

## **OLD MARKET PLACES IN THE FUNCTION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Marketplaces are the oldest market institutions and their position within old cores of cities enables their tourism potential to be clearly defined. That is the case with old marketplaces in Republic of Serbia, such as Skadarlijska Pijaca marketplace in Belgrade, Riblja Pijaca marketplace in Novi Sad and Tvrđava marketplace in Niš. The purpose of this paper is the valorisation of local identity, tourist promotion of cities and development support of social, cultural and tourist potential of these cities. Based on theoretical research, the author's experience and conversations with tourist guides, the conclusion may be drawn that old market places can make contribution to the construction of a peculiar tourist place, and contribute to building of new trends in the tourist offer of the city, region and country.*

*Key Words: tourist potential, old market places, urban areas, foreign tourists*

*JEL classification: R280, Z32*

### **Introduction**

Environmental and social changes directly affect life and business. They also affect the changes in the needs and wishes of tourists, both local and foreign. For further development of urban areas, it is important to adjust all tourist potential that is available. The needs for recreation and social activities of modern tourists also demand an urban way of relaxing and sightseeing in old city centres, which certainly include the old marketplaces.

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However, historical old markets and old buildings are usually located near each other, so tourists usually think that the old markets and old town areas are interesting for visiting. These areas are valuable for tourists, since they want to understand them and their social, cultural and tourist aspects. Taking into account the fact that in the era of digital transformations in production and services, the old markets in all world's urban cities have retained their traditional importance, this research acquires special importance.

The successful use of tourist potential of historical markets in the Republic of Serbia may be based on the European and world countries experiences in using this potential. As there is no national strategy for the development of markets in the function of local tourism in the Republic of Serbia, it is necessary, following the examples of good European practice, to influence political, economic, sociological, technological and other factors, in order to create a basis for strategic action and the development of market organisations in Serbia (Prdić et al., 2023) in order to preserve the culture. The tourist potential of Serbian historical markets offers new possibilities to the towns where they are located, thus giving local tourist organisations and enterprises chances for development and progress, and at the same time it all has a positive influence on creating a vintage image of towns. By organised reception of local and especially foreign tourists in urban environments, where the historical markets are the centre of the offer, there is an emergence of a comprehensive and dynamic precondition for a tourist base creation, with the goal to increase the tourist offer of the city, and also the region and the country. Building the tourists' database and focusing marketing activities in the Republic of Serbia towards the tourist sector, where historical marketplaces are an important part of urban areas supply makes an ideal base for wider social and economic development. Skadarlijska, Riblja and Tvrđava markets with their historic role are important for tourism. Within the concept of tourism potential of historical markets in the Republic of Serbia, the success is estimated in the form of social, economic and tourism potential of a particular place in the tourist offer of urban areas concept.

### **Theoretical research framework and review of literature**

Having in mind the fact that tourism is the main initiator of development in the modern digital era, it is certainly necessary to make connection between rural and urban areas. The Internet has enabled price

disintermediation and transparency (Kotler et al., 2019). On the bases of the principle of eliminating intermediaries, using the Internet, it is possible to manage a tourist destination on the ground of principles that are generally known and founded on the historical context and significance of old markets worldwide. Market places are common social and world phenomenon, so it is possible to create a world destination strategy. Observing market places in a historical context from the Middle Ages to the present global society, they were part of world trade (Prdić & Kostić, 2022). Markets emerged about five thousand years together with commodity exchange (Petrović et al., 2021). Historically, the evolution of marketplaces is related to people's lives (Prdić & Prdić, 2021). Rural tourism in Serbia is still in its infancy (Cvijanović & Gajić, 2020). The year 1217 is recorded in documents as the time of the emergence of the first meat stands on Pla de la Boqueria, and they were part of the street marketplaces located on La Rambla. These marketplaces were composed of temporary outdoor stalls where farmers from the countryside near Barcelona were selling their goods (Boqueria Market Barcelona, 2023). Looking back at the history of marketplaces, it is important to mention the „Borough Market“ in London, which is the most famous British market, situated along the Thames River, and it is believed to be around 1000 years old. „La Boqueria“ in Barcelona is a giant historical marketplace that is about 800 years old. Local farmers used to sell meat and vegetables there. Nowadays, the food from all over the world is being sold there (Dimitrovski & Crespi, 2018). La Boqueria is the most popular and frequently visited market in Barcelona (Crespi & Dimitrovski, 2016). One of the eldest and most popular indoor marketplaces is „Yeliseyevskiy“, located in the centre of Moscow, and it is a famous tourist and historical symbol of past times and trade. All these marketplaces, together with architecture, culture and tradition, are an integral part of areas with valuable potential of attracting tourists and with valuable economic potential (Prdić & Prdić, 2021). It is quite miraculous how they managed to survive and adorn the cities' landscape, despite the prevalence of big trade chains (Spain Underfoot, 2023).

Marketplaces contribute to numerous social benefits - increased income, social communication and interaction, development of social welfare, and they build a stronger connection between consumers and the local community (Bonanno et al., 2017). People's pleasure is based on specific things (Vujić et al., 2020). For many, this is thought of as being part of the fun (Wu et al, 2014). As far as health tourism development is concerned, the orientation is on the development of a sustainable

destination (Šmitran, 2023). There is a desire to achieve new standards in communication between the marketplaces and consumers, which will contribute to a better position of the market, having in mind the traditional importance of the marketplaces as a component of this strategy (Prdić et al., 2023). The pandemic has influenced rapid changes (Vukasović & Filipović, 2023). The global pandemic significantly influenced the tourists (Mandarić et al., 2022) depending on their risk preferences (Milojević et al., 2022) Communications determine the direction in which modern man is going (Mihajlović et al., 2022). Statistical analysis and monitoring of tourist movements during the pandemic and other potential crises was the subject of numerous researches in the post-pandemic period. The modern digital age offers a lot more opportunities to specify the destination on the international tourist market than previously. In this context, an orientation to visits the old marketplaces may be a good option as a part of world destinations which connect rural and urban areas.

The aim of this paper is to point out the opportunities that old marketplaces offer in the context of tourist supply in urban areas, and question the connection between the sellers' offer and the tourists' satisfaction as consumers. The results of this research can serve marketplaces, tourist organisations, and marketplace sellers in the context of identifying factors that influence the recognition of old markets as part of the total tourist offer. The practical and scientific experience of the author contributes to the formation of recommendations for application in business practice and based on the introductory observations of the literature used and the methodology itself.

### **Research methodology**

Old marketplaces are part of urban areas and a wider area of rural places, and in historical context are valuable for tourist potential both in the world and in our country. The modern era is increasingly directing its potential and success indicators towards linking the traditional values of a region with trend monitoring, planning analysis, and managing the promotion of a tourist destination promotion.

The aim of this paper's theoretical part is a creation of a model that would turn old city domestic marketplaces into desirable tourist sites in the context of the tourist potential of urban areas. In addition, the goal is to create a usable model for improvement of tourist spot potential based on

conversations with tour guides working with foreign tourists. The implementation of research objectives is based on the application of marketing research methods, with the theoretical aspect based on the existing literature, the author's experience and existing models applied to old marketplaces, while in the case of a practical research model, the results are evaluated on the basis of personal interviews with tour guides that guide tourist visits. The interview was conducted between September the 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> by visiting three marketplaces - Skadarlijska, Riblja and Tvrđava. On the bases of data obtained by the personal interview method, qualitative data analysis was performed. The interview was conducted with 50 foreign tourists who visited these markets during the weekend during the certain period. Special methods of knowledge are used here - methods of analysis and synthesis, logical deduction and statistical processing of data presented in the form of tables. The intention is to question the following hypotheses by selected methods and the author's personal interview with the sellers.

*H1: Sellers insufficiently use foreign tourists as potential buyers of their products.*

*H2: Sellers at the market have a positive attitude about potential changes in the supply to foreign tourists.*

## **Results and Discussion**

According to conversations with tourist guides of markets analysed as part of a visit to urban areas, the costumers' loyalty to visits to marketplaces is at enviable level. Tourist guides' attitudes are one of significant fact of analysis. Their attitude is that strong tourist competition among numerous destinations and maintaining a high level of loyalty is needed using the concept of visiting rural and urban destinations. Old marketplaces certainly are part of this concept, from a visitor perspective (Fusté-Forné, 2023). Hence, the purpose of this paper in the theoretical sense is accomplished and is not limited to personal and qualitative research of the sellers' opinions. Furthermore, the paper deals with the topic on the bases of the existing literature, the author's experience and direct conversations with tour guides. Based on the author's experience, the condition for interviews with market sellers is continuous sales at the market for at least 5 years. The experience indicates that tourists are mostly over 50 years old. Namely, the presumption was that these sellers have a better perception of the importance and touristic role of markets. Interviewed sellers answering the question from hypothesis H1 had opportunity to give an answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 expressed a

negative opinion and 5 strongly positive. The analysed data are presented in table 1.

Table 1: *Interview data on the average rating of supply of products for foreign tourists (tested value = 4)*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Stan. deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Insufficient supply	150	4.3321	.65036	.05649

Source: *Interview and calculation by the author*

Table 2: *One sample test, average rating of application of the supply (tested value=4). 95% Confidence interval of the Difference*

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
Insufficient supply	4.837	148	.069	.12332	.0092	.2546

Source: *Interview and calculation by the author*

In accordance to the obtained empirical test data, and with the significance of  $\alpha=0,069=6.9\%$ ,  $\alpha>5\%$ , which shows that the average value (grade of insufficient offer) does not differ from the tested value, the conclusion is that the hypothesis that the average rating (4) of the insufficient supply of own products to foreign tourists in all three analysed markets by all sellers can be accepted. Therefore the hypothesis H1: *The sellers insufficiently use foreign tourists as potential buyers of their products* - can be accepted.

Table 3: *Data from the interview on the average score of attitude change in the product supply for foreign tourists (tested value = 4)*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Change of sellers in the supply	150	3.989	.63780	.06410

Source: *Interview and calculation by the author*

Judging by the obtained results of the empirical test, the significance is  $\alpha=0.939=93.9\%$ ,  $\alpha>5\%$ . It may be concluded that the average value (assessment of changes in the attitude of sellers in the offer) is not different from the tested value, and that indicates that the hypothesis that

the average rating (4) of the desire for changes in the offer among all sellers may be accepted. So, the hypothesis H2: *The sellers at the market have a positive attitude about potential changes in the supply to foreign tourists* - can be accepted.

Table 4: *One sample test, ratings of changing attitudes in the supply (tested value = 4). 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference*

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
Willingness to change the supply	-.079	148	.937	.00504	-.1332	.1223

Source: *Interview and calculation by the author*

### Conclusion

The goal of this research was to use the old city markets, Skadarlijska in Belgrade, Riblja in Novi Sad and Tvrđava in Niš and make the concept of the tourist offer of urban areas based on the foreign tourists' visits. This supply has a wider range of information for foreign tourists since the marketplaces themselves would be presented in the context of local identity, social, cultural and tourist potentials that urban areas of the modern world bring to tourists. In accordance with this objective, based on theoretical knowledge, conversations with tour guides, the author's experience and personal interviews with sellers in the context of supply improvement, hypotheses were made and verified using certain statistical methods. After the conducted research based on previous knowledge, it was concluded that the analysed marketplaces could become part of urban local cities supply. In the same way, tourist guides believe, on the bases of their personal knowledge, that old markets can be part of the city tourist supply in a form of visiting a tourist place. It was established that H1: *Sellers insufficiently use foreign tourists as potential buyers of their products*, can be accepted, and that sellers are not satisfied with the level of their supply and the benefits it can bring them. The second hypothesis, H2: *Sellers at the market have a positive attitude about potential changes in the supply to foreign tourists* - can be accepted due to sellers' awareness of their own capabilities and willingness to increase supply.

This research has some limitations. The limitation is the size of the sample, although the method of taking the sample implied particular conditions in order to represent the population in the right way. The

recommendation for future research is to take significantly larger sample so that the results would be more representative. In addition, research repeated over time would contribute to the consistency and greater reliability of the results.

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