

# THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURIST ON THE TOURIST'S ATTITUDES ABOUT THE TOURISM PRODUCT: CASE OF VRNJAČKA BANJA, SERBIA

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**Abstract:** *The demand for the tourism products is affected by many different factors, such as tourism supply, economic, socio-psychological as well as demographic factors. The aim of our study was to analyze the impact of demographic characteristics on tourist's attitudes about the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja. This spa is the most visited tourist destination in Serbia, after the capital city Belgrade, and the most famous spa in the country and the region. The main goal of the paper is to show that demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and level of education of tourists, have a significant impact on the attitudes of tourists about key elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja. The analysis is based on the application of the ANOVA method. Results indicate that demographic characteristics, such as gender and age have the significant impact on the tourist's attitudes about some key elements of the tourist's products.*

**Keywords:** *demographic characteristics, tourist's attitudes, tourism product, tourist destination, Vrnjačka Banja.*

**JEL:** Z32, Z39.

## INTRODUCTION

The product represents the most significant element of the marketing mix and it triggers the creation of the marketing strategy for entering markets. It is an

instrument which links the manufacturers' and consumers' interests (Tripunoski, Ferati, Sibinovski, 2017). Numerous interpretations can be found in the scientific and professional literature that a tourism product is a tangible (material) supply. However, the tourism product is a far more than that. The product is anything that can be offered on the tourism market and that can satisfy the wishes and needs of consumers. Products offered on the market include physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, real estate, organizations, information and ideas (Kotler & Keler, 2006). Product in tourism includes many elements: travel, accommodation and meals, rental car, souvenir sales, excursions, but also natural beauty, cultural and historical heritage, courtesy of tourist workers, etc (Bakić, 2010). In other words, a tourism product is the sum of the various amenities, goods and services that serve the tourist needs during their travel in the current destination (Milićević, 2015).

Successful development of one destination supposes the existence of a specific tourism product that can be placed on an adequate tourism market (Čerović, 2009). The destination product includes all the attractive, communicative and receptive elements that the destination has at its disposal. Attractive elements represents all natural and social elements of the destination, communicative elements accessibility of the destination, while receptive elements include all the conditions for tourist stay in the destination, such as accommodation, food, entertainment, etc (Bakić, 2005, 2009; Popesku, 2016). Attractive elements form the basic motive of tourists choosing to arrive at the destination and the base of the destination product (Milićević & Štetić, 2017; Magaš et al., 2018).

Tourism represents an experience-based industry (Pizam, 2010). The demand for the tourism products is affected by many different factors, such as economic factors, supply-side (i.e. tourism policy, transport infrastructure and accommodation, activities of the tour operators), but also socio-psychological factors including the amount of free time, urbanization, motivation, and – last, but not least – demographic structure of the population and its dynamics (Szromek et al., 2012). The major demographic trends are the aging of the population, the educational level, the changing role of women in society, etc (Nedelea, 2008).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is of great importance for the global economy, particularly for the economies of developing countries. Analysis of tourist circulation trends points to a significant change in tourism trends, increased diversification of tourism

products and destinations, major shift in travel motivation and demographic characteristics of tourists, length of stay and frequency of travel, holiday booking methods, as well as the emergence of new product segments and promotion methods and activities (Vujičić et al, 2012). Market segmentation is widely applied in tourism mostly for determining the profile of tourists (Tkaczynski et al., 2010). The benefit of market segmentation lies in a tourist destination being able to specialize on the needs of a particular group of tourists and become the best for them. In doing so the destination gains a competitive advantage because (1) competition can be reduced from the global market to tourism destinations specializing on the same segment, (2) efforts can be focused on improving the product in a specific way rather than trying to provide all things to all people at high cost, (3) marketing efforts can be focused by developing the most effective message for the segment targeted and by communicating the message through the most effective communication channel for the segment, and finally, (4) tourist experiencing a vacation at a destination that suits their special needs are likely to be more satisfied with their stay and, consequently, revisit and advertise the destination among like-minded friends (Dolnicar, 2008). When segmentation is well-constructed and effectively utilized to understand and serve markets, destinations are able to direct their resources much more efficiently to reach the target markets and their efforts to compete against their rivals becomes much more fruitful (Birdir, 2015).

Numerous approaches and numerous variables are used in market segmentation. There is no universal approach, nor the scheme according to which it would be determined which model and which variables are the best for segmentation (Gutić & Petrić, 2012). Segmentation of the tourism market is done on a number of different bases, and all the criteria used can be classified into four categories: geographical, demographic, psychographic and behavioral categories (Živković, 2009; Jovičić, 2011; Đorđević & Veljković, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2017; Popesku, 2018) One way of market segmentation is a benefit segmentation (Zečević & Kovačević, 2016). The benefit segmentation implies the analysis of what consumers think about specific product attributes, and how much importance they attach to them (Mohsen & Dacko, 2013).

Authors' research based on geographical and demographic variables can be found in the scientific literature. Stanković, Đukić and Popović (2012) was conducted one such study in Serbia which showed that for certain aspects of the tourist product between tourists there are statistically significant differences in behavior, depending on their demographic and geographical characteristics. The changes

in the demographic structure of societies are undoubtedly one of the key factors affecting the social and economic life and the phenomena appearing in these spheres in a modern world (Szromek et al., 2012). Therefore demographic variables are often used for profiling various tourist segments. The most commonly used are age, gender and education level (Heung et al., 2001; Jönsson & Devonish, 2008; Pavlović, 2018).

The age is a distinctive demographic factor that affecting destination choice. Turisti različitih starosnih grupa imaju drugačije potrebe i želje (Najdić, 2014). While younger tourists seek fun and cheap places, older tourists tend to seek comfort and security. In keeping with the demographic trend, the aging population is considered one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism market (Weaver et al., 1994). The *Silver hair tourists* (seniors) are the segments with specific desires and needs in terms of customization, service consumption, security and desired products. The share of world's population over the age of 60 increased from 8 % in 1950 to 12 % in 2013. According to forecasts, this share will reach 21 % by 2050 (Horwath HTL, 2015). This segment becoming one of the most relevant markets in the tourism sector (Glover & Prideaux, 2008) and as predicted by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the share of older people in tourism movements will increase significantly in the future (Barjakta- rović & Pindžo, 2016). These "new seniors" are highly educated, independent, experiencing some kind of "personal awakening" and no longer fit in the stereotype "Stay at home" older people (Milićević, 2015). Seniors prefer longer stays at destinations. As they lack obligations about the work, they have more free time to travel, and they tend to enjoy in longer stays at their destinations than other tourists (Alegre & Pou, 2006). In order to maintain an active and healthy life, they are most focused on spa destinations, where they expect high quality health and tourism services (Milićević & Štetić, 2017).

In addition, *Millennials* or *Generation Y* (approximately people born in the 1980-1995 period) and *Generation Z*, known as *Post-Millennials* or *iGen* (approximately people born in the 1996-2010 period), are likewise appearing as an influence (Parment, 2013; Monaco, 2018). These are tech savvy, technology driven age groups, with specific needs for communication, consumption and the tourist experience (Milićević & Štetić, 2017). The *Millennials* are expected to represent 50% of all travelers by 2025 (Horwath HTL, 2015). The *Millennials* often have more discretionary income to spend than other generations and travel is typically a top priority (Rezdy, 2018). Namely, 60 % of them consider that travel is an integral part of life, by no means is a luxury, business travel "life" travel, their

spending on travel is significantly higher than the consumption of other market segments. During the year, they make on average 4-5 tourist trips (Barjaktarović & Pindžo, 2016). *Generation Z* is believed to be totally different from *Generation Y* in so much ways as they already have higher access to information, a more dynamic lifestyle, and a higher level of education, an accelerated adoption of change and faster spend (Horwath HTL, 2015). *Generation Z* is growing up in a world surrounded by technology and the internet, with smart phones, video games and screens. The sending of e-mails, SMS, “likes”, is an integral part of their daily life (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). These tourists expect a great deal from the travels. Tourism is considered as being, at the same time a moment of conviviality, socialization, implication and empowerment. All these needs are reflected in: last-minute decisions, search for opportunities, use of word-of-mouth recommendation sources to choose their destinations, increasing use of low-cost services (Mignon, 2003).

The results of Wong, Law and Zhao (2017) research revealed that more educated people engage in international travel more often, while those less educated travel within the state more often. Some study point that the tourists with elementary or college education are particularly motivated by the desire to rest and fun when they travel, while tourists with higher education levels have often reasons related to status, prestige or self-fulfillment. For some types of tourism, such as the cultural tourism, the level of tourist’s education is especially important. The tourist attracted by the cultural tourism is often an educated person, with high socio-economic status, who requires high quality services (Mazilu & Mitroi, 2010; UNWTO, 2001). Some other study point that the tourists with higher education level are more health concerned (Kim et al., 2009).

Gender also represents one of the most obvious characteristics on the basis of which many products and services have been separated and marketed (Najdić, 2014). In the past, middle-aged males dominated the business tourism market. However, majority of women are now in the labor force (Nedelea, 2008). The female gender is high-tech, connected, and social (Skift, 2014). The leisure travel market is far more balanced in terms of gender. However, in the older categories of leisure tourists (over the age of sixty), women outnumber men due to their longer life expectancy (Boston Globe, 2016). In addition, women are more travel influencers because they’re more involved in household spending decisions. In the USA 92 % of women make the travel decisions. Women are more sophisticated consumers who pay attention to detail, and depend on more on recommendations from friends (Jucan & Jucan, 2013).

## METHODS

In order to explore the characteristics of tourist demand, special attention has been devoted in the paper to the study of the impact of demographic characteristics on the attitudes of tourists who visited Vrnjačka Banja. Vrnjačka Banja was selected for this research because it is the most visited tourist destination in Serbia following Belgrade. At the same time, it is one of the largest and most famous spas in the country and the region. The key elements of Vrnjačka Banja's tourism product are, above all, its natural beauties and thermo-mineral springs, which are the central place of spa tourism development, on which a variety of health and wellness products are based. In addition, the rich offer of sports, recreational and cultural-entertainment products, as well as a variety of accommodation facilities, make Vrnjačka Banja especially attractive for various market segments (Hrabovski Tomić & Milićević, 2012).

Bearing in mind that the demographic characteristics of tourists have a significant impact on decision making of the tourist destination choice, that is, the different types of attractive, communicative and receptive elements that make up the destination product, the purpose of the paper is to analyze the impact of demographic characteristics on tourist attitudes about the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja. The analysis is based on the application of that test for independent samples for analysis differences between male and female and one way ANOVA between subject method differences for age and education. A Tukey post hoc test was used to determine between which pairs of independent variable categories arise differences in variance analysis.

The main goal of the paper is to analyze demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and education, have a significant impact on the attitudes of tourists about individual elements of the tourist product. The hypotheses tested in the paper are:

H<sub>1</sub>: The gender of tourists has a statistically significant impact on tourist attitudes about the key elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja;

H<sub>2</sub>: The age of tourists has a statistically significant impact on tourist attitudes about the key elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja;

H<sub>3</sub>: The level of education of tourists has a statistically significant impact on tourist attitudes about the key elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Regarding the composition of the sample, the share of women (52.6 %) and men (47.4 %) is relatively uniform. According to the age, the largest group of surveyed tourists is aged 31 to 50, of which there are 135 (44.4 %). As far as education is concerned, as many as 74 % of surveyed tourists have a high degree of education. The average value of the elements of the tourist product of Vrnjačka Banja was detected between 3.12 to 4.75. The highest mean value was recorded for the element of *Natural beauties*, and the lowest the element *Price*. Gender differences in attitudes toward the 13 elements of the tourism product are presented in Table 1. Of the total of 13 elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja, which were evaluated by tourists, only with *Traffic accessibility* and *General cleanliness and spa arrangement*, the difference in the mean values between the male tourist and female tourists is not statistically significant ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). Significant differences were observed between men and women in their attitudes towards the other 11 elements of the tourism product (Natural beauties, Diversity and quality offer, Medical tourism offer, Spa & wellness offer, Activities for children, Cultural and entertainment offer, Local tourists information and signaling, Accommodation, Hospitality and Price),  $p < 0.05$ . On average, women have a more positive attitude towards these elements of the tourism product than men. Based on the research results, we can accept H1. If the average value of the elements of the tourist product of Vrnjačka Banja from the aspect of the age of tourists is observed, it ranges from 2.91 to 4.78. The highest mean value was recorded by the element of *Natural beauties*, and the lowest the element *Local tourist information and signaling*. Namely, although tourists from the ages of 51 to 60 years rated *Natural beauties* a very high grade ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ) and consider this element of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja as “exceptional”, tourists who are younger than 30 have estimated this element of the tourist product considerably lower score ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). Although tourists under the age of 30 assessed the *Local tourist information and signaling* feature by the lowest score ( $M=2.91$ ,  $SD=1.22$ ), this element was rated by a higher rating by tourists aged over 30. Table 2 in the appendix presents the results of testing the differences in attitudes about the 13 elements of the tourism product, depending on the age of tourists. Of the total of 13 elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja, which were evaluated by tourists, only with *Traffic accessibility*, the difference in the mean values between different age group of tourist is not statistically significant ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). Significant differences were observed between tourists of different ages in attitudes towards the other 12 elements of the tourism product (Natural beauties, Diversity and quality offer, Medical tourism offer,

Spa&wellness offer, Activities for children, Cultural and entertainment offer, Local tourists information and signaling, General cleanliness and spa arrangement, Accommodation, Hospitality and Price),  $p < 0,05$ . Based on the previous, it can be concluded that the hypothesis  $H_2$  has been proven.

**Table 1.** The impact of gender on the tourist's attitudes about the key elements of the tourism products of Vrnjačka Banja

	Tourists	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Significante (p)*																																																																																																																																												
Natural beauties	Male	132	4.43	0.58	4.57	252	0.00																																																																																																																																												
	Female	122	4.75	0.51				Diversity and quality offer	Male	131	3.71	0.81	5.52	247	0.00	Female	118	4.25	0.73	Medical tourism offer	Male	125	4.16	.60	3.84	232	0.00	Female	109	4.48	0.66	Spa & wellness offer	Male	124	3.87	0.85	4.67	231	0.00	Female	109	4.37	0.75	Sports and recreation offer	Male	124	3.54	0.86	5.31	230	0.00	Female	108	4.11	0.75	Activities for children	Male	121	3.50	0.92	5.09	223	0.00	Female	104	4.11	0.84	Cultural and entertainment offer	Male	125	4.14	0.63	2.24	233	0.03	Female	110	4.34	.74	Traffic accessibility	Male	127	3.70	0.95	0.28	236	0.78	Female	111	3.74	1.12	Local tourists information and signaling	Male	127	3.17	1.22	4.19	237	0.00	Female	112	3.80	1.10	Accommodation	Male	128	3.77	0.90	6.88	236	0.00	Female	110	4.49	0.67	Hospitality	Male	132	4.36	0.61	4.42	250	0.00	Female	120	4.68	0.56	General cleanliness and spa arrangement	Male	129	3.91	0.80	1.24	241	0.22	Female	114	4.04	0.82	Price	Male	133	3.12	1.63	4.93	249	0.00
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Source: authors

**Table 2.** The impact of age on the tourist's attitudes about the key elements of the tourism products of VrnjačkaBanja

	Tourists	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	Significante (p)*
Natural beauties	<30	79	4.33	0.50	9.38	0.00
	31-50	95	4.63	0.64		
	51-60	46	4.78	0.42		
	>60	34	4.76	0.50		
Diversity and quality offer	<30	76	3.59	0.77	8.37	0.00
	31-50	94	4.14	0.77		
	51-60	45	4.09	0.82		
	>60	34	4.18	0.83		
Medical tourism offer	<30	75	4.05	0.49	7.93	0.00
	31-50	84	4.32	0.70		
	51-60	43	4.53	0.63		
	>60	32	4.56	0.67		
Spa&wellness offer	<30	77	3.67	0.85	13.55	0.00
	31-50	86	4.20	0.79		
	51-60	41	4.34	0.69		
	>60	29	4.62	0.68		
Sports and recreation offer	<30	73	3.55	0.80	3.29	0.02
	31-50	91	3.91	0.89		
	51-60	41	3.95	0.77		
	>60	27	3.93	0.96		
Activities for children	<30	72	3.47	0.69	4.91	0.00
	31-50	88	3.90	0.99		
	51-60	40	4.10	0.93		
	>60	25	3.76	1.09		
Cultural and entertainment offer	<30	72	4.07	0.42	4.30	0.01
	31-50	91	4.17	0.75		
	51-60	43	4.44	0.73		
	>60	29	4.48	0.83		
Traffic accessibility	<30	77	3.83	0.85	0.57	0.63
	31-50	91	3.69	1.10		
	51-60	43	3.67	1.06		
	>60	27	3.56	1.22		
Local tourists information and signaling	<30	77	2.91	1.22	9.58	0.00
	31-50	92	3.80	1.03		
	51-60	44	3.73	1.23		
	>60	26	3.50	1.14		
Accommodation	<30	72	3.64	0.86	11.16	0.00
	31-50	94	4.34	0.77		
	51-60	44	4.23	0.86		
	>60	28	4.32	0.86		

Hospitality	<30	78	4.29	0.54	6.52	0.00
	31-50	94	4.57	0.65		
	51-60	46	4.54	0.62		
	>60	34	4.79	0.48		
General cleanliness and spa arrangement	<30	76	4.18	0.53	3.22	0.02
	31-50	88	3.97	0.89		
	51-60	45	3.80	0.94		
	>60	34	3.76	0.85		
Price	<30	78	2.51	1.66	25.30	0.00
	31-50	93	3.87	1.00		
	51-60	46	4.00	1.05		
	>60	34	4.18	0.80		

Source: authors

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean values of the key elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja, such as *Natural beauties*, *Diversity and quality of the offer*, *Medical tourism offer*, *Spa & Wellness offer*, *Accommodation* and *Prices* among tourists who are younger than 30 years, on the one hand, and tourists who are over 30 years of age, on the other. However, when it comes to the element *Sports and recreation offer*, then there is a statistically significant difference between the mean values between tourists younger than 30 years ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=0.80$ ) and tourists aged between 31 and 50 ( $M=3.91$ ,  $SD=0.80$ ). Whereas, when it comes to the elements *Activities for children* and *Local tourist information and signaling*, a statistically significant difference in mean values has been recorded between tourists who are younger than 30 ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ) on one side and on the other side of the tourists aged between 31 and 60. There is a statistically significant difference between tourists who are younger than 30 ( $M=4.07$ ,  $SD=0.42$ ) and tourists older than 51 ( $M=4.44$ ,  $SD=0.73$ ) when asked about the quality score of the *Cultural and entertainment offer* as an element of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja. The assessment of *Hospitality* differs significantly between tourists who are younger than 30 ( $M=4.29$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ) on the one hand and, on the other hand, tourists aged 31-50 ( $M=4.57$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) and tourists over 60 years ( $M=4.79$ ,  $SD=0.48$ ) of age. The difference in the mean value of the ratings among tourists belonging to different age groups is not statistically significant when it comes to elements such as *Traffic accessibility* and *General cleanliness and spa arrangement*. On the basis of the foregoing, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean values between tourists who are younger than 30 on the one hand and one or more observed age groups on the other, except for elements such as *Traffic accessibility* and *General cleanliness and spa arrangement*. Of the total of 13 elements of

the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja, which were evaluated by tourists, only in the *Accommodation*, *General cleanliness* and *Price*, the difference in the mean values of the ratings among tourists of different levels of education is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results showed that education level have high impact on the perception of tourism product elements. Those results are presented in Table 4. Based on the previous, it can be concluded that the hypothesis H3 has not been proven.

**Table 3.** Multiple comparison of tourist's attitude about the key elements of the tourism products of Vrnjačka Banja

Dependent Variable	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)
Natural beauties	< 30	31-50	-0.30*
		51-60	-0.45*
		>60	-0.44*
	31-50	51-60	-0.15
		>60	-0.13
		51-60	0.02
Diversity and quality offer	< 30	31-50	-0.55*
		51-60	-0.50*
		>60	-0.58*
	31-50	51-60	0.05
		>60	-0.04
		51-60	-0.09
Medical tourism offer	< 30	31-50	-0.27*
		51-60	-0.48*
		>60	-0.51*
	31-50	51-60	-0.21
		>60	-0.24
		51-60	-0.03
Spa & wellness offer	< 30	31-50	-0.52*
		51-60	-0.67*
		>60	-0.94*
	31-50	51-60	-0.14
		>60	-0.42
		51-60	-0.28

		31-50	-0.36*
	< 30	51-60	-0.40
		>60	-0.38
Sports and recreation offer	31-50	51-60	-0.04
		>60	-0.01
	51-60	>60	0.03
		31-50	-0.42*
	< 30	51-60	-0.63*
		>60	-0.29
Activities for children	31-50	51-60	-0.20
		>60	0.14
	51-60	>60	0.34
		31-50	-0.11
	< 30	51-60	-0.37*
		>60	-0.41*
Cultural and entertainment offer	31-50	51-60	-0.27
		>60	-0.31
	51-60	>60	-0.04
		31-50	-0.89*
	< 30	51-60	-0.82*
		> 60	-0.59
Local tourists information and signaling	31-50	51-60	0.08
		> 60	0.30
	51-60	> 60	0.23
		31-50	-0.70*
	< 30	51-60	-0.59*
		> 60	-0.68*
Accommodation	31-50	51-60	0.11
		> 60	0.02
	51-60	> 60	-0.09
		31-50	-0.28*
	< 30	51-60	-0.25
		> 60	-0.50*
Hospitality	31-50	51-60	0.03
		> 60	-0.22
	51-60	> 60	-0.25

		31-50	0.22
	< 30	51-60	0.38
		> 60	0.42
General cleanliness and spa arrangement		51-60	0.17
	31-50	> 60	0.20
	51-60	> 60	0.04
		31-50	-1.36*
	< 30	51-60	-1.49*
		> 60	-1.66*
Price		51-60	-0.13
	31-50	> 60	-0.31
	51-60	> 60	-0.18

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

**Source:** authors

**Table 4.** The impact of education on the tourist's attitudes about the key elements of the tourism products of Vrnjačka Banja

	Tourists	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	Significante (p)*
Natural beauties	Primary education	4	4.75	0.50	1,41	0.25
	Secondary education	72	4.67	0.61		
	Faculty	177	4.54	0.55		
Diversity and quality offer	Primary education	4	3.75	0.96	1,43	0.24
	Secondary education	69	4.10	0.81		
	Faculty	175	3.91	0.82		
Medical tourism offer	Primary education	4	4.50	0.58	2,80	0.06
	Secondary education	69	4.45	0.65		
	Faculty	160	4.24	0.64		
Spa&wellness offer	Primary education	4	4.50	0.58	2,13	0.12
	Secondary education	69	4.25	0.75		
	Faculty	159	4.02	0.88		

Sports and recreation offer	Primary education	3	4.00	1.00	1.24	0.29
	Secondary education	66	3.94	0.93		
	Faculty	162	3.75	0.84		
Activities for children	Primary education	4	4.25	0.96	2.07	0.13
	Secondary education	67	3.94	1.04		
	Faculty	154	3.70	0.87		
Cultural and entertainment offer	Primary education	4	4.75	0.50	2.13	0.12
	Secondary education	69	4.32	0.74		
	Faculty	161	4.18	0.67		
Traffic accessibility	Primary education	4	4.25	0.96	2.63	0.07
	Secondary education	70	3.50	1.24		
	Faculty	164	3.80	0.92		
Local tourists information and signaling	Primary education	4	4.25	0.96	1.10	0.33
	Secondary education	68	3.54	1.16		
	Faculty	166	3.42	1.22		
Accommodation	Primary education	4	4.25	0.50	3.08	0.05*
	Secondary education	69	4.32	0.85		
	Faculty	165	4.01	0.88		
Hospitality	Primary education	4	5.00	0.00	1.62	0.20
	Secondary education	71	4.55	0.63		
	Faculty	176	4.48	0.60		
General cleanliness and spa arrangement	Primary education	4	4.25	0.96	4.17	0.02*
	Secondary education	71	3.75	1.10		
	Faculty	167	4.07	0.63		
Price	Primary education	4	4.50	1.00	6.95	0.00*
	Secondary education	72	3.96	0.86		
	Faculty	174	3.30	1.54		

**Source:** authors

Considering that the three groups of tourists from the education aspect are being observed, below in the paper, special attention will be devoted to an analysis aimed at determining among which groups there is a difference in the mean value of the assessments related to the elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja. When it comes to the element *Price*, tourists without education have estimated it by 4.50 ( $SD=1.00$ ), and tourists who have higher and high education by 3.30 ( $SD=1.54$ ). *General cleanliness and spa arrangement* were estimated by tourists with secondary education by 3.75 ( $SD=1.10$ ), and tourists without education by 4.25 ( $SD=0.96$ ). When it comes to elements of *Accommodation*, *General cleanliness and spa arrangement* and *Prices*, then a statistically significant difference in the mean value between tourists with secondary education and tourists with high and higher education was recorded.

**Table 5.** Multiply comparison of tourist’s attitude about the key elements of the tourism products of Vrnjačka Banja

Dependent Variable	(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)
Accommodation	Primary education	Secondary education	-0.07
		Faculty	0.24
	Secondary education	Faculty	0.31*
General cleanliness and spa arrangement	Primary education	Secondary education	0.50
		Faculty	0.18
	Secondary education	Faculty	-0.32*
Price	Primary education	Secondary education	0.54
		Faculty	1.20
	Secondary education	Faculty	0.66*

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Source:** authors

## DISCUSSION

The results of our study showed that the mean value of the elements of the tourist product of Vrnjačka Banja was between 3.12 to 4.75. The highest mean value was detected for the element of *Natural beauties*, and the lowest for the element *Price*. Also, only *Traffic accessibility* and *General cleanliness and spa arrangement*, was not statistically significant according to gender, while women have a more positive attitude towards these elements of the tourism product than men.

Birdir in his study from 2015. showed that “destination security,” “the friendliness of the local people,” “comfort at place of accommodation,” “low local crime rate” and “natural beauty and scenery” have been identified as the most important factors affecting tourists visiting Istanbul. This results are in correlation with our results where the tourists also think that those elements define some tourism destination. On the other hand, Weaver et al. (1994) in their study found that age is a distinctive demographic factor that affecting tourism destination choice. Namely, they concluded that younger people seek fun and cheap places, older people tend to seek comfort and security. The same group of authors also found that tourist under 45-year-old tends to be novelty-seeking. Those results are in comparison to our study also, where we confirmed that same element of tourism destination are more important to younger population such as price and Spa & wellness offer.

One of the most important elements that could influence on tourism destination choise by Dey and Sarma’s (2010) are also “Nature loving explorers,” “nature-lo-

ving vacationers,” and “change seekers.” The travel motivation factors found are also and vacation, fun and independence, health and recognition, nature and wander thirst. Motivations for tourism destination choose may differ based not only on the characteristics of the destinations but also on the nationality of tourists (Kozak, 2002). East Asian tourists were found to be more shopping-oriented than their European or North-American counter-parts (Rosenbaum et al, 2005). Also, souvenir and gift shopping was found to be very important for tourists in many parts of the world (Anderson et al., 1995); however, for Asian tourists (Japanese, Taiwanese, etc.) this practice was found to be particularly important in strengthening social relationships (Lyu et al., 2016).

Asians tourist also like to buy luxury items when traveling away from home (Park et al., 2010) and tend to spend more money on shopping than tourists from other parts of the world. Heung and Qu (1998) have shown that tourists visiting Hong Kong from different countries display different shopping preferences and behaviors. While Chinese and Taiwanese tourists dedicate more than 60% of their budget to shopping, North-American and European tourists use only about 30% of their budget for this purpose. The other study also showed that Europeans visiting a renowned market in Auckland, New Zealand were interested mainly in value for money when buying something and were concerned over “authenticity”, whereas Asian shoppers valued more the overall ambience. Previous study has confirmed that not only cultural but also social and demographic characteristics of tourists may influence their motivation to shop while travelling as well as their expectations and preferences (Anderson et al., 1995). Younger and less educated tourists were documented to be more interested in shopping while travelling (Lyu et al., 2016), results that can be seen as a major trend shift from previous findings that contended that older tourists with higher education tended to spend more on shopping while on vacation.

In terms of gender, previous studies have found that women, in general, are more interested in shopping and tend to spend more than men (Anderson et al., 1995). Oh et al. (2004) has shown that tourists’ social and demographic characteristics (gender and age) as well as their main motivation to travel may influence their choice of shopping outlet. All of those study results are in correlation with our results were also be confirmed that younger and less educated people love Spa & wellness offer and were more interesting in shopping.

Anderson et al., (1995) showed there is little correlation with gender ideologies as defined. It is argued that the authenticity of local products is an important

selling point for both early and middle adulthood cohorts. In conclusion a series of recommendations are outlined which retailers can adopt in order to increase their sales. These include: differentiating their prices from competitors in order to attract impulse purchasers; offering unique souvenirs, which can emphasize the authenticity of the local basis of their production; and focused marketing aimed at encouraging husbands or boyfriends to purchase expensive items as one off special souvenirs for their wives or girlfriends. The results of previous research confirmed that variables such as tourist perceptions of a destination or hospitality businesses, satisfaction levels, demographic profiles and tourist activities may vary according to countries of origin. Such differences in customer attitudes and behavior emphasize the importance of destination management exploring the feature of each customer group, segmenting tourism markets and releasing new marketing strategies that are appropriate for each market. However, despite extensive research on tourist motivation (Armstrong et al., 1997), the literature still suffers from a lack of empirical studies that investigate whether tourist motives differ between groups and destinations. People may intend to take a trip to fulfil their physiological (food, climate and health) and psychological (adventure and relaxation) needs (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). A variety of researchers thus note that tourists' motivations are multiple and people might have different reasons to take either domestic or international vacations. Each destination offers a variety of products and services to attract visitors and each tourist has an opportunity to choose from a set of destinations. Different factors may have an influence on destination choice, i.e. age, income, personality, cost, distance, risk and motivation. Of these, tourism literature emphasizes the importance of both push and pulls factors in shaping tourist motivations and in choosing vacation destinations (Crompton, 1979). Push factors are origin-related and refer to the intangible, intrinsic desires of the individual traveller, e.g. the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, health or prestige. Pull factors are mainly related to the attractiveness of a given destination and tangible characteristics such as beaches, accommodation and recreation facilities and cultural and historical resources (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). According to all of our results on destination choice or elements that define destination are dependent of age, gender and education level. Younger people with less education level choose same type of destination with especially emphasis on price and social events, while older people choose cultural destination.

## CONSLUSION

The aim of our study was to investigate the impact of demographic characteristics on the tourist's attitudes about the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja in

Serbia. Results of our study showed that all the average value of the elements of the tourist product of Vrnjačka Banja was between 3.12 to 4.75. According to all participants and elements, the highest mean value was recorded for *Natural beauties*, and the lowest for the element *Price*.

Of the total of 13 elements of the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja, which were evaluated by tourists, statistically significant differences in attitude between male and female tourists were not detected only for Traffic accessibility and General cleanliness and spa arrangement. In all other cases the differences between male and female tourists were statistically significant, where female tourist participants shared higher values than males. In relation to education level of participants, the difference among tourists was statistically significant only in Accommodation, General cleanliness and Price, while the other 10 elements did not statistically differ between the education groups.

Since there are three different age groups, the results showed that the younger tourist group gave more attention to sport and recreation, Spa & wellness offer, and Accommodation and prices, while the older group preferred Natural beauties, Activities for children, and Cultural and Entertainment offer. Based on all of our results, we can conclude that demographic characteristics of tourists have a significant impact on the tourist's attitudes about the tourism product of Vrnjačka Banja in Serbia.

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