A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE CHOICE OF TOURIST DESTINATION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract

This study aims to better understand the motives of young people in deciding to visit a certain destination. The young generation – between 18 and 26 years of age – were surveyed for the purposes of this study. The total sample consists of 870 respondents living in five cities of the Republic of Serbia. The obtained results indicate that psychological motives do not show importance among young people when they decide to travel to a tourist destination, while emotional sensual motives, development motives, gastronomy motives, and self-realisation motives have a significant and positive effect on visiting a destination. The study has several specific benefits in relation to discovering the youth's main motives for visiting a destination, complementing the existing literature. The results

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also have a practical application in the management of the development of tourist destinations and their direction towards an accurately determined profile of tourists.

Key words: tourist motivation, preferences, youth, Republic of Serbia.

КОНЦЕПТУАЛНА СТУДИЈА О ИЗБОРУ ТУРИСТИЧКЕ ДЕСТИНАЦИЈЕ МЕЂУ МЛАДИМА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ

Апстракт

Ова студија има за циљ да боље разуме мотиве младих људи приликом одлучивања да посете одређену дестинацију. Анкетирана је млада генерација између 18 и 26 година старости, те се укупни узорак састоји од 870 испитаника из пет градова Републике Србије. Добијени резултати указују да психолошки мотиви не показују значај код младих приликом одлучивања за путовање на туристичку дестинацију, док емоционални сензуални мотиви, мотиви развоја, гастрономски мотиви и мотиви самореализације имају значајан и позитиван ефекат на посету дестинацији. Студија има неколико конкретних предности у циљу откривања главних мотива посете дестинацији од стране младих како би се употпунила постојећа литература, али су резултати нашли и практичну примену у управљању развојем туристичких дестинација и њиховом усмеравању ка тачно утврђеном профилу туриста.

Кључне речи: туристичка мотивација, преференције, омладина, Република Србија.

INTRODUCTION

For young people, youth tourism is a form of learning, a way to get to know other people and the diversity of other cultures. In addition, tourism can certainly be the source of a new career or self-development, or become part of the identity of young people (Kinderis et al., 2010; Ozdemir et al., 2012; Gajić et al., 2023). In recent decades, more and more attention has been paid to the preferences of young people when it comes to decisions and the directions of tourist movements (Horak et al., 2000; Khoshpakyants et al., 2010; Camilleri et al., 2018; Gorbatov et al., 2020). The motives that drive young people have become a current issue of conscious research (Huntley et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2009; Eusébio et al., 2016; Carvache-Franco et al., 2020). The habits and motivations of the Z generation are certainly different from those of the previous ones, and this fact contributes to the topicality and inexhaustibility of data for research in almost all domains of science, from psychology, sociology, and demographic segments to tourist decisions (Damanik et al., 2022; Irimias, 2023). For ten years, the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, as a non-profit organisation, has been mostly engaged in this research. Their assessment so far is that the youth tourism market in the world amounts to about 25%. Changes in the way

of life of young people make travelling easier because they have easier access to money, and the openness of borders becomes an integral factor in tourism (Šaparnienė et al., 2022; Aujirapongpan et al., 2023; Pop et al., 2023). According to some studies, traditional tourists have an unstable travel plan and are prone to changes during the tourist visit, while those partaking in youth tourism have a strictly planned trip that, apart from vacation, aims to get to know local customs and culture, participate in education and experience destinations through direct interaction with the local population (Figueiredo et al., 2012; Jamrozy et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Meng et al., 2020).

The aim of this study is to investigate and identify the key motives that influence the decision of young people in choosing a tourist destination. Through the application of structural modelling of path analysis, the study focuses on five main motives: psychological motives, emotional-sensual motives, development motives, gastronomic motives, and self-realisation motives. The study examines how these motives influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination, with special reference to the importance of each of these motives and their connection with the actual visit.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the complex factors that shape young people's tourism decisions. Given that tourism represents a significant part of the economy of the Republic of Serbia, understanding these motives can help in the creation of more effective marketing strategies, and the development of tourism products that better meet the needs and desires of the young population. In addition, discovering which motives young people find most attractive can provide insight into how tourism destinations can improve their offerings and attract more visitors from this demographic.

The innovativeness of this study is reflected in the application of path analysis to examine the influence of various motives on the decision to visit a destination, which enables a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of the choice of tourist destinations among young people. This study provides a foundation for further research in the field of tourism and paves the way for the development of targeted strategies that can improve the tourist offer and attract young visitors, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Serbia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Factors and Motivations of Tourists

Psychological factors refer to the characteristics of tourists, which determine them to prefer a certain destination, either as a result of the services or activities available in that place or as a result of their perception of the place they visit (Moisa et al., 2010; Demeter et al., 2014; King

et al., 2015). Psychological factors influence consumer behaviour and include sub-factors such as: motivations, perceptions, emotions, habits and beliefs. Psychological factors also include values, personality, lifestyle, needs, previous experiences and knowledge, preferences and satisfaction (Caber et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022). Motivations are based on needs. According to Maslow, needs are classified into five categories: physiological or biological needs, safety needs, social or belonging needs, self-esteem needs and self-achievement needs (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). Maslow's pyramid is considered a useful tool for understanding the motivation of consumers of tourism products and/or services, and for creating marketing content in accordance with consumer wishes, because consumer goods aim to satisfy every level of need.

Maslow believes that people are motivated to satisfy their basic, indispensable needs, before moving on to other needs. According to the levels of needs in Maslow's pyramid, every tourist destination must ensure the fulfilment of physiological and safety needs. In tourism, these needs relate to gastronomy and accommodation (Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Aujirapongpan et al., 2023). The need for security is reflected in the characteristics of the tourist destination, social life and pathological risks specific to that area. Social needs represent the level that ensures the belonging of an individual to a group and satisfies the need for self-esteem. It refers to hospitality, the kindness of the host and the uniqueness of the tourist sphere (Blichfeldt et al., 2007; Gajić et al., 2022). Cognitive and aesthetic needs relate to tradition, knowledge, the local way of life and appreciation of beauty, form and balance (Kinderis, 2010; Irimias, 2023). Self-actualisation needs refer to the need for self-fulfilment, personal cultivation, and personal growth through superior experiences (Han et al., 2017; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Gamor et al., 2022; Chistyakova et al., 2023). The process of motivation begins with the recognition of needs. The moment a need is emphasised, the need inadvertently turns into a motive (Bizirgianni et al., 2013; Mudarra-Fernández et al., 2019). Motivation is associated with individuals when they convert desire into decisions. A person has the ability to adapt, thrive in the face of adversity and change, and recover from an atypical case (Šimková & Holzner, 2014).

Typological Construct of Possible Travel Motives

Trends showing a growing demand for authentic vacation experiences include individualism, the pursuit of a range of experiences, self-improvement, experimentation, and increased social and environmental awareness (Almeida-García et al., 2020; Irimiás et al., 2023). Tourists are looking for opportunities to engage and talk with the local population, as well as the opportunity to learn about the characteristics of the destination. According to studies conducted in famous locations, greater authen-

ticity can increase visitor satisfaction, improve the tourist experience and attract new demand segments (Horak et al., 2000; Huntley et al., 2006; Kinderis et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2018). Different tourist profiles and their unique decision-making mechanisms, motivations and behaviours have been identified using a wide range of analytical models and factors (socioeconomic, demographic and psychographic) (Dwyer et al., 2009; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022).

Travel motives are a type of psychological activity that is influenced by various factors, including one's interests, hobbies, occupation, outlook on life, awareness of one's surroundings, level of education and family (Jamrozy et al., 2017; Han et al., 2018). People's reasons for traveling can also be influenced by their social environment. Travel behaviour and experiences of associates, acquaintances, and family members can always influence others or create a psychological comparison that causes others to have the same travel goals and result in imitation of travel behaviour. An individual's psychological need to engage in travel-related activities is called their travel motivation (Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Eusébio et al., 2016; Damanik et al., 2022). If there is motivation, action will be taken to travel. The path from developing the motivation to travel to actually taking a trip is complex in real life. People must have the necessary internal and external elements, such as physical health, financial stability, access to transportation, and other situations when they need to travel (Camilleri et al., 2018; Caber et al., 2020). The ability to pay many forms of travel-related fees is clearly necessary because this is a type of consumer behaviour. A person will not become motivated to travel if their salary is insufficient to cover even the most basic requirements (Demeter et al., 2014; Agyeiwaah et al., 2019). The availability of road transport, accommodation, dining options and service standards at a destination are vital factors in choosing a destination, and have a significant impact on how they create motivation to travel, especially for visitors with relatively high hospitality expectations (Blichfeldt et al., 2007; Bizirgianni et al., 2013).

People embark on leisure and recovery trips to relax, maintain their health and find satisfaction when they have stressful or tiring daily lives or jobs. People belonging to this type of traveller require that the interpersonal connections they make during the trip be friendly, pleasant and caring (Khoshpakyants et al., 2010; Gamor et al., 2022; Aujirapongpan et al., 2023; Gajić et al., 2023). People who travel for religious reasons do so primarily to satisfy their spiritual needs (Blackwell et al., 2007; Ozdemir et al., 2012; Gorbatov et al., 2020; Chistyakova & Chistyakov, 2023). When the economy grows, the tourism sector expands and the number of travellers increases, or decreases when the opposite happens, in nations and regions where the income of the population increases (Mudarra-Fernández et al., 2019; Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Aujirapongpan et

al., 2023; Chistyakova et al., 2023). Free time is a necessary prerequisite for carrying out travel-related activities. People may develop incentives to travel due to the relative strength of labour protection regulations and the availability of statutory holidays in wealthy countries (Chistyakova & Chistyakov, 2023). People's motivation to travel can also be influenced by social or group pressure (Horak et al., 2000; Kinderis et al., 2010; Khoshpakyants et al., 2010; Gorbatov et al., 2020). Travel activities then occur as a result of, for example, sponsored travel business events, travel awards, etc., which influence people to develop their own travel motives without intending to (Blichfeldt et al., 2007; Blackwell et al., 2007; Ozdemir et al., 2012; Meng et al., 2020). Poon and Lock-Teng Low (2005) state that the motivations of tourists include, among other things, different cultural events, food festivals, different sports activities and natural attractions (King et al., 2015; Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2022). Also, other authors point out that tourism is connected with the natural attractiveness and gastronomy of a certain destination (Bizirgianni et al., 2013; Han et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Almeida-García et al., 2020).

Motives of the Youth Movement

The complexity of tourist behaviour has often been emphasised in numerous psychological studies dating back to the 1970s, where a wide range of analytical models and variables (socio-economic, demographic, psychographic) have been used to identify different tourist profiles and their particular mechanisms of choice, motivation and behaviour (Moisa et al., 2010; Figueiredo et al., 2012; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Gamor et al., 2022). To research the topic of the needs of young people during travel is, first of all, to identify the criteria and variables used to define an individual as a member of the 'young people' in order to later observe and describe their decision-making processes, motivations and behaviours. The socio-demographic identification of this segment gives us objective information, but does not solve the question at what age an individual stops being 'young' (Demeter et al., 2014; Jamrozy et al., 2017; Camilleri et al., 2018).

UNWTO highlights the increasing importance of the segment of young tourists, both in terms of tourist flow and in terms of spending power. In doing so, it is emphasised that, compared to the past, this segment covers a wider range of the population: people ages 15 through 30+, rather than 18 through 24. From a behavioural point of view, it highlights the fact that young people and travellers want to discover and learn about different cultures and be able to interact with the local population (UNWTO).

When defining the concept of youth tourism, it is important to emphasise that it includes tourists in the age group between 15 and 35 years.

WYSE Travel Confederation defines youth tourism as youth travel, which includes all independent travel by young people, ages 16 through 26 (WYSE, 2023). However, other authors claim that young travellers are those who: look for more affordable accommodation, are more inclined to meet new people and destinations, are independent in organising travel and have a more flexible travel schedule, preferring longer vacation periods (Dwyer et al., 2009; Agyeiwaah et al., 2019; Damanik et al., 2022; Irimiás et al., 2023). Many authors believe that youth is becoming a key category for the development of tourism in the future for several reasons: their attitudes, and way of thinking and life can create new trends in the field of travel; and youth travel in the present, but they are expected to continue by creating new directions of movement (Huntley et al., 2006; Eusébio et al., 2016; Han et al., 2018; Caber et al., 2020). Travel is a novelty for them: an opportunity to escape from everyday life, try a new way of life, gain new experiences, go to new places and learn new things. Differences in the perception of the directions of movement of tourists from the 2020s and 2030s will, just like today's young tourists, reflect different needs and desires compared to those of the modern middle-aged tourist (Blackwell et al., 2007; King et al., 2015; Mudarra-Fernández et al., 2019; Caber et al., 2020). The search for one's own identity through travel is one of the primary factors associated with young people (Pop et al., 2023). Today's youth want to brand themselves in the world and share travel-related experiences with a large audience, primarily online.

Youth tourism is a very intricate interweaving of economic reality, sociodemographic policy and specific psychological and value-oriented states of subjects (Irimias, 2023; Pop et al., 2023). Young people, who constitute the 'next generation' of travellers (both actual and potential), need to understand their attitudes towards sustainability in order to guide tourism growth in a way that is consistent with future demand (Pop et al., 2023). In recent years, the scientific community has increasingly shifted its focus to the research of one specific group of tourist demand — young people. Youth tourism revenues have grown to nearly $400 billion by 2020, compared to over $180 billion at the start of the decade, with 200 million international trips undertaken by young people annually (compared to nearly half that number at the start of the decade) (Irimias, 2023).

At least once a year, 96% of young people go on a one-day trip. There's a reason why German youth is considered the happiest target demographic in the travel industry, as one in three hotel guests and one in four travellers is between the ages of 16 and 29. Young travellers seek to experience the local way of life at the destination (Khan et al., 2022). Since they like to independently research and plan their trips without the help of tourist and travel agencies, and share knowledge about the tourist offer via the Internet, the local community should be able to recognise this request for a special interest and develop this niche in the tourist offer

through their own self-development. Research has showed that about 37% of young people said they were very likely to spend extra money on food or drinks, followed by 27% citing events or festivals (Gorbatov et al., 2020; Damanik et al., 2022; Chistyakova et al., 2023; Aujirapongpan et al., 2023). Traditional luxury travel items, such as airline ticket upgrades, were favoured purchases. Young travellers' booking habits have shifted from traditional travel agencies to online travel agencies. The United States remained the most popular destination for young travellers, although their percentage decreased compared to 2012; the survey showed that some young travellers also made the decision to travel to other less popular locations. For the first time in ten years, Australia has re-entered the top ten in the ranking. Thailand was in the top 10, but the remaining 7 spots were taken by European nations. In addition, shorter trips increased, while long trips lasting 120 days or more decreased somewhat (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Meng et al., 2020).

Although the number of digital nomads, often referred to as location-independent employees, remains modest, the tourism sector has taken notice of them. Only 0.6% of millennial and Gen Z travellers in 2017 identified as 'digital nomads,' as opposed to more conventional terms like 'packer' or 'traveller.' They are also most likely to book their plane tickets online (85%). Digital nomads 'have an influence on other young people' and more space for collaboration is opening up in some places as a result of their influence (Caber et al., 2020). Millennial and Gen Z travellers cited three top factors for their travel happiness: destination, length of trip, and activities. They were happiest when they travelled to Mexico, Japan, Indonesia and Peru, and happiness 'reaches a temperature' in a month. Adolescent and student travelers are eager to explore and learn about different cultures while having the opportunity to connect with the local population. These elements increase the prospects for encouraging more responsible and environmentally conscious behaviour through this part of the tourism market. Despite the growing interest in the millennial generation, the extent of knowledge about youth travel is still somewhat limited (Aujirapongpan et al., 2023).

Young people are recognised as an attractive and important market segment that can influence numerous aspects of tourism (Vukić et al., 2015). According to the results of recent research conducted on a sample of Turkish students, young tourists stay at a destination longer, spend more than international tourists and express high values of loyal consumers, considering that they often return to destinations they have already visited (Caber et al., 2020). The importance of this market segment is that it represents the market of the future, in addition to being a growing market. In order to observe and characterise the decision-making processes, motivation and behaviour of individuals classified as young, it is neces-

sary to first identify the factors and criteria used to categorise people as young members of the population.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, a detailed review of the available literature was carried out, based on information from domestic and international sources about youth tourism and their motivation for travel. The research techniques used include comparative, systematic, synthesis research, study of documentary sources and survey research. The study is entirely voluntary and has the characteristics of a pilot study.

Research Objective and Research Hypothesis Model Design

The main goal of the research was to determine the factors that play a motivator role among young people in creating the intention to visit a tourist destination, as a special demographic group of tourists. A research model with hypotheses was set up (Figure 1).
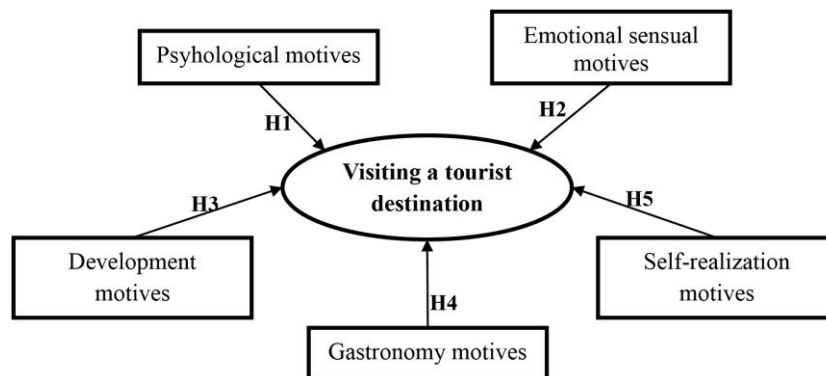

Figure 1. Proposed research model with hypotheses
Source: Authors' research

The following research hypotheses were established: (H1) psychological motives significantly influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination; (H2) emotional-sensual motives significantly influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination; (H3) developmental motives significantly influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination; (H4) gastronomy motives significantly influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination; and (H5) self-realisation motives significantly influence the decision of young people to visit a tourist destination.

Questionnaire Design and Measurements

For the purposes of constructing the questionnaire, models from Gorbatov and Chuvatkin (2020) were used for questions related to psychological motives (coping with stress, changing the landscape, relaxation, preventive measures, health treatments, improving physical activities), developmental motives (participation in the event, historical sights, natural attractions, art, local architecture, lifestyle of the local population), emotional and sensual motives (excitement, nostalgia, visiting friends and relatives, religious motives) and self-realisation motives (learning new things, job search, realisation of own skills). The Quan and Wang (2004) model was used to construct the questionnaire related to gastronomy as a motivator, and it contains questions concerning the following: getting to know local food and drinks, getting to know how to prepare traditional food, food as a motive of not forgetting, food as an extension of the dining process, as well as visiting and choosing a destination (a motive drives me to choose a destination, I visit randomly without a particular motive, motives influence me to visit the same destination again). For assessing the importance of various items in our research, we used a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated 'Irrelevant' and 5 indicated 'Very Important.' This range allowed respondents to accurately express their opinion on each item, providing us with detailed insights into their priorities and perceptions.

Research Context: Spatial Setting and Participants

Before the actual survey of respondents, a pilot survey was conducted on a sample of 40 respondents to identify any ambiguities, doubts, or errors. The pilot study was conducted in two cities in the Republic of Serbia, during tourist events in Sremska Mitrovica and Novi Sad. Following the pilot study, there were no significant ambiguities in the questionnaire. The survey was conducted between January and April 2023, with a total of 900 respondents. Out of the total number of surveys distributed, 30 were discarded because they were not completed correctly. The remaining 870 were analysed. The study included young people from Novi Sad (215 respondents), Belgrade (335 respondents), Valjevo (103 respondents), Kragujevac (148 respondents), and Vrnjačka Banja (69 respondents). The research was limited to examining young people ages 18 through 26, based on the authors' discretion and the literature that accepts this age range as the youth category. Table 1 describes the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.

Table 1. Statistical findings of sociodemoraphic characteristics of respondents

Gender		Frequency of traveling	
Male	34.9%	I have never traveled	12.1%
Female	65.1%	I have traveled once a year	23.3%
		I have traveled several times a year	64.6%
Education		Age	
High school	23.7%	18 – 22	36.9%
Faculty	66.3%	23 – 25	63.1%
MSc	10.0%		

Source: Authors' research

The statistical findings from the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a study population with a higher female representation (65.1%) than male (34.9%), and a significant portion of the respondents (64.6%) report traveling several times a year. Most participants have attained faculty-level education (66.3%), with a smaller percentage holding a high school diploma (23.7%) or an MSc degree (10%). The age distribution shows a focus on young adults, with 63.1% being ages 23 through 25, and 36.9% being ages 18 through 22. These insights suggest that the research captures perspectives from a relatively well-educated, predominantly female, young adult demographic with considerable travel experience, which could influence the study's outcomes and their interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected information was analysed using the statistical program SPSS, version 23.00 and SPSS AMOS, version 21.00. Descriptive statistical analysis obtained average scores for all items and determined a normal distribution of data, where the values of skewness (0.535) and kurtosis (-0.712) were individually within ±1, while the critical ratio (Z value) of Skewness (0.635) and Kurtosis (-0.678) were within ±1.96 [155]. Internal validity was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and reliability analysis confirmed that all measures used in the study were reliable, as Cronbach's alpha (α) for each construct was greater than 0.7. Construct validity was tested by factor analysis, where a total of six factors were extracted from all items. The overall measure of sampling adequacy was above 0.60 (Kaiser-Meier-Olkin coefficient - KMO = 0.763). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (X^2 = 2289.321; df = 118; p = 0.00). Path analysis and structural modelling determined the influence of predictors on the criterion of visiting a destination, in order to determine which of the predictors and to what extent influence the decisions of young people to visit a destination.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows descriptive values for different items within the study, organised by factors. Each factor contains specific items that are evaluated based on the arithmetic mean (M), standard deviation (Sd), Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) indicating the reliability of the scale, and factor loadings (λ) indicating how well the items represent a certain factor.

Table 2. Descriptive values of all items

Factors α = 0.904	Items	M	Sd	α	λ
Psychological motives	Coping with stress	2.04	1.207	0.825	0.733
	Changing the landscape	2.91	1.426	0.899	0.715
	Relaxation	2.64	1.379	0.801	0.764
	Preventive measures	3.02	1.388	0.805	0.699
	Health treatments	2.76	1.340	0.863	0.730
	Improving physical activities	3.14	1.342	0.821	0.700
Development motives	Participation in the event	3.08	1.275	0.838	0.832
	Historical sights	2.19	0.479	0.836	0.827
	Natural attractions	2.80	0.303	0.809	0.810
	Art	4.33	1.235	0.823	0.799
	Local architecture	3.77	1.063	0.898	0.819
	Lifestyle of the local population	3.51	1.148	0.895	0.801
Emotional sensual motives	Excitement	3.94	0.012	0.996	0.744
	Nostalgia	3.32	0.064	0.905	0.791
	Visiting friends and relatives	3.66	0.910	0.927	0.684
	Religious motives	3.52	1.905	0.900	0.794
Self-realisation motives	Learning new things	3.61	0.125	0.899	0.848
	Job search	3.49	0.018	0.820	0.813
	Realization of own skills	3.28	0.983	0.896	0.871
Gastronomy motives	Getting to know local food and drinks	3.47	0.672	0.800	0.903
	Getting to know how to prepare traditional food	2.39	0.845	0.899	0.912
	Food as a motive of not forgetting	3.53	0.323	0.894	0.893
	Food as an extension of the dining process	2.47	1.092	0.818	0.899
Visit	Motive drives me to choose a destination	4.64	0.457	0.895	0.873
	I visit randomly without a particular motive	1.95	0.190	0.832	0.869
	Motives influence me to visit the same destination again	2.65	0.419	0.805	0.796

Note. M – arithmetic mean, Sd – standard deviation,
α – Cronbach's alpha, λ – factor loadings

Incorporating the overall reliability statistics, the survey demonstrates a robust measure of travel motivations and experiences across its

spectrum, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904 across 26 items. This high level of reliability indicates a strong internal consistency within the survey, suggesting that the items collectively form a cohesive measure of the constructs being assessed. Such a high Cronbach's alpha value reinforces the validity of the findings, highlighting that the diverse motivations and experiences captured in the survey from art appreciation and the pursuit of new experiences to specific motives driving destination choice are reliably measured. The average scores (mean values) across various travel motivations and experiences reveal significant insights into traveller preferences and behaviours. High mean scores for items such as 'Art' and 'Motive drives me to choose a destination' indicate these are particularly important factors for travellers, suggesting a strong appreciation for cultural experiences and specific personal motivations in choosing travel destinations. Conversely, lower mean scores for 'I visit randomly without a particular motive' highlight a tendency among respondents to travel with clear intentions or interests. These averages provide a snapshot into the key drivers behind travel decisions, emphasising the importance of personalised and culturally rich experiences in meeting the diverse needs and motivations of travellers. Factor loadings (λ) are also mostly high, which further confirms that each item represents its factor well.

A total of six factors were extracted by factor analysis with Promax rotation, of which five factors will represent predictors and one criterion variable later in the path analysis. It was also determined that 67% of the variance was explained. Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics of factors, the validity of the measurement model of the extracted factors, and the effects of predictors (path analysis). It includes factors such as psychological motives (PM), emotional sensual motives (ESM), developmental motives (DM), gastronomic motives (GM), and self-realisation motives (SRM), as well as visit (VISIT) as the dependent variable. For each factor, it shows the mean scores (m), Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) for reliability, outer loading (λ), percentage of variance, total effect on visit, as well as correlation (β), standard error (S.E.), t-value, significance (p), and confirmation of hypotheses.

Psychological Motives (PM) show moderate mean scores (m=3.49) with high reliability (α=0.884) and a significant portion of variance explained (34.303%), yet their direct effect on visitation is minimal and not statistically significant (β=0.006, p=0.87), leading to the denial of Hypothesis 1. Emotional Sensual Motives (ESM), despite a lower mean score (m=2.81), exhibit higher reliability (α=0.917) and contribute significantly to the variance (44.946%). Their positive effect on visitation is statistically significant (β=0.283, p=0.02), supporting Hypothesis 2. Development Motives (DM) have the highest mean score among the factors (m=3.89) and show a substantial reliability score (α=0.871). They account for a significant variance (54.095%) and have a modest but significant

impact on visitation (β=0.336, p=0.03), confirming Hypothesis 3. Gastronomy Motives (GM) are associated with a moderate mean score (m=3.01) and high reliability (α=0.880). They explain a notable amount of variance (59.306%) and have a strong, statistically significant effect on visitation (β=0.134, p<0.001), affirming Hypothesis 4. Self-Realisation Motives (SRM), with a mean score of 3.56 and high reliability (α=0.891), explain a considerable variance (63.822%) and exert the most substantial effect on visitation among all factors (β=0.440, p<0.001), strongly supporting Hypothesis 5.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of factors, measurement model validity of the extracted factors and effects of predictors (path analysis)

Factor statistics – Promax rotation					Predictor effects and path analysis					
Factors	m	α	λ	% variance	Total %	Effects	β	S.E.	t	p	Confirmation
PM	3.49	0.884	0.709	34.303	8.308	Visit ⇐ PM	0.006	0.021	0.158	0.87	H1 ✘
ESM	2.81	0.917	0.770	44.946	6.469	Visit ⇐ ESM	0.283	0.272	2.290	0.02	H2 ✔
DM	3.89	0.871	0.816	54.095	7.311	Visit ⇐ DM	0.336	0.329	1.241	0.03	H3 ✔
GM	3.01	0.880	0.901	59.306	3.289	Visit ⇐ GM	0.134	0.132	3.699	***	H4 ✔
SRM	3.56	0.891	0.852	63.822	5.729	Visit ⇐ SRM	0.440	0.433	12.172	***	H5 ✔
VISIT	3.28	0.827	0.871	67.614	1.373						

*λ-Outer Loading; α - Cronbach's alpha, β - correlation, t –t value, p – significance,
PM – psyhological motives, ESM- emotional sensual motives, DM – development motives,
GM-gastronomy motives, SRM – self-realization motives.
Source: Author's research

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In recent years, the scientific community has been focusing more and more attention on examining especially the tourism demand of young people. Young people are new visitors to the tourist market (Gorbatov et al., 2020). There are different definitions of the categorisation of youth according to age. Youth tourism is defined as all independent trips by people between the ages of 18 and 26 that last less than a year and are driven, in whole or in part, by the desire to learn about other cultures, gain life experience or take advantage of formal and informal learning opportunities outside the home (Meng et al., 2020). In 2015, almost every fourth tourist was between 16 and 29 years old (23%), one in three hotel guests were Millennials, and the total value of international youth tourism was predicted to reach US$400 billion in 2020, which is double the value compared to 2009 (UNWTO). Raylicities are factors of attraction of tourists to destinations, especially the specificity of the attractor of rayyans among the young population.

The authors investigated the influence of the following motives on the choice of destination among young people: psychological motives, emotional sensual motives, development motives, gastronomy motives, self-realisation motives. Employing a Promax rotation to better understand the underlying structure of these factors, the study sought to quantify their influence on visitation behaviour through descriptive statistics, measurement model validity, and path analysis. Results revealed a different scope of travel motivations. Psychological Motives (PM), despite their theoretical relevance, showed minimal direct impact on visitation decisions. In contrast, Emotional Sensual Motives (ESM) and Development Motives (DM) were found to significantly influence visitation, albeit to varying extents. Gastronomy Motives (GM) and particularly Self-Realisation Motives (SRM) demonstrated strong positive effects on the decision to visit, highlighting the importance of personal growth and fulfilment in travel choices. The percentage of explained variance for each factor underscored the complex interplay of motivations driving visitation, with significant contributions from emotional, developmental, and gastronomic factors.

The general conclusion of this study emphasises the multifaceted nature of travel motivation, suggesting that while traditional psychological factors may not directly drive visitation decisions, the pursuit of emotional enrichment, personal development, culinary experiences, and self-fulfilment play crucial roles. These findings offer valuable insights for tourism marketers and destination management organisations, indicating a need for tailored strategies that cater to the diverse and complex motivations of travellers.

Limitations

The study, while providing important findings on travel motivations and their impact on visitation decisions, is subject to several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the respondents were young, which indicates that the results of this study will not be applicable to all age groups, and analyses of other age groups are also suggested. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as respondents could overestimate or underestimate their motivations in reflection, or due to social desirability. Additionally, the sample size and demographic composition could also restrict the applicability of findings across broader populations, as cultural, socioeconomic, and individual differences in travel motivations might not be fully captured. The study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot in time, which may not fully account for the dynamic nature of travel motivations and behaviours that can change due to emerging trends, global events, or personal circumstances. The factors identified and their respective influences offer a foundation for understanding travel motivations but might not encompass all possible motivators, especially

those unique to specific destinations or types of travel. Lastly, while the statistical methods employed are robust, the interpretation of the results requires caution, as the variance explained by the factors, though significant, leaves a portion unexplained, suggesting the existence of other influential factors not captured in this study. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for framing the study's contributions and for guiding future research. Future studies could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs, diversifying sample populations, and exploring additional or emerging travel motivations, thereby enriching our understanding of the complex and evolving landscape of travel behaviour.

Future Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings from this research offer several important theoretical implications for the understanding of young tourists' travel motivations and destination choice. Theoretically, this study enriches the existing literature by providing a deeper insight into the complex array of factors that influence young travellers' decisions. It highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the motivational constructs beyond traditional factors, suggesting that the motivations of young tourists are multifaceted and influenced by a blend of experiences, personal development opportunities, emotional connections, and the quest for authentic and novel experiences. This complements existing theories by suggesting that young tourists' motivations may differ significantly from those of other demographic groups, due to their unique values, lifestyle choices, and the influence of digital media on their travel behaviour. The study contributes to the broader discourse on travel motivation by emphasising the diverse and dynamic nature of young tourists' preferences and motivations. It suggests that traditional models may need to be expanded or adapted to better capture the intricate motivations driving this demographic. It also underscores the importance of considering the digital impact on young travellers, including how social media and online communities shape their perceptions and decisions. This aspect introduces a new dimension to motivational theories, reflecting the contemporary travel planning process. By exploring a wide range of factors, from emotional to developmental motivations, this research encourages a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding travel motivation, incorporating insights from psychology, sociology, and technology studies.

From a practical standpoint, the insights gained necessitate a strategic re-evaluation of how destinations and tourism providers design and market their offerings to young tourists. Destinations need to create more personalised, authentic, and engaging experiences that resonate with the values and expectations of this group. This involves leveraging technology to enhance the travel experience, from virtual reality previews to mobile apps that offer personalised recommendations. Additionally, tourism

marketers should utilise social media platforms not just for promotion, but as a tool to engage with young tourists, understand their preferences, and co-create travel experiences that meet their aspirations.

The significance of this research for future studies lies in its identification of gaps and opportunities within the current understanding of young tourists' travel motivations. By highlighting the complex and evolving nature of these motivations, the study sets a foundation for more in-depth investigations that can adapt to changing trends and technological advancements. Future research is encouraged to explore the impact of digital innovation on travel behaviour, the increasing importance of sustainability and ethical travel choices among young tourists, and how these preferences differ across cultures and geographic locations. Such research will not only expand academic knowledge but also provide practical insights for the tourism industry to cater to the dynamic needs of young travellers, ensuring relevance and sustainability in a rapidly changing global tourism landscape.

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КОНЦЕПТУАЛНА СТУДИЈА О ИЗБОРУ ТУРИСТИЧКЕ ДЕСТИНАЦИЈЕ МЕЂУ МЛАДИМА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ

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Резиме

Ова студија се бави истраживањем мотива који обликују избор туристичких дестинација међу младима у Србији, са посебним освртом на њихове специфичне преференције и очекивања. Анкетирањем 870 испитаника старости од 18 до 26 година, из различитих градова, добијени су подаци који откривају комплексност фактора који утичу на њихове одлуке о путовању. Док су психолошки мотиви, попут релаксације и промене окружења, показали ограничен утицај, доминантну улогу су преузели емоционално-сензуални мотиви, као што су узбуђење и носталгија, који имају значајан и позитиван ефекат.

Развојни мотиви, укључујући интересовање за културне и историјске садржаје, природне атракције и начин живота локалног становништва, истакли су се као важан фактор у привлачењу младих туриста. Посебну пажњу заслужују гастрономски мотиви, који указују на све веће интересовање младих за локалну гастрономску понуду и традиционалне укусе. Мотиви самореализације, попут тежње ка личном развоју и стицању нових искустава, показали су најјачи утицај, указујући на значај индивидуалног напретка у оквиру туристичког доживљаја.

Практичне импликације ових налаза огледају се у препорукама за креирање иновативних и циљаних туристичких понуда, које интегришу аутентичност, културне специфичности и могућности за лични развој. Овакав приступ не само да доприноси конкурентности туристичких дестинација, већ и подстиче њихов одрживи развој.

Са теоријског аспекта, истраживање обогаћује постојећу литературу дубљим разумевањем мултидимензионалне природе мотива младих туриста, сугеришући да будућа истраживања треба да укључе утицај дигиталних иновација, глобалних трендова и културолошких разлика. Ова студија поставља основу за развој нових стратегија које ће боље одговарати динамичним потребама младих путника и допринети њиховом испуњенијем туристичком искуству.