

Original scientific paper

UDK: 005:796

659.4

Received: 11.10.2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2302095p>

Accepted: 20.11.2023

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INVESTIGATION OF THE ATTITUDES OF USERS OF SPORTS TOURISM ON MOUNTAIN GOČ

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Abstract: In this paper, the authors analyze and investigate the relevant facts of the organization and management of sports and recreational tourism in the Goč valley. Today's tourists expect a lot from tourist destinations. So today's tourists are ready to pay more. For this reason, the marketing role must be crucial for sports tourism. Mount Goč in the context of sports tourism explores the potential of Mount Goč as a destination for sports tourism. Goč mountain, located in Serbia, offers a variety of natural beauties and sports opportunities that attract lovers of active vacations. The paper analyzes the geographical location of the mountain and its accessibility, and highlights the proximity of major cities and roads as key advantages for the development of sports tourism based on the opinions of users. The mountain offers various terrains for sports activities, including hiking, cycling, skiing and snowboarding, as well as opportunities for adventure sports such as paragliding and mountain biking. Also, the paper explores the existing sports infrastructure on Goč, including tracks, sports fields and accommodation facilities. The importance of further infrastructure development for attracting sports enthusiasts and tourists is emphasized. Then the competition and demand for sports activities on Mount Goč are analyzed, including a comparison with other mountain destinations in the region. Marketing strategies and promotion of the mountain as a destination for sports tourism are also discussed. Based on all of the above, the paper concludes that Mount Goč has significant potential for the development of sports tourism, but that it is necessary to continuously invest in infrastructure and promotion in order to attract sports fans and tourists and stimulate the economic sustainability of tourism region through this type of tourism.

Keywords: Sports tourism, sports activities, Goč, Research and sustainable development.

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Introduction

Mount Goč is one of the lower mountains of Serbia, located near Vrnjačka Banja, and south of Zapadna Morava it belongs to the northern Kopaonić mountains. The territory of Mount Goč partly belongs to the municipality of Vrnjačka Banja and partly to the area of Kraljevo, from which it is 31 km away. In addition to being located near one of the most visited tourist destinations in Serbia, Vrnjačka Spa, the basis for the development of tourism on Mount Goč is the wealth of flora and fauna, climatic predispositions and hydrographic potential. The Goč mountain area is extremely rich in flora, aromatic and medicinal plants, as well as forest fruits. It is estimated that there are 650 plant species on Goča, of which over 200 medicinal, aromatic and other useful species (Brčeski, Čikara, Maksimović, 2010, p. 23).

Goč is recognizable for its forests, pastures, meadows, and a significantly smaller area is under arable land and gardens and orchards, while viticulture is neglected. The rich flora is excellent for bee grazing, so forest, meadow and acacia honey are mostly produced. An important branch of agriculture on Goč is animal husbandry. Sheep, cattle, poultry and some residents raise pigs. But, due to the influence and development of new technologies, most of the young people have left this area, so animal husbandry has seen a significant decline. The foothills of Mount Goč were recognizable by their herds of sheep, and today there are fewer herds and shepherds. Also, in the past almost every household had one horse, while today only some households use a horse to bring firewood (Kovačević, 2010).

On Mount Goč there are sources of streams and rivers that find their way to Zapadna Morava and to the north and Rasina to the south. It should also be pointed out that there is also an artificial reservoir Selište, which was built on the river Zagrža, which covers an area of about 8ha (Rsovac, 2008, p. 82). On Goča we can find two hunting grounds, Vrnjačka Reka" (13,775 ha) and "Beli Izvor" (8,768 ha). So this mountain has natural resources for the further development of tourism rather than anthropogenic ones. It should also be noted that there are a couple of inconspicuous buildings that can be important for the development of religious tourism. These are: the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church of St. John, which is special because it belongs to the type of smallest churches and log cabins in Serbia (Borović Dimić, 2008, pp. 524-525). The development of rural tourism is extremely important for the preservation of traditional values. Old crafts are recognizable in this area.

Crocheting is still practiced by the residents living in these areas, and other crafts are slowly disappearing. The rolling mills were located in mountain and sub-mountain settlements on the slopes of Goča. Today, only two rolling mills work during the

season (August-December). Opanak became a symbol of Vrnjačka Banja thanks to the "Opanak" craft shop for the production of opanak, where the largest opanak in the world was made. There is only one shop in the Goča foothills, in the village of Vraneši ("Kurjak"), which sells furs and hunting trophies (Kovačević, 2010).

Tourism on Goča is not sufficiently developed due to inadequate accommodation facilities and poor marketing strategy. The accommodation offer consists mainly of resorts: "Beli Izvor", "Cvetna dolina", "Dobre Vode", "Stanišinci", "Lovački dom" and the tourist resort "Goč-Gvozdac". However, Mount Goč is characterized by settlements of the broken type. The largest number can be seen in cottages. The problem is reflected in the fact that these cottages are being built without adequate permits, thus causing communal problems. Cottages and mountain houses, in addition to rural households, can be used for the development of rural tourism.

The following forms of tourism have been developed on Goč (Milićević and Podovac, 2012, p. 79):

- sports-recreational;

- youth/student;
- winter;
- excursion tourism.

Goč is an ideal place for an active vacation and for the preparation of athletes. The facility "Beli Izvor", which has sports fields for basketball, handball, volleyball, football and tennis, is suitable for these purposes. Winter tourism is developed thanks to the "Goč" ski resort, which has a cable car, the horizontal length of which is 470 m, which is the length of the two ski slopes. Excursion trails on Goč cover a large area of Goč. In one part of this zone, there are well-maintained trails with a couple of restaurants, five excursion points and four viewpoints. The points serve to accommodate tourists in nature and have a dining area. During the summer, you can buy homemade cheese, cream, eggs, vegetables and fruits, etc. Magnificent views of Župa, Kopaonik and Željin, Zapadna Morava and the Gledić mountains can be seen from the viewpoints (Ruđinčanin, 2008, p. 326).

The term and significance of sustainable development of sports tourism

Sports tourism, active vacation, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, trends in tourism, these are all terms that are increasingly used in the tourist world. In the literature, we can come across different definitions of sports tourism. Thus, in the period from 1993 to 2014, it was defined more than thirty times (Sobry, et al., 2016). The authors (Bartoluci et al., 2016) point out that sports tourism is a specific form of tourism in which sport is the main motive for traveling and staying in certain

destinations. In addition to Bartolucci, we should also mention Gibson's approach, which distinguishes "three domains of sports tourism: active sports tourism, which refers to travel with the purpose of playing sports, then there is event sports tourism, which refers to travel with the purpose of watching a sports event, and nostalgic sports tourism, which includes visits to sports museums, famous sports arenas and finally a cruise with a sports theme (Gibson, 1998) Sports tourists travel outside their place of permanent residence for more than 24 hours, but less than a year, mainly for: participating in physical activity, watching physical activity or visiting sports attractions (Diklić et al., 2023). Perhaps the simplest definition of a sports tourist is the one that states that "an individual who engages in sports on vacation" (Gibson, 1998).

In addition to the definitions of sports tourism, it should be pointed out that sports tourism distinguishes between hard and soft sports tourism. Hard sports tourism is a form of tourism that attracts a large number of visitors to a specific place to attend a specific sporting event such as Formula 1 racing or the World Cup (Singh et al., 2016). On the other hand, soft sports tourism represents all tourists who travel to participate in recreational activities such as hiking, skiing or even rafting (Singh et al., 2016). These soft tourism activities favor the sustainable development of sports tourism.

The terms sports tourism and tourist sport caused the most confusion. "The term tourism sport recognizes sport as a secondary and even incidental activity on the road, and in some literature it is explained as a tertiary attraction"(Sobry et al., 2016). In addition, Robinson points out that "sport tourism can be divided into two areas of focus: the difference between those who travel primarily for sport (sport tourism) and those in which sport appears as a secondary option (sport tourism)" (Robinson et al. 2004). . The urban way of life encourages people to do more and more sports and actively participate in sports activities. Likewise, playing sports improves people's health, strengthens immunity and helps fight against various diseases. Although people still perceive 3 S (sun, sea and sand) tourism, more and more people are looking for a more active vacation, destinations with various contents and opportunities to practice certain sports or even destinations that organize sports events. Sports help people to deal with everyday stress, busy lifestyles, noise, social and media pressures and similar life problems.

There are four groups of motivators that encourage tourists to take such trips (Bartoluci et al. 2016):

- physical motivators - directly related to the physical need to improve the body's physical condition by participating in sports activities,
- cultural motivators - refer to

tradition and heritage related to sports and famous athletes, • interpersonal motivators - refer to sports activities that greatly help socialization between people and • personal motivators – include visiting exclusive destinations to participate in sporting activities and events that reflect social status and prestige.

Sports tourism has three dimensions. The first dimension contains various activities. The second is the spatial dimension, which is determined based on whether sports tourism takes place outdoors or indoors. The third dimension is the temporal dimension in which sports tourism is defined based on the season or term in which it takes place. Sports tourism occurs in the following forms: • competitive sports tourism, • winter sports and recreational tourism i • summer sports and recreational tourism.

For competitive sports tourism, the main motive of travel is a certain sports event, regardless of whether they are active participating tourists or passive participants. On the other hand, sports-recreational tourism is divided into winter and summer, in which the main motive is active participation in sports activities, and tourists are always active participants in the activities. In winter sports and recreational tourism, tourists prefer skiing, snowboarding, team sports on snow and ice, and this form of tourism is most often associated with winter resorts and spa centers, as well as coastal destinations. If we are talking about summer sports - recreational tourism, we associate it with coastal destinations, rivers, lakes and mountains. Activities related to summer sports and recreational tourism are walking, running, water sports, tennis, horseback riding and hiking.

In order to make it easier to connect the concepts of sports tourism and trend, it is necessary to define the concept of trend. A trend is most often associated with a certain change in the phenomenon in the future, in this case, that phenomenon is tourism. "Trend indicates the direction of development of some phenomenon in time (in relation to the previous state) or in relation to some other phenomenon (in relation to something)" (Chep, 2020). Trends can indicate two changes, dynamic change and static change. There are several types of trends in tourism that are interrelated. They are the most represented according to the place of origin on the tourist market, namely the trends of tourist demand and the trends of tourist supply (Kroflin, 2021). Čavlek describes tourism demand trends as changes in people who participate or would like to participate in tourism movements. , and trends in tourism offer as changes in the market of suppliers of goods and services that are offered at certain prices to meet tourist needs (Čavlek, et al. 2011).

Hendija states that sport and sports tourism has become one of the newer qualitative trends in the tourist market (Hendija, 2016).

But, both in tourism in general and in sports tourism, there are trends that can be observed in a broader sense (tourism as a whole) and in a narrower sense (sports tourism). Some of the trends that concern tourism itself, and are also visible in sports tourism, are:

- climate changes
- demographic changes
- trips to destinations of preserved nature
- encouraging sustainable tourism
- technology development
- an offer for an active and healthy life.

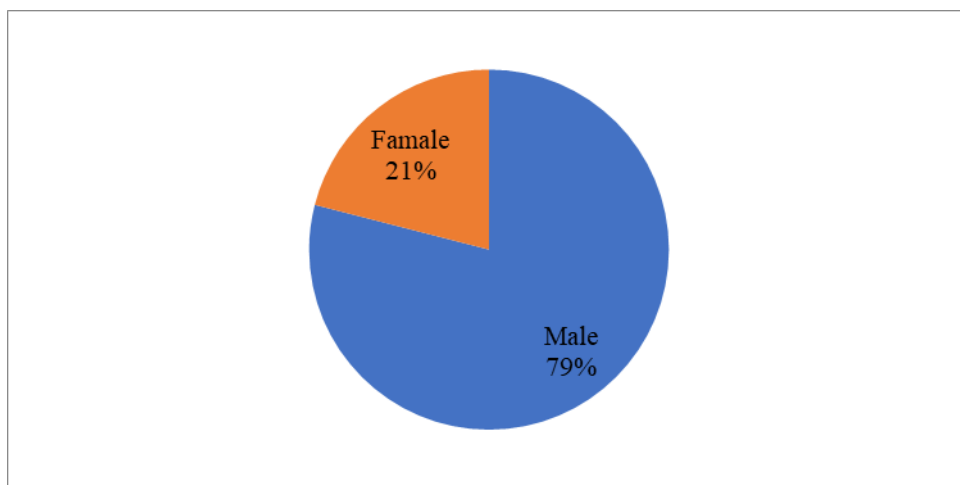
Demographic changes are also one of the more influential trends in sports tourism. There are more and more older travelers, but also young individuals and couples looking for an active vacation, activities related to sports and maintaining health. Travelers of the third age have more free time, have greater spending power and travel more often, and in addition, they are looking for destinations with sports content. We can also connect this with the trend of demand for destinations with preserved nature, where tourists decide to explore nature by walking and hiking, running, cycling, etc. The development of technology, on the one hand, helps the development of man and his way of life, but it also affects the health of each individual and the way in which that individual spends his daily life. Online platforms that can be accessed from the comfort of an armchair, as much as they help, they also spoil the person in a way that makes people move much less. With the advent of digital media and channels, all information is available in just a few steps. Destinations use such channels to promote their offer and new content. New trends in sports tourism were created by the development of technology such as virtual sports, more precisely e-sports (Ratković, Dašić, 2023). These include new sports such as bungee jumping, paragliding and skydiving. Likewise, sporting events, such as the Olympic Games or the World Cup, are becoming one of the main reasons for travel.

Research methodology and results

The total research sample consists of 105 respondents of both sexes, of different ages, marital and financial status. The research was conducted in the period from mid-June to the end of June 2023 in such a way that respondents were given a questionnaire in order to participate in the research with the explanation that the

research is completely anonymous and that the obtained data will be used for the purpose of creating a scientific paper. The subject of this paper is the research and examination of users' views on the development of sports tourism in the tourist destination of Goč. The aim of the paper is to present the most relevant indicators of development based on user opinions that would help the management of the tourist destination and the same results could be used for new research. Hypotheses in the research: Initial hypothesis: The tourist destination of Mount Goč, based on the opinions of tourists, believes that sports tourism can improve the economic situation in this tourist destination. Auxiliary hypotheses: H1 Tourists are of the opinion that Mount Goč has enough ski slopes. H2 Based on the obtained results, tourists believe that this tourist destination could improve its marketing.

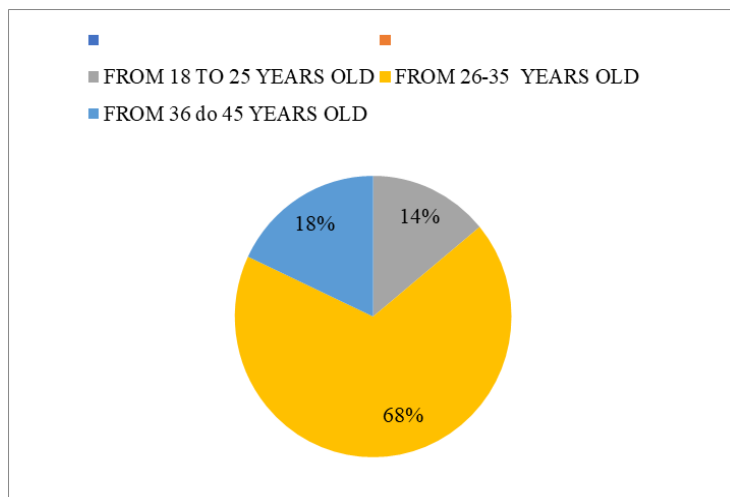
Graph 1: Structure of the sample in relation to the sex of the respondents



Source: Authors

When it comes to the gender of the respondents (Graph 1), male respondents participated the most (79%), and female respondents accounted for (21%). The sample is not approximately uniform according to the sex of the respondents.

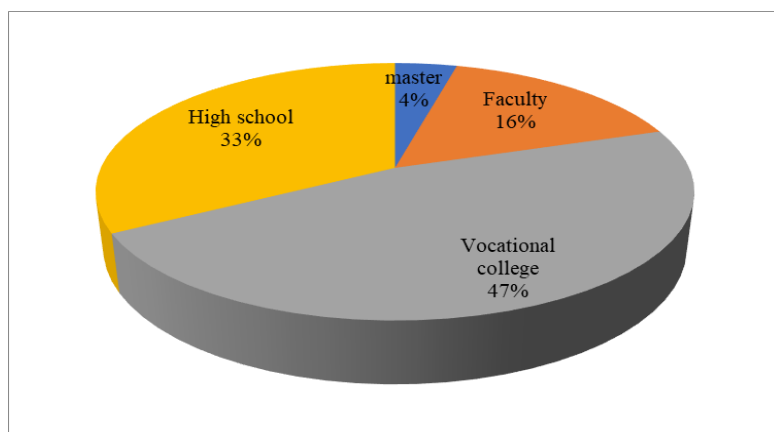
Chart 2. Structure of the sample in relation to the age of the respondents



Source: Authors

In relation to the age of the respondents (Graph 2), the majority of respondents included in this research, more than half of the entire research sample, are aged between 26 and 35 (68%). In addition, 14% of respondents are between 18 and 25 years old and 11% are between 35 and 45 years old. Respondents older than 65 did not participate in the research. The sample is not uniform according to the age of the respondents.

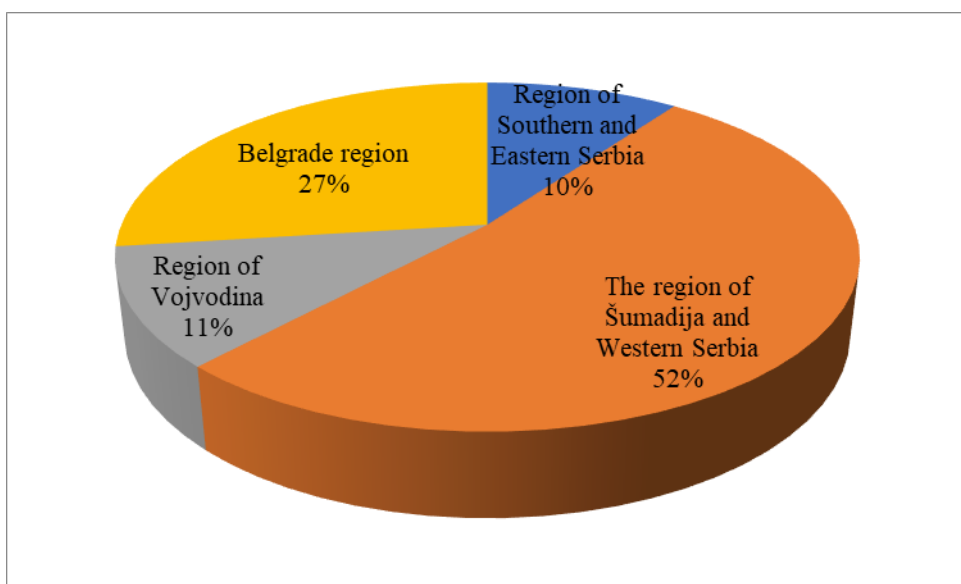
Graph 3. Structure of the sample in relation to the level of education



Source: Authors

When we talk about the structure of the sample in relation to the level of education (Graph 3), only educated respondents participated in the research. Namely, almost half of the entire research sample consists of respondents with a university degree (47%). After that, in order of representation, respondents with completed high school follow, of which 33% of the entire research sample is in total, while 16% are respondents with completed college and 4% respondents with completed master's studies. The sample is not uniform according to the level of education of the respondents.

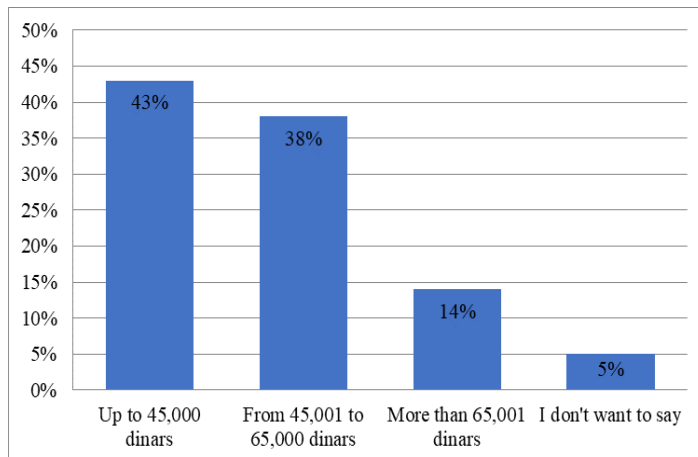
Chart 4. Structure of the sample in relation to the respondent's place of residence



Source: Authors

When it comes to the place of residence of the respondents (Graph 4), the majority of respondents reside in the region of Šumadija and Western Serbia (52%), followed by respondents with residence in the Belgrade region (27%), and the fewest respondents are from the region of Vojvodina (11%)) and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia (10%). The sample is not uniform according to the respondent's place of residence.

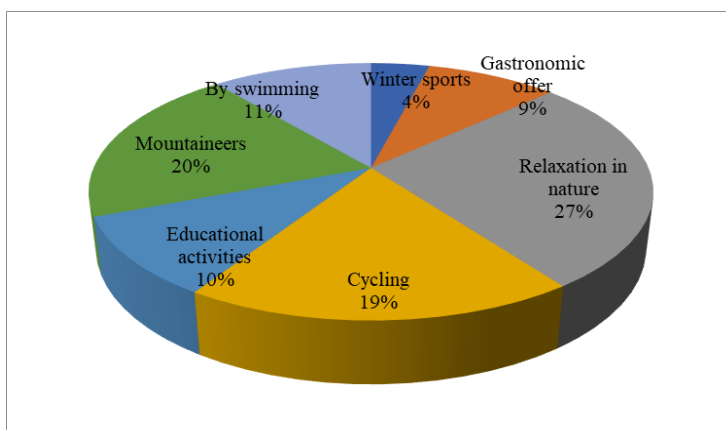
Chart 5. Structure of the sample in relation to the monthly income of the respondents



Source: Authors

When we talk about the amount of monthly income of the respondents (Graph 5), most respondents from the research have incomes up to 45,000.00 dinars (43%), followed by 45,000.00 to 65,000.00 dinars (38%). In addition, 14% of respondents have incomes greater than 65,001.00 dinars, and 5% of respondents did not want to reveal the amount of their monthly income. The sample is not uniform according to the level of the respondents' monthly income.

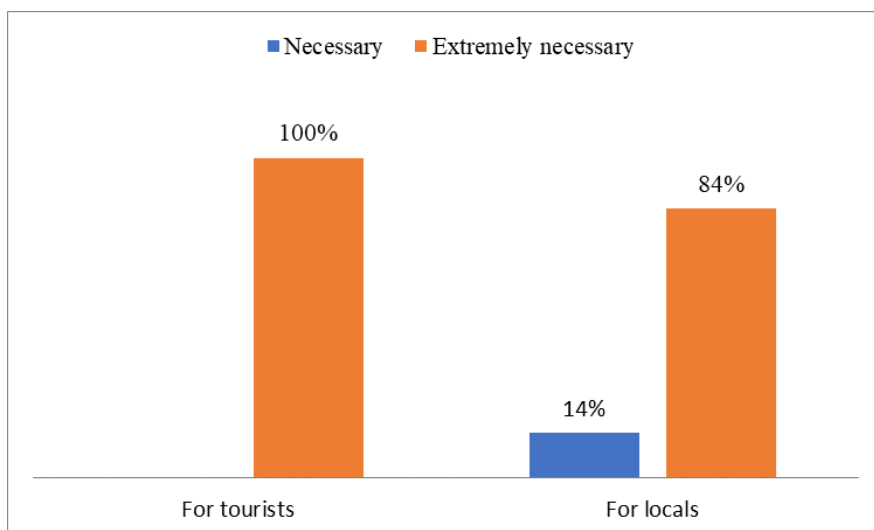
Chart 6. Structure of the sample of respondents visiting the mountain in relation to the activities the respondents engage in



Source: Authors

When we analyze the activities during the visit, the largest number of respondents, 27%, stay for relaxation, and a smaller percentage of 20% hikers, while 19% engage in cycling, and a similar percentage of 11% swim, 10% educational programs (the most common are excursions organized by schools) and gastro offer 9%. The lowest percentage is winter sports (here it is important to point out that this research was done in the summer period, so it is necessary to do the same in the winter period when the winter season starts).

Chart 7. structure of the sample of respondents in relation to the extent to which you think the Goč ski resort is needed by the city of Kraljevo and Vrnjačka Banja

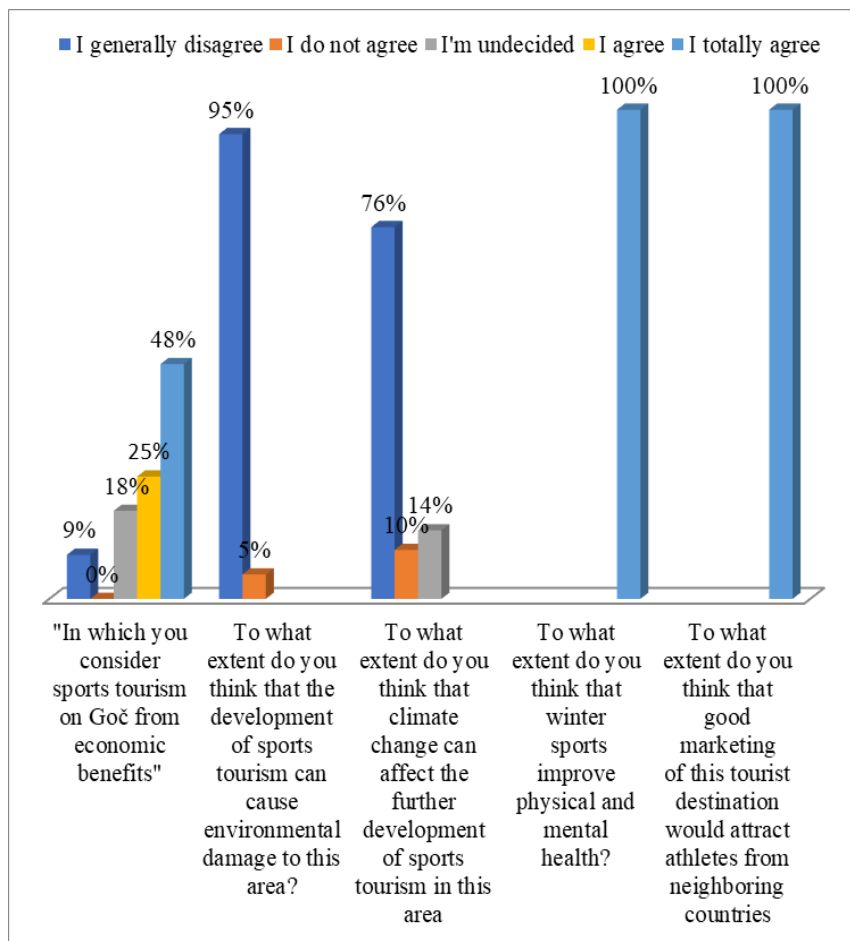


Source: Authors

Based on the opinions of 100% of visitors, they believe that the proximity of the town of Kraljevo and Vrnjačka Banja is extremely necessary and important.

The majority of respondents think that the seats on the ski slopes could be improved. Build an artificial lake and make artificial snow for skiing with accompanying facilities (this means lighting during the night, music and other facilities), and about 45% believe that additional facilities such as a snow park, ski jumps, ramps and a children's playground could greatly improve winter season.

Graph 8. of the structure of the sample of respondents in relation to the improvement of sports tourism on Goč



Source: Authors

Based on the indicators, 48% of respondents believe that sports tourism on Goč can be of economic benefit for that tourist destination. That is why 95% of respondents believe that sports tourism in this area cannot cause damage in an ecological sense. 76% of respondents believe that climate change has no influence on the further development of sports tourism in this area. However, 100% of respondents believe that winter sports improve physical and mental health. Also, 100% of the respondents are of the opinion that adequate and modern marketing would win new users from neighboring countries.

Conclusion

The conclusion about sports tourism on Mount Goč can be summarized in several key points:

1. Mount Goč offers outstanding opportunities for sports tourism in all seasons. In the winter it is a popular destination for skiers and snowboarders, while in the summer you can enjoy mountain biking, hiking, mountaineering and other outdoor activities.

2. In addition to natural beauty, Goč also offers a wide range of accommodation, restaurants and other services that accompany sports tourism, which creates conditions for a comfortable stay for visitors.

3. Sports tourism in Goč has a positive impact on the local economy, creating jobs and helping the development of small businesses in the area.

4. Also, this form of tourism contributes to the preservation of the natural environment and promotes awareness of the importance of protecting natural resources.

5. In the future, the development of sports tourism on Goč can be further improved by investing in the infrastructure and promotion of this destination in order to attract a greater number of visitors from the country and abroad. Sports tourism on Mount Goč has great potential for development and attracting numerous visitors. This beautiful mountain, located in the heart of Serbia, offers diverse opportunities for active vacations and sports activities during all seasons. Based on the analysis of the available data, it can be concluded that the natural beauty, the wealth of fauna and flora, as well as the proximity to the urban center of Kraljevo, make Goč an attractive destination for sports tourism. Mount Goč offers various sports activities, including hiking, cycling, skiing, horseback riding and paragliding. There are also plenty of trails and paths that meet the needs of both recreational and professional athletes. In addition, the mountain hosts various sports competitions and events throughout the year, attracting sports enthusiasts from all over the region. The development of sports tourism on Goča requires further investment in infrastructure, promotion and support for local sports clubs and organizations. In addition, it is important to preserve the natural environment of the mountain in order to preserve its unique beauty and attractiveness. In conclusion, sports tourism on Mount Goč has a huge potential for attracting visitors and developing the local economy. With proper planning and investment, Goč can become a recognizable destination for sports activities and holidays in nature. In conclusion, sports tourism on Mount Goč brings numerous advantages for the local community and tourists,

offering a variety of sports activities in a beautiful natural environment. This destination has the potential for further development and promotion, which will attract an even greater number of lovers of active holidays in nature. Hypotheses in the research: Initial hypothesis: Respondents believe that the sports tourism of Mount Goč can improve the economic situation was confirmed by this research. Auxiliary hypotheses: H1 Tourists are of the opinion that Mount Goč has enough ski slopes, and this research confirmed the same. H2 Based on the obtained results, tourists believe that this tourist destination could improve its marketing, this research confirmed the hypothesis.

Conflicts of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: M.P., Formal Analysis: M.P., M.M., Investigation: M.M., Methodology: M.P., M.M., Data curation: M.M., Resources: M.P., Writing – original draft: M.P, Writing – review & editing: M.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript

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