руралних предела, али и за дефинисање новог хоризонта за туризам који је заснован на откривању традиционалне хране и руралних заједница.

Емпиријско истраживање спроведено је током месеца фебруара 2023. године на узорку од 251 испитаника из Србије. Као главно средство коришћен је онлајн упитник (енглески *Google Docs*) дистрибуиран путем друштвених мрежа Фејсбук, Линкдин и Инстаграм (енг. *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, *Instagram*). Упитник који је коришћен у истраживању састоји се од затворених питања, а за потребе истражи-

вања формирана је листа од 25 фактора који су преузети из ранијих истраживања (Payandeh et al., 2022).

Резултати истраживања су показали да су најзначајнији фактори мотивације за посету сеоском туристичком домаћинству брига за заштиту животне средине и очување и разноликост традиционалне хране, конзумирање хране припремљене на традиционалан начин, као и природно окружење. Предност се даје квалитету прехранбених производа узгојених у руралним срединама у односу на сам изглед објекта, док посетиоци у најмањој мери придају важност новцу у односу на све остале бенефите посете (дугорочно позитивно расположење, оживљавање сећања на детињство, квалитет конзумиране хране итд.). Долази се до закључка да фактори *Slow Food* покрета у значајној мери утичу на мотивацију испитаника, али нису од пресудног значаја кад је у питању поновна посета сеоском туристичком домаћинству.