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FACULTY OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS LOGISTICS

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## WINTER TOURISM SERVING AS BASIS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BROD- THE REGION OF PRIZREN

Naser Bresa<sup>1</sup>; Nikola V. Dimitrov<sup>2</sup>;

### Abstract

*This research paper focuses on the number of local and foreign tourists during the winter in the region of Prizren more specifically in the touristic complex, Arxhena hotel in Dragash. The collected notes were compared and classified considering quantitative and qualitative methods of analyses based on the date the administration of the hotel and its professional staff provided. The date is sorted, compared and shown while taking into consideration the hours this hotel is almost frequented during the day, month and year. This research paper aims to discuss the infrastructure, hotel capacity, service and ski lift safety. The reports that confirm the annual financial income during the winter season add value to the collected data moreover it is implied that this touristic attraction has a major impact on employment social wellness and other business. The outcomes of this research are reliable and valid. The statistics of this data show that this rural area is considerably visited by foreign tourists who enjoy the snowy mountains and the traditional service. In conclusion, as the number of services added so does the number of visitors.*

Key Words: winter tourism, skiing, snow paths, telepheric  
JEL classification: Z32

### Introduction

Kosova as a country when considering winter sports is exclusively represented with ski centers in Brezovica as one of the most known in the region. Today this asset is retained by the region of Prizren that includes the municipality of Dragash (where a new ski center is recently built). Gradually the region of Prizren is currently getting enriched with a winter tourism center, as an extra asset for developing tourism, economy, culture and social diversity.

The ski center is located in the village of Brod, under extremely favorable conditions provided by the nature. The initiatives of tourism development are completely private, including the investments, all serving to the clientele, which mainly come from the countries around like Albania.

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Environmental resources, climatic factors, and other eco-diversity factors are part of the special climate of this area. The area is known for healing many types of diseases, both chronic and acute ones.

The hotel that is placed on the edge of the Brod Mountains, the Arxhena hotel is characterized with its beautiful surroundings. Every day, the demands for winter tourism are increasing, especially for skiing, and even more when services and safety are at the level of spiritual tranquility that is the dominant factor in this touristic complex.

This touristic complex has a direct impact on economic development which leads to the increased number of employees in the hotel, the continuous work of the lifts (management and safety), the attendance of many local and international visitors and the progress of tourism development. Arxhena hotel together with the managed paths and the Ski Lift are a large touristic complex. Every segment of this complex shares' values and importance in encouraging tourists.

Photo 1: *Hotel Arxhena*



Arxhena hotel is placed at the front of the Brod Mountains, around the hotel is a stream which gives life and tranquility to the spiritual surroundings. The Arxhena hotel is 1500m above the sea level surrounded from all sides with high mountains. On the left side, in front of Arxhena Hotel there is a picturesque landscape that has both stones and rocks where one can often see wild goats. The right side of the hotel is also a powerful area with medicinal and aromatic plants stretching up to 2000 m above the sea level. In front of the hotel there is the guardian stone of the village of Brod that identifies this area as safer and appealing to the local and foreign visitors. The main architectural part of the hotel along with eco-diversive values is the ski-lifts (two of them), which is a must-see package of unsurpassed values to the people who appreciate the environment, especially winter sports.

### **Arxhena Hotel Brod**

Arxhena hotel is well known as the pride of the Dragash Mountains. It was built between 2008-2009, with initial facilities, restaurant and accompanying rooms, and guest beds. This hotel was the trigger for the community development. It is placed 16 km away from Dragash / Dragaš city, more concretely in the village of Brod. Arxhena hotel continuously has been improving the infrastructure inside and outside the building. It has 53 guest rooms each with one or two beds, 133 beds in total and 600 seats in restaurants. As for the number of employees, it varies from the seasons, i.e. in Winter 22 employees. The hotel within the Arxhena resort complex has 2 conference rooms, 4 restaurants, suites, saunas, standard rooms and sports grounds, all in the service of tourists. This resort complex also has a Walk or Hiking trail, which is used by many people who prefer going out in nature. Visitors are instructed before they depart; in special cases also they are accompanied if they require it. Arxhena Hotel and its visionary management keep creating opportunities for business development through tourism development, mainly during winter. The hotel is equipped with special permission from the respective institution where it has placed the ski trails and vehicles from the altitude level of 1500-2050m, at a distance of 1500m, for all the visitors.

Photo 2: *Ski-Lift in Brod-Arxhena*



Since 2018, there has been installed a Telepheric with increased capacity and creativity compared to the telepheric built long ago 2013. Telepheric 1 and 2, are parallel built and functionalized for visitors during the 12 months.



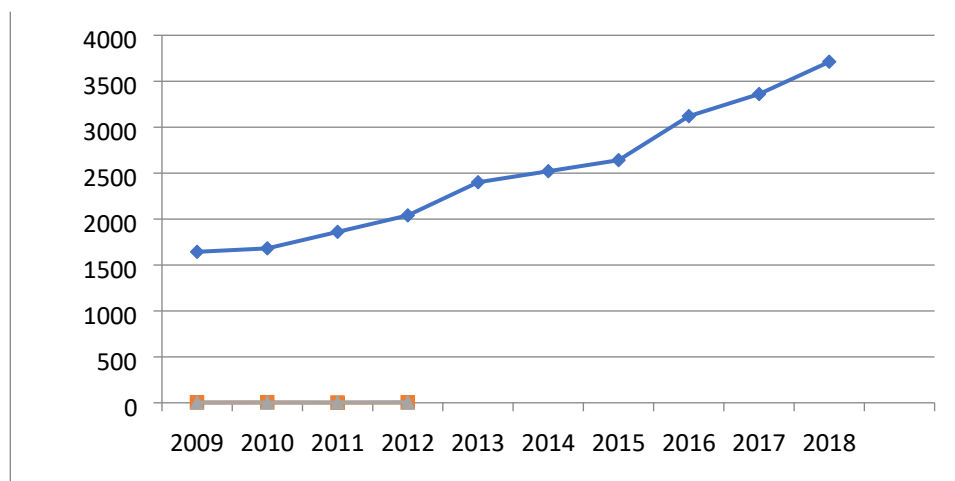
Photo 3: *The ski slopes of the Arxhena*



Table 1: *Night-stay tourists*

No	Years	Weeks	December	January	February	Annual tourism
1	2009	128	512	545	586	1.643
2	2010	140	560	563	577	1.700
3	2011	155	620	640	666	1.926
4	2012	170	680	684	698	2.062
5	2013	200	800	815	855	2.470
6	2014	210	840	843	889	2.572
7	2015	220	880	896	911	2.687
8	2016	260	1.040	1.077	1.112	3.229
9	2017	280	1.120	1.155	1.190	3.465
10	2018	300	1.200	1.256	1.255	3.711
	<b>In total</b>					<b>25.465</b>

In this table are presented of the number of tourists, who spent their holidays at the Arxhena hotel. According to the data provided by the database of the Arxhena hotel shows that the number of visitors is increasing, from 1.643 night-stay for the 3-month period in 2009, to 3711 night-stay for 3 months in 2018(December, January and February).



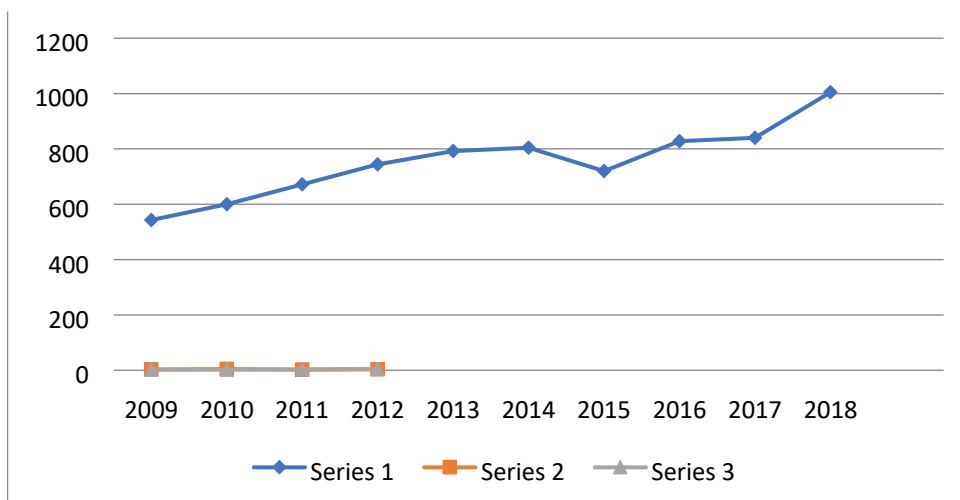
Graph. no 1. The graph shows the number of tourists in years during December, January, February (winter tourism). Arxhena hotel is creating a construction and a service as it can be seen in the graph above. It is also shown the big increase in number of tourists with over 100% between 2009 and 2018. For 9 years, the increase presented in annual percentage was about 13%.

Table 2: *Visitors that stay around a week*

No	Years	Weeks	December	January	February	Annual tourism
1	2009	45	180	189	174	543
2	2010	50	200	220	205	625
3	2011	56	224	231	214	670
4	2012	62	248	267	245	720
5	2013	66	264	293	235	792
6	2014	67	268	310	255	833
7	2015	60	240	325	282	797
8	2016	69	276	333	290	899
9	2017	70	283	345	300	928
10	2018	80	320	355	330	1.005
	<b>In total</b>					<b>7.812</b>

In the table above are presented the numerical data in a period of a week, the higher results are mainly showed on weekends. The number is relatively lower compared to the tourists who decide to stay in the hotel, however, there are still enough visitors. Daily tourists use hotel offers, gastronomy and other services outside the hotel rooms. Daily tourists prefer using the ski slopes and the telepheric, two distinctive components that are missing in many centers. The facts show that the number of visitors in daily basis is also growing, from 2009 to 543 in 3 months, reaching 1,005 in 2018. The results show that this growth was driven by improved conditions such as services-restaurants, telepherics, and opportunities for sports activities, such as open sports days.



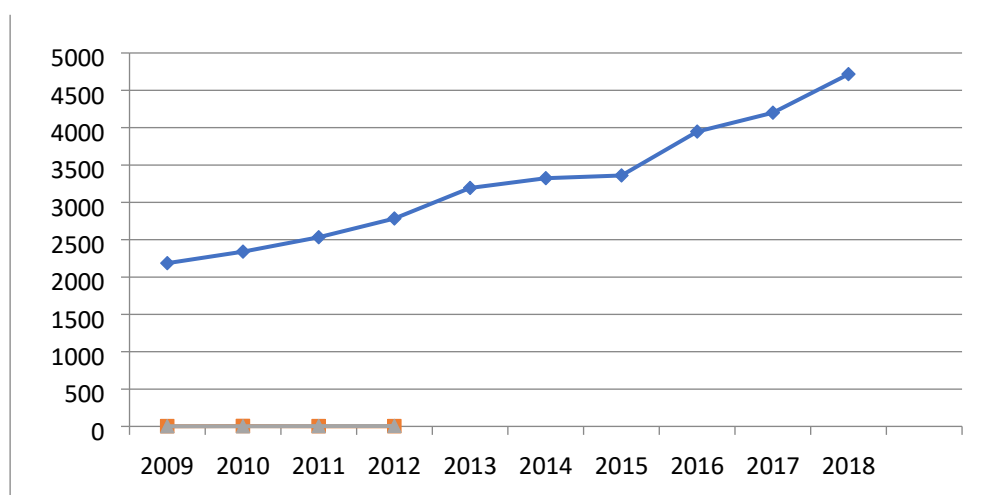


Graph no. 2. In this graph is shown the number of tourists or guests on daily basis, or what they call an active day-time, during the Winter Season (December / January / February). Precisely the distinctive elements of Arxhena hotel sports and recreational facilities, which year after year attract local tourists and other countries, impact the general number of visitors that it can be seen in Graphs from 2009 to 2018. Except for 2015 stagnation or decrease of tourist arrivals, we can generally conclude that within 9 years for 90% is the increase of the number of daily visitors or when turned in percentages is increased for 10% every year.

Table 3: *Round-trip weekly / 3 Months*

No	Years	Weeks	December	January	February	Annual tourism
1	2009	173	692	734	760	2.186
2	2010	190	780	783	782	2.345
3	2011	211	844	871	880	2.595
4	2012	232	928	951	943	2.822
5	2013	266	1064	1108	1.090	3.262
6	2014	277	1108	1153	1.144	3.405
7	2015	280	1120	1.221	1.193	3.534
8	2016	329	1316	1.410	1.402	4.128
9	2017	350	1400	1.500	1.490	4.390
10	2018	380	1520	1.611	1.585	4.716
	<b>In total</b>					<b>33.383</b>

In this table are presented the summary results of how much the tourists stay at the Arxhena hotel. According to the statistical data, it can be claimed that Arxhena hotel has a reasonable increase in the acceptance and accommodation of tourists, based on their requirements. The weekly and monthly increase, the 9-year surveys from 2009 to 2018, show an increase of 7-8% by 2016, while from 2016-2018 this growth is more evident after the installation of the telepheric, which percentage on a monthly basis, exceeds 12-15%. While in the total percentage from 2009 to 2018 is approximately 115%. From this table, it can be concluded that sustainable business development is achieved with sustainable, visionary and fruitful management both for the owner as well as for the employees, the community and the country itself.



Graph no. 3, It shows the total number of tourists daily, during the Winter period (December, January, February), based on the data given by the Arxhena hotel. As it is shown in graphs, this number is increasing continuously. The growth in number of tourists started from 2015. According to the data given by this hotel, the increase from 2009 was 2,186 visitors, in 2018 this number reaches 4,716, which is more than double.

### **Tourism as a multidimensional development phenomenon**

Dragash and the 18 villages that this area includes are of Gora municipality, exceptionally in some villages where the dominant population is Albanian, as in Krushevë and Restelicë. All of these villagers, with an emphasis on Brod village and the surrounding villages, are visitors of the village of Brod, which is also the most strategic point in the whole Dragash / Dragaš municipality. According to many information provided by the respondents of this village, only during the summer season the number of tourists exceeds for several times the number of residents or citizens residing in this village due to climatic conditions and geographical position as well as existing traditional restaurants, leaded by the Arxhena hotel. Tourists are mostly visitors that have emigrated to western countries and who organize a family gathering during the Summer season.

They usually are curious for traditional clothing exhibitions and organic dishes, therefore, they represent a good tourism model in the community. All of these tourists are recognized as summer vacation tourists driven by family ties and the eco-diversity environments surrounding this hotel. An objective of our scientific work is the Winter Tourism research that is quite different from that of Summer. There are mainly involved tourists outside of the region, very demanding type of tourism, exclusively developed after the strategic investments with additional design of hotel facility and easy access to more deep areas. Winter tourism development trends, predominantly ski-sports fans, show the touch of winter sports feelings, the use of environmental resources, the adaptation and economic, social, and cultural development. Arxhena is creating good opportunities for alternative tourism development from those in these areas, with the possibility of extending the capacities both in the hotel sector and in the Olympic-like ski paths.

### **Improvement of hotel services**

The undeniable fact is the private investment in accommodation, hygienic conditions, quality traditional food, convenient inventory, security, internet access, but also the opportunity to develop sports recreational activities (both inside or outside the hotel facility). Arxhena hotel has already filled the tourist agenda, perhaps even this agenda may be more attractive depending on the visitors' requests, especially when it comes to recreational tourism, with massive touristic potential. Activities do not pause there because walking paths in higher areas, then organizing competitions, camping and various open-air games are the creative side of the hotel. Arxhena hotel, in cooperation with the clientele organizes free transport for all those who stay for 7 days at the hotel.

### **Trends in tourism development over the years**

According to the Tables (1,2,3), we can point out that the trends of tourism development in the Arctic Complex are on a progressive growth, especially in Winter Tourism or winter sports. These trends of visitors' development in these high areas are a constant stimulation of this business to make synchronized investments, depending on the demands of tourists. Investments are of a structural nature, thus increasing the number of employees every year means increasing domestic welfare. From this hotel benefits also the community that lives here, whether directly with the sale of organic products from buffers who have over 10,000 sheep (dairy products), 250 cows (also milk products and "Sharri" cheese), over 300 beehives (organic honey), then over 200 species of medicinal and aromatic plants present to the impressive swords of the Brod Mountains. This area is increasingly open to visitors, who find themselves experiencing the miracle, both environmentally and professionally. They are taken away by the spiritual calmness that this touristic complex offers.

## Conclusion

This research paper aims to reveal the Brod mountains' resources, therefore it is mostly concentrated in the winter season capacities, the main hotel of this area, development and operation on the ski slopes that are, built and functionalized by the management of the hotel complex Arxhena. This hotel (the current capacity and the professional services are included in this paper) is the best example of showing how the opportunities of tourism development can be doubled. The basis of this research is Winter Tourism, the conditions it offers and the trends of economic, social and cultural development. Arxhena Hotel has sufficient capacity for the current demands, however, by taking into consideration that this tourism development flow is continuously increasing compared to 2009 it can be foreseen that the capacity of the hotel will not be sufficient. This suggests that the capacity of the hotel should be increased due to the tourists' demands. The Telepheric construction in 2018 with equivalent services is an indication that investors are decided and persistent in accomplishing their goal- the Balkan Winter Ski Resort Center. Elements that should be highlighted are track scoutings on the track, assistance to all visitors who need skiing tips and help to the get in and get off of the telepheric are some of the professional services that are offered to the visitors. An element to be pointed out is that the health services in case of emergency are always ready for action in order to be serving at any unpleasant event that may occur during skiing. Arxhena Hotel offers highly repairable services according to the visitors' demands. The staff is willing to offer respect and appreciation of the touristic agenda for all visitors indiscriminately. Those who visit the Arxhena hotel will not hesitate next time just as the tourists who came there claimed.

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