
THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM FOR RURAL AREAS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF APATIN

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ABSTRACT

The paper starts with the initial hypothesis that traditional, i.e. local food served in local restaurants (chardas) is the basis for the development of rural areas. By setting certain sub-hypotheses, we highlight the primary purpose of the paper, and thus we show that traditional food has the “strength” to change and improve rural areas. We based the research on a changed questionnaire previously used for research in the Black Sea resorts of Romania. The questionnaire comprises of 9 attributes, and we asked respondents to rank certain attributes on a three-point scale. The research was conducted among visitors who came from eight countries, including Serbia, to get the most relevant data through statistical processing, which will serve to assess the current, but also to predict the future state and development of gastronomic tourism.

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Introduction

Since food and beverage are recognized as important factors in attracting tourists, we consider gastronomic tourism to be the backbone of the development of rural areas. (Hall, Mitchell, 2001; Hjalager, Richards, 2002; Charters, Pettigrew, 2005; Wolf, 2006; Petrović et al., 2017; Vuković et al., 2019; Vujko et al., 2020). Food has the “power” to attract tourists contributing to the transformation of rural areas into tourist destinations. It is well

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known that tourists travel to different parts of the world just to try something new and to experience through “taste” new destinations in this specific way. (Kivela, Crotts, 2006).

The municipality of Apatin is in the southwest part of the province of Vojvodina (West Bačka District), on the left side of the Danube. It occupies the space of 333 km², with approximately 35,000 inhabitants in one urban and four rural areas (Prigrevica, Kupusina, Svilojevo, and Sonta), (Radujko, 2008; Bošković, 2013; Tadić, 2018). Regional route R 101 connects Apatin and Sombor (16 km) and the borders with the Republic of Croatia near Bogojevo (35 km). Apatin is 100 km away from Novi Sad, via Odžak, and 120 km via Vrbas Two geomorphologic environments are represented in the municipality’s relief: the alluvial plain of the Danube and the light terrace, with an average altitude of 85 m (Radujko, 2008; Bošković, 2013; Tadić, 2018).

The tourist attractions in the region are the very rich fishing waters on the Danube and its branches, as well as famous hunting places, habitats of the famous Danube deer and other game animals. Apatin has long been known as a fishing center. The floodplain of the special nature reserve “Gornje Podunavlje” is a natural hatchery for about 50 species of freshwater fish, among which the most important species are: carp, pike, perch, catfish, etc. (Rudić-Vranić, 1960; Ćopić, 2016). Also, the Apatin fishing culinary tradition is well known, as well as the manifestation “Apatin Fishermen’s Evenings”.

The paper tries to show that food and gastronomic tourism are a powerful magnet for attracting tourists, and a mighty instrument with the help of which the invested money will return many times. Such investment directly affects the development of rural areas, which is the starting hypothesis of the paper. The primary aim of the paper is to prove that traditional food has the “strength” to change and improve rural areas, and gastronomic tourism represents the backbone of development. What we conclude is that certain items influence the overall impression which gastronomy makes on tourists. Thus, new aims of the paper emerged, i.e. to investigate whether tourists are satisfied with their stay at the destination and whether this stay fulfilled their expectations; also, to check the quality of the food that was served, as well as to check the quality of the service in chardas.

The research methodology

The survey was conducted among the guests of three well known chardas on the territory of the municipality of Apatin, “Zlatna Kruna”, “Harčaš” charda, and “Kupusinska” charda from May until September 2018, and included 234 participants of different gender, age, and educational background.

The quantitative-qualitative method, which is one of the most used methods, is used in this paper because it allows great freedom in research and evaluation, and is based on the following indicators: accessibility of resources, tourist equipment, environment, resource specificity, resource significance, and artistic value. For this paper, we did the valorization of gastronomic tourism on the Danube chardas of the municipality of Apatin: Charda”Zlatna kruna” (Golden Crown), “Harčaš” charda, and “Kupusinska”

charda. Valorization was performed by Dragan Ignjatov and Đurđina Knezević. Locating the destination or zoning, was done by drawing and connecting points on the map of Apatin. A tour of the city during the visit to the Apatin chardas is shown.

We based this study on a changed questionnaire that was primarily conducted in the Black Sea resorts of Romania in August 1997 and implemented by Nield, Kozak & LeGrys (2000). According to Nield, Kozak & LeGrys (2000), the participants were asked to rate nine attributes (Value for money, Food quality, Number of dishes, Standard of food service, Variety of dishes, Food presentation, Overall traditional meal experience, Speed of service, Attractiveness of surroundings) of food service (on a three-point scale).

A three-point scale, although unusual, was employed to give unequivocal answers regarding tourists' likes and dislikes. Within the three-point scale, the item 'like' refers to the respondents' favorite opinions about the food and beverage and the item 'dislike' refers to their unfavorable opinions. The item 'neither' was inserted for those who neither liked nor disliked an item. By applying the appropriate research instruments, the survey included variables that primarily concerned the participants' opinions of the linkage between traditional food and loyalty. The variables reflect the opinion of the participants about the food, food service, the attractiveness of surroundings, and loyalty.

The collected data was analyzed by employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. This data was analyzed by appropriate statistical methods which were descriptive and comparative, enabling the explication of the research results and the performing certain conclusions.

One form of the analysis of the data was the chi-square test (Pearson Chi-Square Test). It was used to determine whether a received (observed) frequency (the responses of participants compared to the origin country) deviated from the frequencies that were expected. This test aimed to check if there was a connection between these groups of participants and the probability of connection. Practice is to always start from the premise that there are certain values of the difference in responses. To detect differences in the responses measured based on statistically significant differences in the distribution of the dependent variable to an independent one, statistically significant differences are taken for those having $p < 0,05$.

In this paper, we started from the main hypothesis H: Traditional food is the reason for the development of the rural areas. Certain lower-level hypotheses are set under the main one: h1-staying at the destination fulfilled the expectations (Table 1); h2-the traditional food is presented in the right manner (Table 11); h3-the environment that surrounds the Apatin chardas (national restaurants) is attractive and improves the overall impression (Table 13, 17); h4-the food and service in the restaurants represent the product which becomes the basis of tourist loyalty (Table 3, 5, 7, 9, 15)

Results and discussion

According to Günther (2021), money can strongly ‘affect people’s reactions. It is well established that Value for money, Food quality, Number of dishes, Standard of food service, Variety of dishes, Food presentation, Overall traditional meal experience, Speed of service, and Attractiveness of surroundings affect customer’s willingness to pay a food price. That feeling is directly proportional to the need of enjoying food, and also with “the wish to be seen” at a certain destination (Mora et al., 2021).

Table 1. Opinion of the participants

			Value for money			Total
			Like	Dislike	Neither	
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	37	1	1	39
		% of Total	12,5%	,3%	,3%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	56	3	2	61
		% of Total	19,0%	1,0%	,7%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	22	1	1	24
		% of Total	7,5%	,3%	,3%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	7	0	0	7
		% of Total	2,4%	,0%	,0%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	34	2	1	37
		% of Total	11,5%	,7%	,3%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	74	3	2	79
		% of Total	25,1%	1,0%	,7%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	22	1	2	25
		% of Total	7,5%	,3%	,7%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	18	3	2	23
		% of Total	6,1%	1,0%	,7%	7,8%
Total		Count	270	14	11	295
		% of Total	91,5%	4,7%	3,7%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

By examining table 1, we see that most participants claimed they received what they expected for the money, which proves the hypothesis h1 - staying at the destination fulfilled the expectations. In Pearson Chi-Square Test, comparisons are made depending on the country from which tourists come. Referring to the data from table 2, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in participants’ responses depending on the country they come from, since $p=8.515$. Therefore, wherever participants come from, they all agree that they got the highest value for the money spent, and all of them were satisfied.

Table 2 Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	8.515	14	0.861

Source: Own calculations

For Mak et al. (2012b), quality of food, number of dishes, and quality of service significantly impact tourist satisfaction and thus affect the perception of gastronomic tourism and rural areas. In this sense, food positively affects satisfaction and intentions to return to a destination. Apart from this, food quality in relation to quality service directly influences the positive aspects of rural areas' development. When one talks about food quality, it is primarily about the quality of the ingredients they made a certain dish of. Organic products are ecologically grown and healthy habits are valued most.

Table 3. Opinion of the participants

		Food quality			Total
		Like	Neither		
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	38	1	39
		% of Total	12,9%	,3%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	61	0	61
		% of Total	20,7%	,0%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	24	0	24
		% of Total	8,1%	,0%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	7	0	7
		% of Total	2,4%	,0%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	37	0	37
		% of Total	12,5%	,0%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	74	5	79
		% of Total	25,1%	1,7%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	25	0	25
		% of Total	8,5%	,0%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	23	0	23
		% of Total	7,8%	,0%	7,8%
Total		Count	289	6	295
		% of Total	98,0%	2,0%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Pearson Chi-Square Test ($p=11.044$ in the case of table 4, also showed that there was no statistically significant difference in participants' responses depending on the country they come from. Participants in the largest number of cases (98%), responded that the quality of food served in 'salash' is excellent and that they were very satisfied. Researching the term "food quality", certain authors conclude tourists are satisfied if all organoleptic properties of food are satisfied (Jovićević, Simin, 2021; Čavić et al., 2021), and in the case of 'salash' in Serbia, hospitable and helpful staff is adding to a sense of satisfaction.

Table 4. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	11.044	7	0.137

Source: Own calculations

According to Okumus et al. (2007), the sensory experience seemed to be the primary determinant of satisfaction. Thus, several gangs that are served, and also the colors of dishes that are served on the plates, matching the ingredients and spices, the smell of the dish (table 9), as well as the psychological moment i.e. the impression that something is of better quality if there is more of it. By examining tables 3 and 9, it can be concluded that a total number of 98% of participants agreed that the quality in chards is at the top level.

Table 5. Opinion of the participants

		Number of dishes			Total	
		Like	Dislike	Neither		
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	37	1	1	39
		% of Total	12,5%	,3%	,3%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	60	0	1	61
		% of Total	20,3%	,0%	,3%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	23	1	0	24
		% of Total	7,8%	,3%	,0%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	6	0	1	7
		% of Total	2,0%	,0%	,3%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	37	0	0	37
		% of Total	12,5%	,0%	,0%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	78	0	1	79
		% of Total	26,4%	,0%	,3%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	25	0	0	25
		% of Total	8,5%	,0%	,0%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	23	0	0	23
		% of Total	7,8%	,0%	,0%	7,8%
Total		Count	289	2	4	295
		% of Total	98,0%	,7%	1,4%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Data in table 6 also show that there was no statistically significant difference in participants' responses depending on the country they come from ($p=18.695$). The number of gangs which is served at 'salash' is at the pleasure of participants and they all agreed that they ate and drank very well at 'salash'. Certain researchers concluded that traditional food is something people love and always return to (Lončarić et al., 2021), and 'salash' itself is a place where traditional dishes are served. Primarily this also means a traditional way of serving food is respected, which means several gangs (small dishes), from appetizer to dessert.

Table 6. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	18.695	14	0.177

Source: Own calculations

The way something is served, as well as the people who are serving food also influence the guest's perception and his wish to visit the destination again (Perić et al., 2020). According to Rozin and Rozin (1981), the standard of food service represents the "ID" of the restaurant, and of the destination itself. Analyzing data from table 7, we can conclude that the respondents support this statement.

Table 7. Opinion of the participants

			Standard of foodservice			Total
			Like	Dislike	Neither	
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	31	4	4	39
		% of Total	10,5%	1,4%	1,4%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	58	0	3	61
		% of Total	19,7%	,0%	1,0%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	24	0	0	24
		% of Total	8,1%	,0%	,0%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	5	0	2	7
		% of Total	1,7%	,0%	,7%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	36	0	1	37
		% of Total	12,2%	,0%	,3%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	76	0	3	79
		% of Total	25,8%	,0%	1,0%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	23	1	1	25
		% of Total	7,8%	,3%	,3%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	23	0	0	23
		% of Total	7,8%	,0%	,0%	7,8%
Total		Count	276	5	14	295
		% of Total	93,6%	1,7%	4,7%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Data in table 8 also show there was no statistically significant difference in participants' responses depending on the country they come from ($p=36.709$).

Table 8. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	36.709	14	0.001

Source: Own calculations

Data in table 9 show that almost 100% of tourists agreed that food and beverage which is served at 'salash' is diverse and abundant. According to authors Čavić et al., (2020), innovation and diversity of food present positive aspects of tourism development in a certain area, thus this piece of information is in correspondence with the stated facts.

Table 9. Opinion of the participants

			Variety of dishes			Total
			Like	Dislike	Neither	
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	38	1	0	39
		% of Total	12,9%	,3%	,0%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	60	0	1	61
		% of Total	20,3%	,0%	,3%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	24	0	0	24
		% of Total	8,1%	,0%	,0%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	7	0	0	7
		% of Total	2,4%	,0%	,0%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	37	0	0	37
		% of Total	12,5%	,0%	,0%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	79	0	0	79
		% of Total	26,8%	,0%	,0%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	25	0	0	25
		% of Total	8,5%	,0%	,0%	8,5%
Hungary	Count	23	0	0	23	
	% of Total	7,8%	,0%	,0%	7,8%	
Total		Count	293	1	1	295
		% of Total	99,3%	,3%	,3%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Table 10 shows that participants' responses depending on the country they come from, statistically do not defer ($p=10.429$), which is corresponding to the research conducted by Brankov et al., (2019), according to which the diversity itself is the key to duration, and thus is the quality.

Table 10 Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	10.429	14	0.730

Source: Own calculations

Food presentation refers to the arrangement of food on the plate in a way that fulfills all organoleptic properties. According to Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2018), food was described as hedonism, and food tourism was a journey in search for taste stimulation which is more than a combination of smell, taste, which is beautiful to the eye and which is arranged and served properly. All this represents food presentation. By examining Table 11 it can be concluded that approximately a half of participants stated that food presentation in chards is done properly, while another half of participants had different statements, 18% voted for inadequate presentation and 27,5% were undecided.

Table 11. Opinion of the participants

			Food presentation			Total
			Like	Dislike	Neither	
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	19	6	14	39
		% of Total	6,4%	2,0%	4,7%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	43	11	7	61
		% of Total	14,6%	3,7%	2,4%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	12	4	8	24
		% of Total	4,1%	1,4%	2,7%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	2	4	1	7
		% of Total	,7%	1,4%	,3%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	28	2	7	37
		% of Total	9,5%	,7%	2,4%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	32	19	28	79
		% of Total	10,8%	6,4%	9,5%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	14	5	6	25
		% of Total	4,7%	1,7%	2,0%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	11	2	10	23
		% of Total	3,7%	,7%	3,4%	7,8%
Total		Count	161	53	81	295
		% of Total	54,6%	18,0%	27,5%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Authors Marković et al., (2019) showed in their research that an excellent presentation is a competitive advantage itself, and by analyzing table 12 we conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in participants' responses depending on the country they come from ($p=34.810$).

Table 12. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	34.810	14	0.002

Source: Own calculations

One may say that the traditional meal experience is recognized as the main part of the national cultural heritage and also the ethnic identity of their people. By getting to know the food of a population, we get to know its habits and way of life. Food is the identity of the destination. According to some researchers, these characteristics represent a contractual zone of attracting tourists to a destination, and a powerful reason for the transformation of rural areas (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021). Looking at Table 13, we can conclude that the participants agree with the statement that food is a way to experience a traditional experience.

Table 13. Opinion of the participants

			Overall traditional meal experience			Total	
			Like	Dislike	Neither		
Country of origin?	Serbia	Count	38	0	1	39	
		% of Total	12,9%	,0%	,3%	13,2%	
	B&H	Count	60	1	0	61	
		% of Total	20,3%	,3%	,0%	20,7%	
	Croatia	Count	24	0	0	24	
		% of Total	8,1%	,0%	,0%	8,1%	
	Macedonia	Count	7	0	0	7	
		% of Total	2,4%	,0%	,0%	2,4%	
	Montenegro	Count	37	0	0	37	
		% of Total	12,5%	,0%	,0%	12,5%	
	Slovenia	Count	79	0	0	79	
		% of Total	26,8%	,0%	,0%	26,8%	
	Greece	Count	25	0	0	25	
		% of Total	8,5%	,0%	,0%	8,5%	
	Hungary	Count	23	0	0	23	
		% of Total	7,8%	,0%	,0%	7,8%	
	Total		Count	293	1	1	295
			% of Total	99,3%	,3%	,3%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Authors Mladenović and Bojičić (2018), showed in their work that people love traditional products and that they easily bond with certain brands which are the synonyms of quality, and by analyzing table 13, we conclude that participants in 99,3% of cases agreed that ‘salash’ offers the unique, traditional experience, so there is no statistically significant difference here in participants’ responses ($p=10.429$) depending on the country they come from.

Table 14. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	10.429	14	0.730

Source: Own calculations

By analyzing tables 3, 5, 7, 9, and 15, we can conclude that the majority of tourists positively assessed the quality of service and food in the previously mentioned chardas and that this influences a positive attitude about the development of gastronomic tourism. Furthermore, this proves the hypothesis h4-the food and service in the restaurants represent the product which becomes the basis of tourist loyalty.

Table 15. Opinion of the participants

			Speed of service			Total	
			Like	Dislike	Neither		
Country of origin	Serbia	Count	8	20	11	39	
		% of Total	2,7%	6,8%	3,7%	13,2%	
	B&H	Count	13	27	21	61	
		% of Total	4,4%	9,2%	7,1%	20,7%	
	Croatia	Count	12	11	1	24	
		% of Total	4,1%	3,7%	,3%	8,1%	
	Macedonia	Count	1	5	1	7	
		% of Total	,3%	1,7%	,3%	2,4%	
	Montenegro	Count	25	8	4	37	
		% of Total	8,5%	2,7%	1,4%	12,5%	
	Slovenia	Count	42	21	16	79	
		% of Total	14,2%	7,1%	5,4%	26,8%	
	Greece	Count	8	14	3	25	
		% of Total	2,7%	4,7%	1,0%	8,5%	
	Hungary	Count	6	11	6	23	
		% of Total	2,0%	3,7%	2,0%	7,8%	
	Total		Count	115	117	63	295
			% of Total	39,0%	39,7%	21,4%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Table 16 does not show a statistically significant difference concerning participants' responses, since here is $p=47.902$

Table 16. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	47.902	14	0.000

Source: Own calculations

It is stated for gastronomy that it might be the main reason a tourist chooses a destination (Santich, 2004), as well as the reason to stay longer at a certain destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006). For Mak et al. (2012a) the destination is an attraction for restaurants.

Table 17. Opinion of the participants

			Attractiveness of surroundings		Total
			Like	Neither	
Country of origin?	Serbia	Count	35	4	39
		% of Total	11,9%	1,4%	13,2%
	B&H	Count	60	1	61
		% of Total	20,3%	,3%	20,7%
	Croatia	Count	24	0	24
		% of Total	8,1%	,0%	8,1%
	Macedonia	Count	7	0	7
		% of Total	2,4%	,0%	2,4%
	Montenegro	Count	36	1	37
		% of Total	12,2%	,3%	12,5%
	Slovenia	Count	77	2	79
		% of Total	26,1%	,7%	26,8%
	Greece	Count	21	4	25
		% of Total	7,1%	1,4%	8,5%
	Hungary	Count	23	0	23
		% of Total	7,8%	,0%	7,8%
Total		Count	283	12	295
		% of Total	95,9%	4,1%	100,0%

Source: Own calculations

Data from table 18 are similar to previous responses, so there is no statistically significant difference in participants' responses depending on the country they come from ($p=16.815$).

Table 18. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Attachment 1.	Value	df	Statistical significance (p)
Pearson Chi-Square Test Male	16.815	7	0.019

Source: Own calculations

Analyzing tables 13 and 17, we can conclude that the majority of tourists positively assessed the influence of the surroundings and the experience we get. This proves hypothesis h3-the environment that surrounds the Apatin chardas (national restaurants) is attractive and improves the overall impression (t 13, 17).

Based on the valorization, it is possible to notice that from all the chardas, only the Zlatna Kruna (Golden Crown) has the best grade for artistic value, thanks to the previously mentioned excellent parameters. Immediately after this charda, the Harčaš (Harchash) charda stands out. This charda has a special significance because of the beautifully landscaped environment in an attractive location near the Danube. After the Harchash Charda, the Kupusinksa Charda stands out for its specificity, it is ideal for all those who want to enjoy the silence and beauty of nature, and also who have the opportunity to spend the night, prepare food on their own, and drink coffee made in the old way.

Table 19. SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorable geographic location • Good connection with surrounding places • Multiculturalism • A familiar attitude of citizens towards tourism • Great gastronomic offer • The existence of a tradition in the culture of hospitality • The long tradition of the event • The Danube river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor infrastructure • Poor tourist markings and road signs • Insufficient cognizance • Lack of information • Lack of investment in tourism • Lack of additional tourist attractions • Lack of production and supply of souvenirs
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of new ways of tourism • Designing a new tourist offer • Improving marketing activities • Vacation segmentation into often and shorter stays at the new destination (another vacation) • Internet access • Local household interest for starting tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investment in gastronomic tourism • Economic crisis • High unemployment rate and the emigration of the young and educated • Lack of funding sources for infrastructure and transport • The fast growth of competition • Losing position because of the competition

Source: Own calculations

Grades for the assessment of the gastronomy of the Apatin Chardas in tourism development, both with SWOT analysis (Table 19) and with valorization (Table 20) were:

VISION - At the very beginning of the development of this type of tourism, it is first necessary to determine the tour that tourists will make. This tour should contain a series of activities that will make time spent in Apatin beautiful and fulfilling to tourists. As people today more often decide on several brief vacations during the year, this weekend tour should attract tourists to visit the chardas as well as to improve the image of the destination itself. The tour would start from the charda “Zlatna kruna” (Golden Crown), where tourists would walk along the banks of the Danube and visit the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles, after which they would return to “Zlatna kruna” where hosts would offer them a fish stew and a roes pie.

After an afternoon meal and enjoyment along the banks of the Danube, tourists would choose whether to go by kayak with an instructor, for those who like to row alone, or by boat, for those who still prefer to feel the warm breeze on their faces. There they would be welcomed with an *apéritif* by their choice while listening to relaxing music of a good old tambourine. Here, tourists could enjoy some additional activities before dinner, such as cycling or, for fish lovers, fishing on the banks of the Danube and swimming in the river and for the youngest: games on the sand, skipping rope, badminton, playing marbles and other.

After enjoying additional activities, tourists could enjoy fish specialties for dinner, such as grilled fish, stuffed smoked carp; here tourists would spend the night under the starry sky in their tents to feel the true charm of nature. In the morning after breakfast, tourists

would go to the last charda - Kupusinska charda, by boat or bicycle for those who love cycling, where they would all take part in preparing fish stew, so to bring with them and pass on to new generations the famous Apatin recipe.

After the meal, a fishing competition would be organized for both the older and younger population, after which prizes would be given for the first three places that tourists will take themselves as a souvenir, and for the first place the prize would be a tour of the Upper Danube special nature reserve. It would encourage revisiting the destination and enabling the development of other types of tourism. Also, the reward for children would be sweets in their weight. After laughter and fun, tourists would return by boat to the original chard where their journey begins and ends.

MISSION – The mission of this form of tourism is primarily to expand the business of chardas and establish cooperation with all relevant entities of economic and social life that are important for strengthening tourism in the Municipality of Apatin, as well as for the planning of its positioning in the market. It is necessary to enable the connection of key stakeholders who will work together to form and implement this tourist product. It is necessary to enable the branding of this area as attractive for tourists and to provide support, through regular and project activities. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish constant information and marketing support, publish printed issues and create a website. The most important is the cooperation with the Tourist Organization of the city of Apatin, which will actively present this form of tourism as well as directly raise interest in tourists towards gastronomic tourism.

AIM- The primary goal of this form of tourism is to establish cooperation with the local population so that residents gain insight into the importance of this form of tourism. Through this form of tourism, it is possible to develop the local community and raise the standard of living. Furthermore, it would enable the creation of a recognizable image of the destination as well as attract a larger number of tourists, both domestic and foreign. The development of this type of gastronomic tourism will contribute to preserving the tradition and emphasize the potentials that this city has. It is very important to fulfill all the expectations of tourists, to fulfill their wishes and requirements, to create a positive image of this type of tourism, to influence the extension of tourists' stay and their return. It is necessary to introduce modern trends in the field of marketing and communication to become visible and recognizable in the market. Some of the other goals are also the infrastructural development of the destination and the ultimate goal is to ensure the long-term competitive advantage of the destination in the market.

Table 20. Valorization according to quantitative-qualitative methodology

	Resource accessibility	Tourist equipment	Surroundings	Resource specificity	Resource significance	Artistic value
Chard "Zlatna Kruna"	5	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	5
"Harčaš" Chard	4	4.5	5	5	4.5	4.5
"Kupusinska" chard	3	2.5	4	3.5	4	4

Source: Own calculations

Conclusion

The gastronomic offer of chardas represents a great potential for further development of tourism in the territory of the Municipality of Apatin. By developing this type of tourism, Apatin, as a tourist destination on the market, could offer a new product and attract new tourists. It is important to plan, in advance and with great care, the development of this type of tourism, to get the maximum benefit for all participants, as well as the tourists themselves. The development of this type of tourism would greatly contribute to the creation of the brand and recognition of Apatin as a tourist destination. Having all this in mind, we can conclude that the main hypothesis of the paper is proved.

Food is directly or indirectly related to Apatin, as a tourist destination; according to some authors, food encourages tourists to taste, and thus experience the local cuisine. In this paper, the lower level hypothesis h1 proved to be correct, just like the lower level hypothesis h4. For something to prove to be of high quality and thus have loyal consumers, it must, additionally, provide a certain satisfaction. This is exactly the triad of factors that affect loyalty: quality, satisfaction, loyalty.

Food and beverage are a powerful means of branding a country and means of its promotion. The involvement of food in tourism marketing and management has increased significantly in the last few decades. In some destinations, food is used as an eye-catcher in brochures, recordings, and television programs. In addition, the presentation of food takes place not only on the plates but also in the chardas. Apatin chardas have many gastronomic specialties that would lead to an increase in the number of guests (consumers) in this district, not only the production and preparation of dried meat products, pork scratching, soup, cooked meat, and tomato sauce but also the preparation and presentation of strudels, floating islands, and Bundt cakes. All this confirmed two hypotheses, h2 and h3.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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