

VALORIZATION OF THE FACTORS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DEBARCA, THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Nikola V. Dimitrov¹; Aleksandra Terzić²;

Abstract

This paper explores the application of activities based on segmentation and valorization of factors for the development of several alternative forms of tourism in rural areas. Segmentation is based on the assumption that different types of natural and anthropogenic motifs can attract various types of tourists in the rural area of the Municipality of Debarca in the Republic of Macedonia. Through a number of parameters we value the space for tourism activities which make the basis for identification of direct market segments of many tourism types (cultural, rural, religious, mountain, hunting, etc.) designed for three target customer groups (young, family, adult). The validity of these segments is confirmed by field research (survey and interview) and qualitative - quantitative analysis. Each segment showed different characteristics of how to streamline marketing activities in the direction of development of rural tourism in the rural Municipality of Debarca.

Key Words: tourism valorization, rural area, Debarca Municipality, Republic of Macedonia

JEL classification: Z3, Z32

Introduction

Selective types of tourism as the main tourist activity have been developing for more than 30 years. In this group, the most important are cultural tourism, rural tourism, religious tourism and the like. The most important of all is cultural tourism as a form of tourism with special

1 Nikola V. Dimitrov, Full Professor, Dean, Faculty of tourism and business logistics – Gevgelia, University Goce Delcev – Stip, Krste Misirkov bb, 2000 Stip, Republic of Macedonia, +38932550351 +38976462745, nikola.dimitrov@ugd.edu.mk

2 Aleksandra Terzić, PhD, Reaches Associate, Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SANU, Serbia, 11000 Belgrade, Đure Jakšića 9, +381112636395, a.terzic@gi.sanu.as.rs

interest, whose subjects are considered motivated to travel for various reasons (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Richards, 1996; Goodrich, 1997). Rural tourism has been identified as an important driver of the rural economy in the long run, which will valorize natural and cultural resources and the existing accommodation facilities. Tourism activities in rural areas are directly linked to sustainable development by supporting the protection of natural and cultural capital of these areas and using them in more sustainable ways, by establishing a balance between economic, ecological and social wellbeing of the rural spaces (Ćurčić et al., 2018). Cultural and natural attractions have a central role in tourism system, representing the base for development of recreational and cultural tourism, creating the identity of the destination. Attractions often affect the type, location and intensity of tourism activities in a region more intensely than quality and quantity of tourism services and institutions (Bjeljac et al., 2013). Tourism that is closely related to the exploitation of natural and cultural resources have a role in linking visitors and places; additionally, it offers unique opportunities for local communities to generate income locally and to enjoy to have their villages being well valorised and publicly appreciated (Bjeljac et al., 2013).

Each trip includes cultural elements; however, it is necessary to distinguish between cultural tourism in urban environment (sightseeing, visiting a museum, religious buildings, manifestations, etc.) and cultural tourism or a tour in the rural environment that includes consideration and short visits to cultural monuments (church, monastery, etc.), reviewing natural rarities (if any), visiting a local museum (if any), consuming gastronomic specialties, etc. (Richards, 1996; Silberberg, 1995; WTO, 1985; Schweitzer, 1999; Bachleitner & Zins, 1999; Hannabus, 1999; McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the segmentation of natural and anthropogenic resources in a small rural area of Debarca for tourism development (Dimitrov & Petrevska, 2012; Petrevska & Dimitrov, 2013; Metodijeski & Dimitrov, 2018).

Methodology

The survey includes qualitative and quantitative analysis on the basis of review and examination of relevant primary (published books, scientific papers and field research) and secondary sources (statistics, publications, web pages, etc.). Important data were obtained through interviews and

structural survey with permanent and temporary residents, using person to person contact in several villages in Debarca, conducted during the summer of 2018. The research detected 12 attractive natural and the same number of anthropogenic tourist resources, that are considered to be the most important tourist attractions in the Municipality of Debarca. For their evaluation, 10 parameters with a value of 1 to 3 for quantitative valorization and 5 parameters with a value of 1 to 3 for qualitative valorization are defined. The results of the research will be presented through several tables from which graphically we can obtain useful data of the current state of the natural and anthropogenic resources and their quantitative and qualitative general value.

Basic information

The subject of our research is the Municipality of Debarca – a hilly – mountainous area with an area of 425.4 km² with approximately 5,507 inhabitants (2002) distributed in 30 settlements (Table 1). Debarca region is a rural area (368 km², with about 2,940 inhabitants in 24 settlements) of the western part of the Republic of Macedonia.

Figure 1: *Geographical position of the Municipality of Debarca, Republic of Macedonia*



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debarca_Municipality

The area is divided into three smaller areas: Gorna (Upper) Debarca (7 villages, the center being the Village of Slivovo), Sredna (Middle)

Debarca (with 5 villages, Izleglavje being the center) and Dolna (Lower) Debarca (with 12 villages and Belchishta as a municipal center). The municipality has 64 churches, 9 monasteries, 32 archaeological sites, 9 monuments, one central (Debarca primary school - Belchista) with four regional schools from the first to the ninth grade (in Velmei, Lesani, Trebenishta and Meseista) and six regional primary schools from the first to the fifth grade (in Zlasti, Botun, Izdeglavje, Volino, Orovnik and Gorenci), several hundred houses with rural tourism potential. Almost all villages have their own water supply system and an asphalt road leading to each of them. There are a total of 8 catering facilities with over 550 seats in the Municipality and there are no accommodation facilities (the Pochinka Motel in Arbinovo is not in operation for a long time) (inventory of catering facilities in 2008).

Table 1: *Resources that are important for tourism development of the Municipality of Debarca*

Gorna Debarca				
	Settlement	MOTIVES		
		<i>Natural</i>	<i>Anthropogenic</i>	<i>Communicative - Receptive</i>
1.	Arbinovo	885 m a.s.l. Mountain	4 churches, old houses, 26 inhabitants	Traffic connection, close to the new road
2.	Lactine	940 m a.s.l. Karaorman pl. (pl. – mountain) 1794 m a.s.l. Slavej pl.	1 church, old houses, 82 inhabitants	Traffic connection, close to the new road
3.	Godivje	945 m a.s.l. Slavej pl., Karaorman pl.	3 churches, old houses, 92 inhabitants	Traffic connection
4.	Vrbjani	930 m a.s.l. Slavej pl.	2 churches, old houses, memorial from the National Liberation War, 58 inhabitants	Traffic connection, close to the new road
5.	Slivovo	950 m a.s.l. Ilinska pl., 1909 m.s.s.l. Lisca peak	3 churches, old houses, 5 archaeological sites, 16 inhabitants	Traffic connection, close to the new road
6.	Turje	1120 m a.s.l. Ilinska pl.	1 church, 17 inhabitants	Traffic connection
7.	Mramorec	1032 m a.s.l. Ilinska pl.	2 churches, old houses, memorial from the National Liberation War, Rodoslovnj izvori Event (2008), 8 inhabitants	Traffic connection, beyond the new road

TOURISM IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tourism as a Generator of Employment (TISC 2019) – Thematic proceedings II

Overview: Mountainous and hilly area. 16 churches, 1 monastery, 5 archaeological sites, 2 monuments, old houses that can be adapted for rural tourism, also new modern holiday homes. Total 299 inhabitants. All small villages.

Sredna Debarca

	Settlement	MOTIVES		
		<i>Natural</i>	<i>Anthropogenic</i>	<i>Communicative - Receptive</i>
1.	Izdeglavje	798 m a.s.l. Valley surrounded by hills	2 churches, old houses, 136 inhabitants	Traffic connection, close to the new road
2.	Ozdoleni	835 m a.s.l. in a valley surrounded by hills	2 churches, old houses, National Liberation War memorial, 47 inhabitants	Traffic connection, 4 km from the new road
3.	Slatino	860 m, in the basin, Ilinska pl., Slatina Artificial Lake with 15.5m high dam (dam burst in 2013)	2 churches, old houses, memorial from the National Liberation War, 161 resident	Good traffic connection
4.	Slatinski Chifik	807 m.s.v. Located in a valley	1 church, 11 inhabitants	Traffic connection
5.	Sosani	860 m.s.v. Ilinska pl.	2 churches, old houses, religious event of Glory of St. Peter, 15 inhabitants	Traffic connection

Overview: Mountain, hilly areas and valleys, 9 churches, 1 chapel, 1 monastery, 1 monument. There are old houses that can be adapted for rural tourism, and there are few new modern holiday homes. Total 370 inhabitants. All small villages.

Dolna Debarca

	Settlement	MOTIVES		
		<i>Natural</i>	<i>Anthropogenic</i>	<i>Communicative - Receptive</i>
1.	Belchitsa	780 m a.s.l. In the basin, 767 m a.s.l. Sini Viroj Nature Reserve or Belchisko Blato, area of 500 m ²	Seat of the municipality, 2 churches, old houses, National Liberation War memorial, Art colony and gallery, 437 inhabitants	Good traffic connection; Art Gallery, Factory, Ambulance School, Cafe
2.	Botun	770 m a.s.l. The valley and hilly land, Sateska River	2 churches, monastery, National Liberation War memorial, religious event of Glory of the Virgin Mary, 227 inhabitants	Good traffic connection, on road intersection Lodging house with 4 rooms
3.	Brezani	1000 m a.s.l. Plakenska pl. Plake Peak, Mazatar Peak, Bayrak Peak	2 churches, 1 monastery, old houses, 31 resident	Traffic connection, Lodging house

TOURISM IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tourism as a Generator of Employment (TISC 2019) – Thematic proceedings II

4.	Velmey	855 m a.s.l. at the foothill of Ilinska pl., Javorec Cave, Gomo Pole Spring	6 churches, old houses, memorial from the National Liberation War and the Ilinden uprising, religious event of Glory of the Little Virgin, 511 inhabitants	Traffic connection, Cafe
5.	Grko Polje	795 m a.s.l. In the basin	1 church, old houses, event of Glory of St. George, 30 inhabitants	Traffic connection
6.	Gomo Sredorecie	790 m a.s.l. In the valley	1 church, archaeological site, 14 inhabitants	1 Traffic connection, Cafe
7.	Dolno Sredorecie	785 m a.s.l. In the valley	Dolno Sredorecie 57 inhabitants, religious event of the Glory to St. George	Traffic connection
8.	Zlesti	788 m a.s.l. In the valley	1 church, 1 monastery, old houses, 4 archaeological sites, 294 inhabitants	Traffic connection
9.	Leshani	807 m a.s.l. In the basin at the foothills	5 churches, 1 monastery, old houses, celebration of All Saints, 484 inhabitants	Traffic connection, Cafe, Lodging house (auxiliary unit)
10.	Novo Selo	770 m a.s.l. In the valley	2 churches, 68 inhabitants	Traffic connection
11.	Pesochani	800 m a.s.l. Foothill of the Slavej pl., Pesocani River	2 churches, 95 inhabitants	Traffic connection
12.	Crvena Voda	1180 m a.s.l. Karaorman pl.	1 church, archaeological site, old houses, National Liberation War memorial, 23 inhabitants	Traffic connection
Overview: Mountain, hills and valleys. Total 25 churches, 4 monasteries, 4 chapels, 24 archaeological sites, 4 monuments. Old houses can be adapted for rural tourism. A total of 2,271 inhabitants (7 small villages up to 100 inhabitants, 4 villages up to 500 and 1 village with over 500 inhabitants).				
Other villages				
		MOTIVES		
	Settlement	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Anthropogenic</i>	<i>Communicative - Receptive</i>
1.	Volino	710 m a.s.l. In the valley	3 churches, National Liberation War memorial, 462 inhabitants	Traffic connection, Cafe

2.	Gorenci	760 m a.s.l. In the Struga bassin	3 churches, 316 inhabitants	Traffic connection
3.	Klimestani	763 m a.s.l. at foothill of Karaorman pl.	1 church, 57 inhabitants	Traffic connection
4.	Mesheishta	752 m a.s.l. Ohrid - Struga Valley	4 churches, 1 monastery, National Liberation War memorial, events of the Glory of St. Peter and Ilinden, 779 inhabitants	Good traffic connection to the new road, Cafe
5.	Orovnik	750 m a.s.l. In the basin, Over 100 m long well- trimmed river bank.	1 church, 1 chapel, 2 monasteries, archaeological sites, old houses, event of Vodici- Bogojavlene, 440 inhabitants	Good traffic connection, two non-categorized accommodation units, Cafe
6.	Trebenishta	718 m a.s.l. In the basin	2 churches, 2 archaeological sites, old houses, Event of Cresober, 513 inhabitants	Good traffic connection, Cafe
<p>Overview: Valley and hilly region. Total of 14 churches, 3 monasteries, 1 chapel, 3 archaeological sites, 2 monuments, old and new houses with possibility for rural tourism. A total of 2567 inhabitants (one small village up to 100 inhabitants, 2 villages up to 500 inhabitants, 2 villages over 500).</p>				

Sources: *Agency for Real Estate Cadastre; State Statistical Office - Census of population of Republic of Macedonia, 2002; Macedonian Orthodox Church - Ohrid Archbishopic; Panov, 1998; Vasileski, 1999; Talevski & Talevska, 2007; Dimitrov & Petrevska, 2012; Petrevska & Dimitrov, 2013; Metodijeski & Dimitrov, 2018; Field Research, June - August 2018.*

Results and analyzes

Tourist valorization or evaluation of a certain area is an indicative method that determines the value of certain natural and cultural resources for creating strategic plans for tourism development at a particular destination (Bjeljac et al., 2013). In this particular case, the rural area of the Municipality of Debarca relies heavily on the traditional cultural values and specificities of natural resources. Debarca is demographically an empty rural area, which has accumulated various contents of natural and anthropogenic resources (mountains, rivers, several springs, one natural and one artificial lake, a marshy, diverse vegetation, forests, hunting game and birds, old houses from different historical periods,

archaeological sites, churches, monasteries, monuments, etc.). In the course of a year, a number of village celebrations are organized, one cultural manifestation, the locals prepare a variety of gastronomic specialties, etc.

Table 2: *Overview of parameters with their quantitative value*

PARAMETER		VALUE		
		1	2	3
1	Tourist position	poor	middle	good
2	Tourist equipment	poor	average	good
3	Infrastructure equipment	poor	average	good
4	Traffic connections	poor	middle	good
5	Accessibility	poor	middle	good
6	Specificity	small	medium	large
7	Contents	poor	middle	good
8	Meaning of the area	local	regional	national
9	Seasonality	one season	two seasons	all year round
10	Degree of attendance	low	middle	high

Source: *Group of authors (2015)*

Considering the connectivity of the area, the traffic infrastructure is quite good, as almost all villages have asphalt roads. At the moment the construction of Ohrid – Kicevo highway is ongoing, and it will pass through the Municipality of Debarca. On the other hand, the number of catering facilities is insufficient, whereas accommodation capacities are still not available. However, the rural area has a sufficient number of abandoned old houses (which can be adapted to small authentic rural accommodation facilities) and new weekend houses that can be used for tourist related purposes as well.

Table 3: *Evaluation model of the tourist attractiveness of the natural / cultural resources*

PARAMETER		VALUE		
		1	2	3
1	Ambience value	low	medium	high
2	Known outside the local are	small	medium	high
3	Significant natural/cultural space	small	medium	high

4	Differs from other attractions in the area	locally	regionally	nationally
5	Tourist visitation in the region	low	medium	high

Source: *McKercher & du Cros, 2002.*

In general, out of the above mentioned 12 natural tourist resources, the Source Fountain located in the village of Velmej is dominant, and represents the must-see destination during each tourist round tour of the region, which gives it a value score of 2.5 (according to Table 2 evaluation model). The second natural object that is offered for a tourist visit is the Sini Viroj Natural Reserve or Belchisko Blato with the general value of 2.2. The other ten evaluated natural resources gained a value ranging from 1.2 up to 1.8, meaning that nothing has been done for its inclusion in tourist offer (a small exception is the Gorno Pole spring with a nice landscape, which is why it scored 1.8 points) (Table 4).

According to the other evaluation model (Table 3), the similar results were gained, as the Source Fountain was marked with 2.2 points, Sini Viroj Natural Reserve or Belchisko Blato and Lake of Trebeniste were marked with a value of 2.0, while other natural goods have a value ranging from 1.2 to 1.6, which means they are not yet attractive enough for tourists. In summary, the natural assets in Debarca region have a total average score of 1.6. This is insufficient for practicing tourism, pointing that the region is at the starting point of the development process. Therefore, there is much work to be done in order to promote the attractiveness of the natural resources of Debarca region (Table 6).

Furthermore, out of the evaluated 12 anthropogenic tourist resources, four sites stand out: Archaeological site of the Bogorodica Prechista (the Holy Virgin) - Rastani site - an ancient Christian basilica with a medieval necropolis and a monastery near the village of Zlasti; then the Monasrety of Leshani (with the church of All Saints) near the village of Leshani, and two monasteries of Orovnik (with church of St. Petka and church St. Nedela), near the village of Orovnik. All four sites gained general value of 2.7, i.e. they are perceived as well arranged for tourist visit and have conditions for staying within the monastery quarters (Table 5). Similar objects are the following three monasteries: Zlestinski manastir (Church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin Mary), Brezanski manastir (church of Sts Peter and Paul) and Botunski manastir (Church of the Holy Virgin Mary) that have lodgings but are not sufficiently promoted. The

listed facilities are visited during the year and in general they are in good condition for receiving tourists.

Other anthropogenic objects are not well equipped or promoted for a tourist trip. For the promotion of the two archaeological sites, with rich archaeological findings from the ancient period onwards, the construction of a museum in the village of Trebenishte is proposed. Ethnographic and historical museum for the area of Debarca, we propose to be built in the municipality center in Belchishta.

The results of the evaluation of the tourist attractiveness of anthropogenic tourist resources (Table 7) conducted on 12 anthropogenic tourist attractions show similar findings. The four sites stand out: the archaeological site of Trebenishte's necropolis and Trebenishte's Kale, with the average value of 2.0, followed by the archaeological site of Bogorodica Prechista - the Rashtani site - an ancient Christian basilica and a medieval necropolis with a monastery near the village of Zlasti, and the Monastery of Lesani (with church of All Saints) near the village of Leshani, with a valuation score of 1.8. The first two sites have higher scores because they are well-known outside the local environment and they are considered to be important sites for ancient archeology. However, so far nothing has been done for thier tourist development and promotion. Other tourist cultural attractions have a rating between 1.2 to 1.6 points, as they are not well developed or promoted for a tourist trip.

Important elements of the intangible cultural heritage of this region are few village celebrations (St. Nicholas, St. George, St. Elijah, St. Virgin Mary, St. Petka, St. Peter and Paul, St. John the Baptist, St. Dimitrius, St. Athanasius, etc.) which are celebrated in several villages within Debarca Municipality. Religious events are reflected in the celebration of All Saints in Leshani, Petrovden in Meseista, Vodici - throwing a cross in Lake Ohrid in Orovnik and others. A cultural art colony, a poetry manifestation of Rodoslovni izvori in Mramorec and the event of Creschober in Trebenishta village is organized. Another event with ethnographic character is the ceremony of the wedding of Velmej - Wearing water from the bride - in the village of Velemej.

The rich local gastronomic treasury would highlight the culinary specialties: peppers with eggs and milk, stuffed dry peppers with cheese, peppers with leeks, stews, pops, compotes and others.

The whole area abounds with old houses of traditional rural architecture. From our research, we conclude that the best conditions for adaptation of village houses for rural tourism purposes and more care are needed in the villages: Trebenishta, Meseista, Belchishta, Novo Selo, Izdeglavje, Slatino, Arbinovo, Vrbjlani, Slivovo, Velemaj and Brezani. Nevertheless, the possibility of the tourism development remains for the list of villages of this region.

The basis of the tourist round tours within Debarca region would include visits and rural tourism activities related to cultural and religious events, then active rural vacations with activities like horse and donkey riding, cycling, recreational hiking, hunting opportunities, fishing, but also eco-tourism with visits to nature reserves / monuments of nature: the site of Sini Viroj (strict nature reserve), the Lake of Trebenisko, the Sateska River and Pesocanska River (proposal for proclamation of a scientific and research nature reserve), Ilinska planina, Javorac Cave and other forms of selective types of tourism.

From the research we have learned that the tourism possibilities of the Debarca Municipality are limited and should be targeted to three basic target customer groups (young, family, and adult) with a focus on special interest segments of rural and religious tourism niches.

Table 4. *Evaluation of important natural tourist resources in Debarca; Author's calculations*

ATTRACTIVENESS	POSITION	EQUIPMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	CONNECTIVITY	ACCESSIBILITY	SPECIFICITY	COMPATIBILITY	MEANING	SEASONALITY	VISIBILITY*	TOTAL POINTS	GENERAL VALUE
Lake of Trebenishta (Bobano), natural	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	/	12	1.3
Slatina Lake, artificial	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	/	14	1.5
Belchishko Blato or Sini Viroj (nature reserve)	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	/	20	2.2
Sateska River	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2
Gorno Pole Spring - Velmey	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	/	16	1.8
Javorec Cave	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	/	13	1.4
East Fountain - Velmey	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	/	23	2.5
Ilinska planina (1909 m)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2

TOURISM IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tourism as a Generator of Employment (TISC 2019) – Thematic proceedings II

Plakenska planina (1999 m)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2
Karaorman planina (1794 m)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2
Slavej planina (1714 m)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2
Mazzatar (Bayrak 1635 m)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	/	11	1.2
TOTAL	15	14	16	17	17	27	15	26	17	/	164	17.9
Average	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.4	2.2	1.2	2.1	1.4	/	13.7	1.5

* Visibility - this parameter has no numerical value due to the lack of indicators

Table 5: *Evaluation of important anthropogenic tourist resources in Debarca; Author's calculations*

ATTRACTIVENESS	POSITION	EQUIPMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	ACCESSIBILITY	SPECIFICITY	COMPATIBILITY	MEANING	SEASONALITY	VISIBILITY*	TOTAL POINTS	GENERAL VALUE
Archaeological site of Trebenishte necropolis	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	/	14	1.5
Archaeological site of Trebenishko (Trebenishte) Kale	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	/	14	1.5
Archaeological site of Bogorodica Prechista Rashtani (village Zlesti)	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	/	24	2.7
Monastery of Leshani (All Saints church)	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	/	24	2.7
Monastery of Brezani (Sts Peter and Paul church)	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	/	14	1.5
Monastery of Slatino (St. John the Baptist church)	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	/	15	1.7
Monastery of Botuno (the Holy Virgin Mary church)	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	/	15	1.7
Monastery of Vrbjani (St. Peter and Paul church)	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	/	14	1.5
Monastery of Mesheishta (St. Ilija church)	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	/	16	1.8
Monastery of Orovnik (St. Petka church)	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	/	24	2.7
Monastery of Orovnik (St. Nedela church)	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	/	24	2.7
St. Nikola's Church - Velmei	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	3	/	18	2.0
TOTAL	16	16	22	25	30	26	30	25	/	216	24.0
Average	1.3	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.1	/	18.0	2.0

Table 6: *Evaluation of important tourist attractions of natural character in Debarca; Author's calculations*

ATTRACTION	AMBIENCE	KNOWN OUTSIDE LOCAL AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	DIFFERS FROM OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN THE AREA	VISITATION	TOTAL POINTS	GENERAL VALUE
Lake of Trebenishte (Bobano), natural	3	2	2	2	1	10	2.0
Slatina Lake, artificial	2	1	2	2	1	8	1.6
Belchishko Blato or Sini Viroj (nature reserve)	3	2	2	2	1	10	2.0
Sateska River	2	1	2	2	1	8	1.6
Gorno Pole Spring - Velmey	2	1	2	2	1	8	1.6
Javorec Cave	1	1	2	2	1	7	1.4
East Fountain - Velmey	3	2	2	2	2	11	2.2
Iliinska pl. (1909 m)	2	2	2	1	1	8	1.6
Plakenska pl. (1999m)	2	1	1	2	1	7	1.4
Karaorman pl. (1794m)	2	1	1	1	1	6	1.2
Slavej pl. (1714m)	2	1	1	1	1	6	1.2
Mazzatar pl. (1635 m)	2	1	1	1	1	6	1.2
TOTAL	26	16	20	20	13	95	19.0
Average	2.2	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.1	8.0	1.6

Table 7: *Evaluation of important tourist attractions of the cultural character in Debarca; Author's calculations*

ATTRACTION	AMBIENCE	KNOWN OUTSIDE LOCAL AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	DIFFERS FROM OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN THE AREA	VISITATION	TOTAL POINTS	GENERAL VALUE
Archaeological site of Trebenishte necropolis	2	2	3	2	1	10	2.0
Archaeological site of Trebenishte Kale	2	2	3	2	1	10	2.0
Archaeological site of	2	1	2	2	2	9	1.8

Bogorodica Prechista - site Rashtani (village Zlesti)							
Monastery of Leshani	2	1	2	2	2	9	1.8
Monastery of Brezani	2	1	1	2	1	7	1.4
Monastery of Slatino	2	1	1	2	1	7	1.4
Monastery of Botuno	2	1	1	2	2	8	1.6
Monastery of Vrbjani	2	1	1	1	1	6	1.2
Monastery of Mesheishta	2	1	1	2	1	7	1.4
Monastery of Orovnik (St. Petka church)	2	1	1	2	2	8	1.6
Monastery of Orovnik (St. Nedela church)	2	1	1	2	2	8	1.6
St. Nikola's Church - Velmey	2	1	2	1	2	8	1.6
TOTAL	24	14	19	22	18	97	19.4
Average	2.0	1.2	1.6	1.8	1.5	8.1	1.6

Conclusion with recommendations

The municipality of Debarca is a geographical area that is neither explored nor comodified by tourism. Our research provides general guidance in the validation of attractiveness factors, i.e. generalizes conclusions of true potential for the development of tourism in the Municipality of Debarca:

- the Municipality has a variety of natural and anthropogenic resources that tourists do not use yet;
- the Municipality does not have the economic nor professional means to develop tourism;
- the Municipality has a small number of catering facilities;
- the Municipality does not have accommodation facilities;
- the Municipality has no strategy for tourism development;
- the Municipality has insufficient human resources, as it is characterised by depopulation process.

Recommendations:

- The Municipality should start developing a strategy for tourism development;
- Focus should be set on rural tourism, religious tourism and mountain tourism (with eco-tourism offer);
- Development of auxiliary strategies for selective tourism types;
- When practicing tourism, we recommend combined round tours, with visits of several natural and anthropogenic goods; we also recommend stay in traditional village houses;

- Tourism development requires the active involvement of more local, national and foreign authorities engagement, and also significant economic investments.

Opinions and attitudes of the local community considering cultural and natural heritage in their environment are very important aspects, since they create local perspective for the evaluation of possibilities to involve geographically limited territory into wider social, cultural and tourism flows. Therefore, it is very important to identify the social, political, economic and environmental implications of potential tourism development in the region, taking into account the manner in which the reaction of the local population can be taken into consideration in order to contribute to the support of the sustainable tourism development. It is essential not only to involve the community in the development process in order to gain the support for tourism industry, but also to provide community's wellbeing and sustainable development (Terzić et al., 2015).

References

1. Agency for Real Estate Cadastre: <http://gis.katastar.gov.mk/arec> (January 2019).
2. Bachleitner, R., Zins, A. H. (1999). Cultural tourism in rural communities: The resident's perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 44(3), 199-209.
3. Bjeljic, Ž., Brankov, J., Jovičić, D., Ćurčić, N., Terzić, A. (2013). Valorization of natural and anthropogenic tourist potentials in underdeveloped regions of transition countries. *TTEM*, 8(3), 1237-1250.
4. Ćurčić, N., Bjeljic, Ž., Terzić, A., Mirković, A. (2018). Importance of tourism for sustainable rural development. *Book of proceedings of VI International scientific-practical conference "Sustainable development of tourism market: international practices and Russian experience"*, Stavropol, 26-27 April 2018, 36.
5. Dimitrov, N., Petrevska, B. (2012). Rural tourism development zones: the case of Macedonia. *Researches review of the Department of geography, tourism and hotel management*, 41, 152-162.
6. Field Research, June/August 2018.

7. Goodrich, J.N. (1997). Cultural tourism in Europe. *Journal of Travel Research*, 35(3), p. 91.
8. Group of authors (2015). *Study for the situation with potentials for development of tourism in East plan region*. University "Goce Delcev", Štip, Macedonia.
9. Hannabus, S. (1999). Postmodernism and the heritage experience. *Library Management*, 20(5), 295-302.
10. Macedonian Orthodox Church - Ohrid Archbishopric, Justiniana Prima <http://www.mpc.org.mk/MPC>; <http://www.dke.org.mk/index.php/namesnistva#sla> (January, 2019).
11. Metodijeski, D., Dimitrov, N. (2018). *Rural tourism – politics and development*. University "Goce Delcev", Štip, Macedonia.
12. McIntosh, R. W., Goeldner, C. R. (1990). *Tourism principles, practices, philoso-phies* (6th Edition). New York: John Wiley and Son.
13. McKercher, B., du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Binghamton: The Haworth Press, Inc.
14. Panov, M. (1998). *Encyclopaedia of the villages in Macedonia*, Skopje.
15. Petrevska, B., Dimitrov, N. (2013). Planning rural tourism development in Macedonia. *Journal of Process Management - New Technologies*, 1 (3), 63-68.
16. Richards, G. (Ed.) (1996). *Cultural tourism in Europe*. Oxon: CAB International.
17. Schweitzer, C. (1999). The hot ticket to cool meetings. *Association Management*, 51(8), 121-130.
18. Silberberg, T. (1995). Cultural tourism and business opportunities for museums and heritage sites. *Tourism Management*, 16(5), 361-365.

19. State Statistical Office (2005). *Census of population, Households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002, Book XIII*, Skopje; available at: http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga_13.pdf (January 2019)
20. Talevski, T., Talevska, M. (2007). *Preliminary investigations of Belcista wetland "Sini Viroj" (Macedonia)*. PSI Hydrobiological Institute, Ohrid, Macedonia.
21. Terzić, A., Simeunović-Bajić, N., Jovičić, A. (2015) Community role in heritage management and sustainable tourism development - Case study of the Danube region in Serbia. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, Special Issue, December 2015, 183-201.
22. Vasileski, D. (1999). Hydrographic features of the Debarca valley. *Geographic Views*, 34, Skopje.
23. WTO (1985). *The states' role in protecting and promoting culture as a factor in tourism development and the proper use and exploitation of the national cultural heritage of sites and monuments for tourists*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.