



PROCEEDINGS BOOK

of the International scientific and
practical conference

CURRENT TRENDS AND PROSPECTS
OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

03.09.2021

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of the International scientific and practical conference
CURRENT TRENDS AND PROSPECTS OF
INTERNATIONAL TOURISM



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PREFACE

Dear participants,

We proudly present the Proceedings Book of the International Scientific and Practical Conference “CURRENT TRENDS AND PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM” that was held online on 3th of September 2021.

The aim of the Conference was to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers, scholars and practitioners in the field of tourism from different countries (universities, companies, government bodies and NGO’s). Participants of the Conference have the opportunities to present their latest research results, exchange and share their experiences, discuss ideas, current issues and future development in all areas of tourism.

We would like to THANKS all the participants in the Conference and the Organizational Board for successfully held conference. Topics connected to different aspects of tourism, consider his multidisciplinary nature are presented in this Proceedings Book (15 papers, 31 different authors from five countries). Across the different contributions the Conference Proceeding Book covers a wide range of topics related to tourism and divided in three Chapters.

The first Chapter - **Accessibility, environmental and security aspects of tourism**, contains topics connected to: Influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic on traffic of tourists in Skopje; Accessible tourism: examples and good practices in selected countries from Europe; Accessible museums, Energy efficiency in hotels – case study hotel “Manastir Berovo”; Review and need for risk management in tourism.

Second Chapter - **Gastronomy and tourism**, is based on following topics: Gastronomic Animation in tourism: the case of Macedonian national evening; Applicable guidelines for the existing rules for labeling food products; Promotion of restaurants by branding the chef and the impact on the tourist offer of the city of Tetovo; Demand as a factor for the development of gastronomic supply in hospitality facilities; and Potentials for the development of gastronomic tourism in Vojvodina from the view of the ethnic minority groups.

Third Chapter - **Cultural, social and economic aspects of tourism**, focuses on topics connected to: Tourism as a factor for economic development in Kosovo: the case of Pec Municipality; Motivations for tourists to choose a tourist destination; Cultural tourism: opportunities for regional tourism product development the case of roman Militum Castra "Dimum"; The fortresses in North Macedonia as a cultural tourist offer; and Cultural and historical heritage on Skopska Crna Gora mountain as a base for tourism development.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the various processes involved in the making of this Conference Proceedings book.

Editorial Board

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THE FORTRESSES IN NORTH MACEDONIA AS A CULTURAL TOURIST OFFER

Abstract

The cultural potential of the destination can be measured by the quality and the cultural and natural goods it possesses. In order for these goods to be placed on the market and to meet the expectations of the tourists, it is necessary to create cultural attractions, which will make up the cultural tourist product along with the other environmental factors. The fortresses in North Macedonia are representative of the comprehensive cultural heritage, and as such are the subject of this research paper. The purpose of this paper is determining the authenticity, recognisability, landscaping and services, i.e. the positive and negative impressions of visiting the fortresses through surveying the tourists on their opinion. This makes a realistic image that will help create quality and authentic cultural tourist product that will meet the requirements and needs of the end users.

Keywords: *fortresses, cultural heritage, cultural product*

INTRODUCTION

The cultural potential of a destination is measured by the quality of the cultural goods it possesses, however in order for these goods to be placed on the market and to meet the expectations of the tourists, it is necessary to create cultural attractions, which will make up the cultural tourist product along with the other environmental factors. The cultural attractions are cultural resources, which attract tourists with their attributes and are the basis for the development of tourism in the destination.⁴ On the other hand, a cultural tourist

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⁴ Slunjski, R. (2020). Touristic and geographic approach to the valorization of cultural heritage, Department of geography, Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics of Zagreb

product is a sum of specific material and immaterial values, as well as the experiences of the visitors, which are a result of a well-crafted presentation and valorization of the cultural resources of a particular tourist destination. All the features that the general tourist product has, apply to the cultural product as well, which means when integrating it, the attractiveness and the authenticity of the product, the residence conditions of the destination and other services that the visitors can consume and the accessibility of the product should be taken into account.

The cultural heritage as a resource for developing of the tourism is much more than an accumulation of material and immaterial cultural goods, which require protection and preserving.⁵ Following the tourism trends and directions dictated by the demand, it is necessary to create an attractive cultural product as a combination of cultural heritage with different characteristics, activities of the management of cultural goods and the tourism industry. Only such a product can spur the development of tourism and the economy in the destination and contribute to sustainable development. The holders of the tourism policy in the destination decide what combination of cultural attractions will be placed on the market, who it will be intended for and how it will be placed. The new perspectives in creation of cultural attractions are related to:⁶ space i.e. concentration of the elements of the cultural heritage and grouping, joining the creative activities in one place, area or region; assessment of the capacity of cultural activities that can cause economic and socio-cultural changes; linking cultural resources with the social capital and their use as a weapon for social integration, opportunity for business development and sustainable development.

Cultural attractions by themselves can be a product that will be placed on the tourism market, which primarily depends on the level of autochthonousness and attractiveness, but they can also be combined to create complex cultural attractions such as cultural landscapes, cultural complexes and cultural routes.⁷ Either way, the cultural attraction will be a successful cultural tourist product only if it has the quality and attractiveness sufficient to attract tourists, at disposal as well as if it's managed at a level that will bring economic benefit and protection of the cultural heritage.

The criteria for creating a successful cultural tourist product are based on an assessment of the cultural resource, which will determine: the tourism potential, the broader context of the cultural resource, issues related to affiliation and ownership, and stakeholder issues:⁸ assessment of tourism potential, which includes market potential and robustness of the cultural resource; broader context of cultural attraction: legal and political context, nature of the cultural resource as cultural heritage, tourist attractiveness of the resource, its market position and the influence of the local community, understanding of the cultural good in its environment; issues related to property, place and cultural space: material cultural resources, immaterial cultural heritage, current and potential uses and beneficiaries; Stakeholder issues and consultation: Stakeholder identification and consultation and people, skills and funding.

⁵ Petković, S. (2019). Menadžment kulturnih resursa u turizmu, Univerzitet Singidumun, Beograd

⁶ Richards, G. (2014). Tourism trends: The convergence of culture and tourism

⁷ Richards, G. (2011). Tourism trends: Tourism, culture and cultural routes, at https://www.academia.edu/1473475/Tourism_trends_Tourism_culture_and_cultural_routes

⁸ McKercher, B., du Cros, H. (2002). Cultural tourism, The Partnership between Tourism and Heritage Management. Haworth Hospitality Press: New York, презентовано од Petković, S. (2019). Menadžment kulturnih resursa u turizmu, Univerzitet Singidumun, Beograd

The modification of cultural resources in the function of tourism has several challenges, especially those related to the provision of services, but also those related to the specific requirements, such as creating a sense of the place and ensuring authenticity.⁹ Accepting this challenge is a hard and painstaking work of the cultural resource management in its efforts to create a product that will meet the needs of consumers emotionally and provide them with an unforgettable experience.

If we talk about the fortresses as an integrated tourist product, then it should be considered within the narrower and broader tourist destination. In doing so it can be concluded that the successful placement will depend on its partial characteristics, as well as many other elements in the destination and the position it has on the tourism map of the world. All regions of North Macedonia have satisfactory tourist and road infrastructure, as well as tremendous natural and cultural potential. The only thing left is creating an authentic and quality content that will attract potential tourists. Over tens of thousands of years, many civilizations and cultures have changed, leaving behind material traces across the territory of this land, and those who set foot on this soil wanted to conquer everything that their ancestors had and leave behind traces of their own existence. This results with the fact that every fortress or locality hides many cultural layers, the oldest of which are rooted back in the prehistoric times. The ancient cities exemplify an inexhaustible source of evidence about the life of the people throughout the centuries, and the fact that they were the highest attainment of life in those times. They housed the state civil and military administration and were synonymous with the state itself.¹⁰ In addition to such cities, there were smaller fortress cities or citadels called guards, border fortresses, shelters etc.

Common to all of them is that they had been protected by walls or ramparts, which in present day are the most visible on the ground. It should also be mentioned that the term “city” is mentioned in the Slavic documents, while in Greek and Latin documents are mentioned the terms “civitas” which the most significant cities were called by, “castrum” which meant smaller and not so significant city and “castellum” which means a military stronghold, citadel, fortress etc. Archaeological data show that in the 5th and 6th centuries some nuances were observed, which differ from the work of previous centuries. The late antique period marks the transformation of the early antique city into the late antique castron. They were large military fortresses, the seat of military, civilian, and ecclesiastical authority.¹¹ The castrons (bishop’s seat) and the castels (military camps built along main roads) have a few things in common, above all, they are fortifications and with the defense walls, gates and towers they enclose the city area, which houses the military, ecclesiastical and civilian authority.

The late antique fortification masonry was of high quality, which is why a large number of fortifications are preserved until this day. This allows for the late antique fortification architecture, which includes the defense walls, towers and gates to be thoroughly tracked and researched.¹² Because of the solid construction, plenty of them were well preserved throughout the middle ages, even today. The solid construction of the fortresses from the 6th century contributed in not needing to build new fortifications for the next 5 or 6 centuries. Therefore, the ancient fortresses were used and eventually remodeled and adapted for new

⁹ Petković, S. (2019). Menadžment kulturnih resursa u turizmu, Univerzitet Singidumun, Beograd

¹⁰ Mikulcic, I. (1996). Средновековни градови и тврдини во Македонија (Medieval towns and fortresses in Macedonia) Academy of Sciences and Arts of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje

¹¹ Nacev, T. (2019). Античка архитектура (Ancient architecture), Goce Delchev University of Shtip

¹² Ibid.

military crews or guards until the 12th and the 13th century. Mikulcic provided evidence for this claim in his research where he documented around 70 late antique fortresses on which medieval movable finds were discovered, but no medieval masonry interventions.¹² This is the main proof that the fortresses were in good condition and that with minor repairs they were prepared for new needs. The seals with which the moats were closed were undoubtedly made with mortar and for that reason they quickly disintegrated and left no traces until today.

For the requirements of this paper, the research was conducted for 8 fortresses - representatives of each statistical region in this country. In fact in accordance with the Law on Regional Development in the Republic of North Macedonia,¹³ eight statistical regions have been determined: Vardar, Eastern, Southwestern, Southeastern, Pelagonia, Polog, Northeastern and Skopje. The following fortresses are subject of this research: Skopje Statistical Region – Skopje Fortress; Eastern Statistical Region – Vinica Fortress; Southeastern Statistical Region - Czar's Towers; Pelagonia Statistical Region - Marko's Towers; Southwestern Statistical Region - Samuel's Fortress; Polog Statistical Region – Tetovo Fortress; Vardar Statistical Region – Prosek Fortress; Northeastern Statistical Region – Gradishte Fortress (village of Pchinja). In addition, there are a number of archeological sites on the territory of our country in the form of fortresses or castrons that should be the subject of interest. Due to the volume of the material, several more fortresses from different regions are briefly explained below, which deserve to be valorized and positioned on the cultural tourist map in some future research papers. The fortresses were selected with a subjective assessment of the authors, which does not mean that the rest of the fortresses located on the Macedonian soil are less culturally and touristically valuable. They also deserve attention and need to be the subject to future research of course. This will undoubtedly contribute to the formation of a complete picture about the fortresses as a cultural tourist product of the Republic of North Macedonia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The visitors of the 8 fortresses: Skopje Fortress; Vinica Fortress; Czar's Towers; Marko's Towers; Samuel's Fortress; Tetovo Fortress; Prosek Fortress; Gradishte Fortress, were surveyed for this paper. The visitor survey was electronically conducted in November and December 2020 and January 2021. A survey questionnaire consisting of 18 questions intends to understand their opinion and views, as final consumers of the tourism product. Given the current situation, we are in and the crisis caused by the Covid 19 virus, only domestic tourists participate in the survey. The opinion of foreign tourists is analyzed according to surveys from one of the most influential tourism web portals - TripAdvisor conducted in recent years.

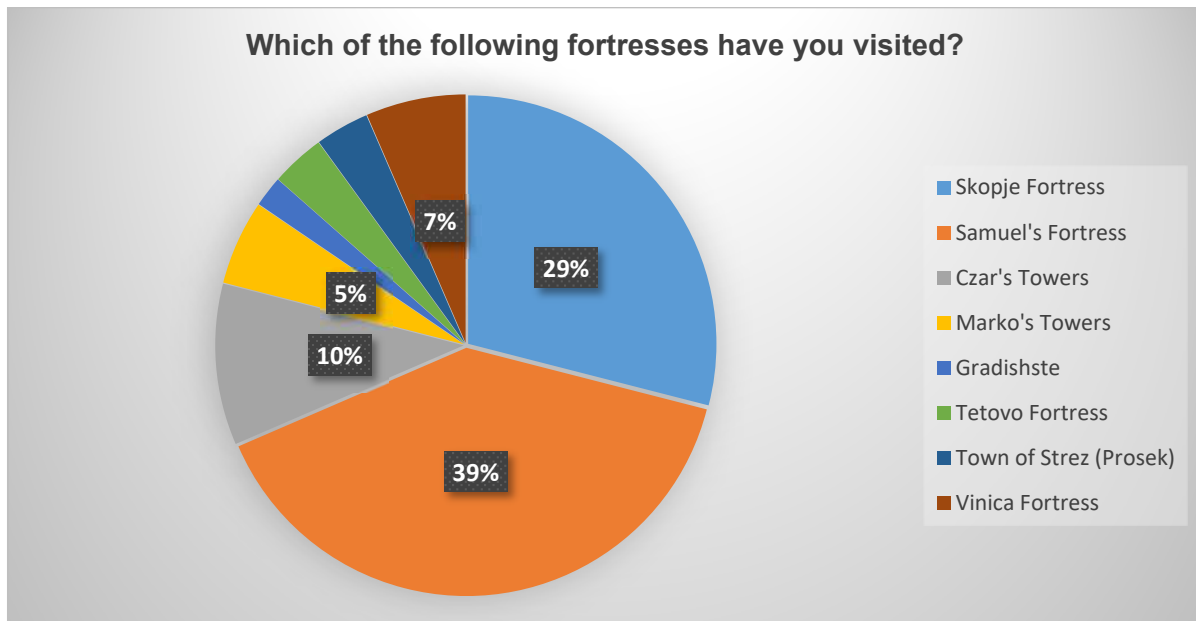
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey questionnaire consists of 18 questions. The first three refer to gender, age, education, 14 of which are closed questions to which the respondent has the ability to pick one out of the suggested answers and answer 1 open type question where he/she can express his/her opinion on the subject of research. 203 respondents fully answered the questionnaire,

¹³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no.119, yr. LXV, 2009, <http://cfcd.finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Uredba-izmeni-119-2009.pdf>, (accessed 10.10.2020)

of which 124 were female and 79 male. 95 of the respondents were aged 30-40, 46 were aged 40-50, 34 were aged 50-60 and 28 were above 60. In regard to education, 137 had higher education, 64 had secondary education and only 2 had primary education. When asked, which of the following fortresses have you visited, the inquiry showed that out of 203 respondents on total, 39% visited Samuel's Fortress, 29% visited the Skopje Fortress, 10% visited the Czar's Towers, 7% visited the Vinica Fortress, 5% visited the Marko's Towers, 4% visited the Tetovo Fortress and Town of Strez (Prosek) and 2% visited Gradishste. (Chart 1)

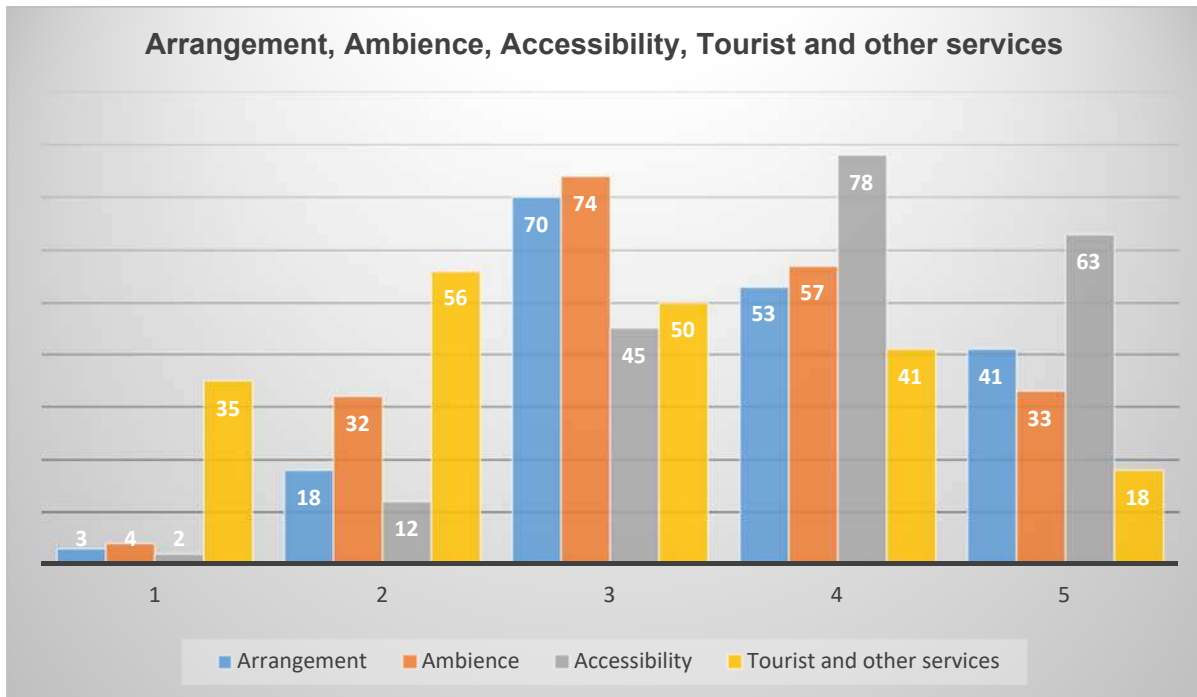
Chart 1. Number of visitors



The following 4 questions of the survey refer to the arrangement, ambience and the accessibility of the fortress visited by the respondents as well as the tourist and other services that the site has to offer. In fact, the respondents answer by giving a grade from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Considering the fact that majority of the respondent (70%) answered that they visited the Skopje Fortress and Samuel's Fortress, the majority of the answers to the questions above refer to these fortresses. (Chart 2)

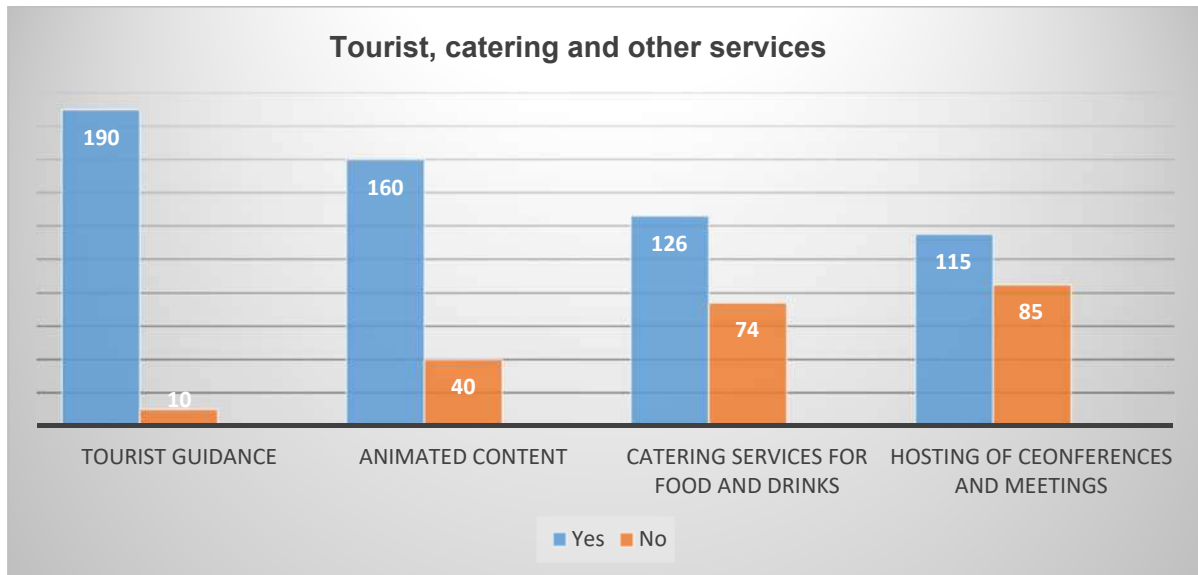
Analysis regarding the question about the arrangement of the fortresses show that majority of the respondents – 35% rated it with a score of 3; and the least amount of respondents – 1.5% rated it with a score of 1; 26.5% rated it with a score of 4; and 20,5% rated it with a score of 5. In regards to the question about the ambience of the fortress they visited, similarly to the previous question, 37% of the respondents rated it with a score of 3; 28.5% of them rated it with a score of 4; and only 2% gave negative score. Regarding the accessibility of the fortress, majority of the respondents 70.5% rated it with a scores of 4 and 5; 22.5% think that the accessibility deserves a score of 3 and only 1% gave a negative score.

Chart 2. Arrangement, ambience, accessibility, tourist, and other services of the fortresses



With respect to the question about grading the tourist and other services that the visitors are provided with on site, only 9% of the respondents gave excellent score, 20.5% rated it with a score of 4 and the majority of the respondents – 53% gave a score of 2 and 3. Only 17.5% of the respondents gave a negative score. The analysis for the individual answers show that: regarding the arrangement, the Skopje Fortress, Samuel’s Fortress and Marko’s Towers received high scores (4 and 5) ; Czar’s Towers and Vinica Fortress received a score of 3 and The Town of Strez (Prosek), Tetovo Fortress and Gradishte received low scores. In terms of the ambience, the grades that the fortresses receive are different due to a subjective fact i.e. the experience of the visitors. The accessibility of the fortresses is rated as good except for The Town of Strez (Prosek) and Gradishte where the access is limited to mountain trails. When it comes to the tourist and other services, the visitors generally gave low scores for all of the fortresses except for the Samuel’s Fortress and Skopje Fortress where the visitors had a slightly higher opinion.

The question whether the fortress should provide a tour guide, majority of the respondents – 95% said yes and the other 5% said no. High percentage of positive answers - 79.7% gave to the question related to the need to introduce animated content in the fortresses. Regarding the question whether the fortresses should have the ability to host conferences and meetings the opinions were divided, 57.3% gave a negative answer and 42.7% gave a positive answer. When asked about the possibility of catering services for food and drinks in the fortresses, 63% of the respondents had a positive and 37% had a negative opinion. (Chart 3)

Chart 3. Tourist, catering and other services in the fortresses

When asked if a souvenir shop is a necessity in the fortresses, 89.2% answered affirmative. Questions related to the need for an information center, information boards, interactive boards, etc., as well as the question: Should there be printed promotional material for the fortress, received a high percentage of positive answers. 99% of the respondents gave a positive answer on the first question and 94.5% on the second question. (Chart 4)

The question: Do you think that the fortresses in Macedonia should be a part of the tourist agencies' tourist offer, all of the respondents answered affirmative, and according to 75.5% of them the fortresses are insufficiently included in the cultural tourist offer. 14.7% think that the fortresses are not included in the tourist offer at all and 9.8% think that their inclusion in the tourist offer is insufficient. (Chart 5)

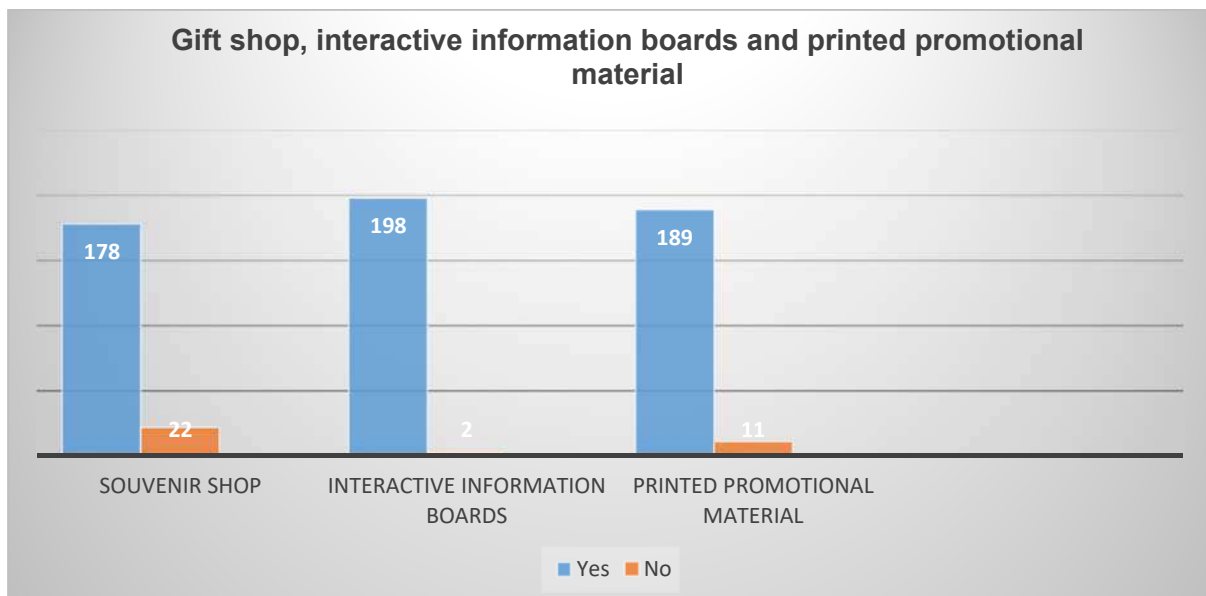
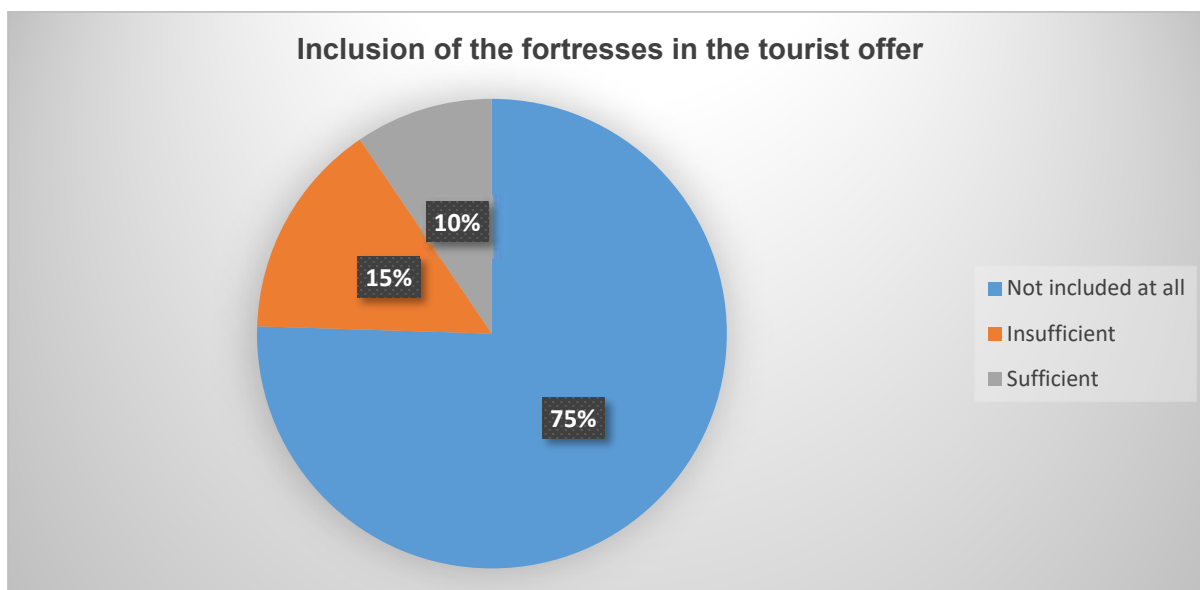
Chart 4. Souvenir shop, interactive, information boards, and printed promotional material of the fortresses

Chart 5. Inclusion of the fortresses in the tourist offer



The respondent had the opportunity to express their opinion on the open question about the additional tourist content to be organized at the fortresses. 70 respondents or 35% took the opportunity and gave a variety of answers that can be categorized in several categories: cultural and other events, 3D presentations of historical events, museum exhibitions of movable heritage of the fortress, lectures, forums and educational and creative workshops etc. Respondents also list various animated content: creating historical events, workshops with old crafts, workshops for children, major promotional activities, days dedicated to the fortress, informative mobile applications about the fortress, etc.

As stated before, due to the current situation caused by the Covid-19 virus pandemic, the opinion about the fortresses in Republic of North Macedonia were taken from one of the most influential tourism and travel web portals – TripAdvisor.¹⁴ These surveys were conducted in recent years. The visitors express their opinion and experience from the visit on the website itself. On the website, Skopje Fortress, Marko’s Towers and Samuel’s Fortress are listed as places to visit if travelling to Macedonia, so the analysis will take into account only these cultural and historical sights.

Skopje Fortress. 650 foreign tourists who visited the fortress in the period of 2013 to 2019 left their review on the website. Of these 112 rated it with 5; 215 rated it with 4; 232 rated it with 3; 75 rated it with 2 and 16 rated it with 1. The opinions of the visitors are positive regarding the location of the fortress, the accessibility, authenticity etc. And negative about the maintenance and other infrastructure (information boards, exhibition places, catering services, signposts, benches, trashcans etc.) the non-existence of any contents inside the fortress, tourist guidance, additional activities, etc. The average grade is 3.5.

Samuel’s Fortress. 779 foreign tourists who visited the fortress in the period of 2013 to 2019 left their review on the website. Of these 275 rated it with 5; 305 rated it with 4; 178 rated it with 3; 17 rated it with 2 and 1 rated it with 1. The positive comments of the tourists are about

¹⁴ https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g295109-Activities-a_allAttractions.true-Republic_of_North_Macedonia.html, (accessed 09.02.2021)

the location of the fortress, the accessibility, authenticity, overall ambience, the inclusion in other natural and cultural resources and the environment etc. whereas the negative are about the insufficient tourist and other infrastructure (information boards, exhibition places, catering services, signposts, benches, trashcans etc.) the non-existence of any contents inside the fortress, tourist guidance, additional activities, etc. The average grade is 4.

Marko's Towers. 38 foreign tourists who visited the fortress in the period of 2013 to 2019 left their review on the website. Of these 26 rated it with 5; 10 rated it with 4; 3 rated it with 3; 2 rated it with 2. Majority of the visitors rated the fortress very good and excellent – 95%. The positive comments of the visitors refer to the location of the fortress, the accessibility, authenticity, overall ambience etc. while the negative comments are about the insufficient tourist and other infrastructure (information boards, exhibition places, catering services, signposts, benches, trashcans etc.) the non-existence of any contents inside the fortress, tourist guidance, additional activities, etc. The average grade is 4.6.

CONCLUSION

Republic of North Macedonia has a rich cultural heritage at disposal that can be a foundation for development of cultural tourism whose positive effects relate to attracting demand with greater purchasing power and increasing of the consumption, extending the tourist season, preserving the cultural values and identity, revitalization of urban areas, additional income for cultural institutions, additional employment, improvement of the destination's image by enriching the tourist offer and improving the quality of life of the local population of course. In doing so, care should be taken for optimal exploitation of cultural resources, so as not to damage them and reduce their attractiveness, which will cause a decline in demand. Over tens of thousands of years, many civilizations and cultures have changed, leaving behind material traces across the Macedonian territory. This results with the fact that every fortress or locality hides many cultural layers, the oldest of which are rooted back in the prehistoric times. From the survey conducted, it can be concluded that the fortresses in the country have authentic and attractive elements, but they are insufficiently included in the tourist offer. This is due to the insufficient maintenance, lack of tourist and other infrastructure, tourist services, additional content that will attract the attention of tourists and so on. This seems evidenced in the answers of the respondents according to which, in addition to tourist management and catering services it is necessary to organize cultural events and other events, 3D presentations of historical events, museum exhibits on movable heritage of the fortress, lectures, forums and educational and creative workshops etc. Respondents also list various animated content: creating historical events, workshops with old crafts, workshops for children, major promotional activities, days dedicated to the fortress, informative mobile applications about the fortress, etc. All these cultural, tourist, catering and other contents and services listed, can be found in the fortresses of the neighboring countries and beyond which are pointed out as good examples of successful tourist valorization.

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