

## TOURIST VALORIZATION AS THE BASIS FOR MANAGING TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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**Abstract:** The concept of tourist valorization is only partially and sporadically examined on the territory of the Republic of N. Macedonia. Furthermore, managing tourist areas by specific destination management organizations has not yet been implemented on a satisfactory level. In such conditions of tourism development, the idea developed for writing this paper. From this emerged the need for expanding the concept of tourist valorization in the domestic scientific and professional field. This is made possible through a comprehensive, substantial and systematic analysis of the tourist valorization process in the function of improving the management of tourist areas. The basic subject of this research paper consists of determining the place, role, function, types and approaches of tourist valorization in the processes of managing tourist areas. Thus, this paper has a dual purpose. On the one hand, it should contribute to the enrichment of the scientific thought with contemporary concepts and approaches for tourist valorization. On the other hand, the results and knowledge of the paper should be in function of improving the current destination management and intensifying the level of tourism development in a given tourist space. The territory in question is the Ohrid tourist region which is also the touristically most developed in the country. This paper presents the results of the doctoral thesis by the author in which the research process through all its phases was performed with the use of a conceptual theoretical and methodological framework, which consisted of both cabinet and empirical analysis. This made it possible for primary and secondary data to be obtained. The collection, systematization and processing of data, as well as the presentation of the obtained results, were made possible through the application of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The conducted cabinet research involved the reference of a wide range of international scientific and professional literature. The empirical research activities included the implementation of contemporary methodological approaches for valorization of several aspects of tourism. The scientific - applicative verification of this paper consists of the practical use of sublimated knowledge, global experiences and best practices for the valorization process in a defined tourist area. More specifically, the used methodological research approaches were the following: European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Destinations Toolkit (ETIS-Toolkit), Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and valorization of the destination's sub-systems: Factor, Attractors and Support Services (FAS-approach). Because of the wide range and volume of findings and results from the conducted research processes, only the most relevant will be presented in this paper. The gained research results allowed making conclusions and suggestions that have the aim to intensify and promote tourism development in the designated area of the Ohrid tourist region. This should serve as a framework for creative use of various valorization approaches in the processes of tourism management, not only on the analyzed territory, but also beyond.

**Keywords:** tourism, tourist valorization, tourist destination, tourism development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourist areas consist of a large number of values that allow tourists and visitors to visit them. Resource management is therefore a complex process for the managing structures operating in tourist areas (Risteski, Kocovski & Arnaudov, 2011). In this regard, it is necessary to valorize the resources so that they can be allocated and put into function of tourism. Once tourism resources are valorized, they are transformed into tourist attractions due to their ability to attract tourists and visitors to the places where they are located. Numerous methods of resource valorization are systematized according to the domains to which they refer (economic, social and cultural). The tourist phenomenon has global influence. In addition, sustainability is also one of the most influential global phenomena that influences all domains of modern living. The need for applying the concept of sustainability in the tourism process stems from its increasingly massive-scale development. Valorization of the tourist sites should be in the function of sustainable development. It is particularly important to emphasize that empirical research in this paper included the use of contemporary methodological approaches. Several valorization approaches were used for determining the development perspectives of the Ohrid tourist area. The application of sustainable tourism development in the Ohrid tourist area implies valorization of many aspects of sociological, economic and ecological type. One of the most important segments of the research component of the paper was the valorization analysis of the resource base of the Ohrid tourist area. More specifically, this involved systematic and structural valorization of differentiated and categorized natural and cultural resources. Valorization is performed and presented in a

quantitative and qualitative form. The results of such valorization allow to prioritize the identified resources and possibilities, as well as to define specific development directions of the analyzed area. All aspects of the Ohrid tourist area were valorized in terms of considering opportunities and recommendations for selective tourism development.

## 2. QUALITATIVE VALORIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE OHRID TOURIST AREA BY USING HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

The indicators that determine the Outstanding Universal Value - OUV, according to the Management Plan of the Ohrid Tourist Area, are **integrity** and **authenticity** (Law on Managing the World Natural and Cultural Heritage Site of the Ohrid Area, 2010). These two elements (integrity and authenticity) create the *cultural landscape* of the Ohrid tourist area which is particularly significant. The cultural landscape is defined as an area of cultural heritage resulting from the combined action of nature and man (UNESCO Operational Guidelines - Article 1, 2008). This is in fact a combination of authentic natural and cultural values integrated into a single whole. Therefore, if integrity and authenticity are compromised, the cultural landscape of this area, as well as its exceptional universal values, will be disrupted. In order to maintain the authenticity, integrity, cultural landscape and outstanding universal values of the Ohrid region, municipal authorities need to implement an effective, sustainable and long-term strategy for managing the active involvement of all stakeholders as well as the local community. This means that in order to achieve sustainable tourism development in this area, a management system has to be developed that will protect the integrity and authenticity of the various undertakings in order to promote tourism. This is especially important given the fact that in the last two years there is a real threat to list the Ohrid tourist area as a World Natural and Cultural Heritage Site in danger. The reasons are numerous, but largest threats are the inadequate spatial planning and the unsustainable destination management in the past 3 decades. In the following text an overview of this type of valorization (Heritage Impact Assessment) of the Ohrid region's integrity and authenticity is presented in tables.

The basic finding when valorizing cultural tourism resources is that the selective type of tourism that makes the most use of those values should be taken into account. Accordingly, rural tourism has been identified as the most appropriate sustainable type of tourism that expresses the greatest potential for development in the Ohrid tourist area (as opposed to mass tourism or lakeside tourism that has evolved in the past). Cultural tourism values within rural tourism have for the most part a pronounced complementary role. The valorization process included an expert evaluation of the individual cultural sites in the rural region of the Ohrid tourist area. In addition to valorizing the importance of cultural resources for the development of rural tourism, it is also necessary to assess the impacts on these values. This process is closely related to sustainability (Risteski, 2019).

The Ohrid tourist area is a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site of mixed character (natural and cultural heritage). The reason for using such methodology for cultural resource valorization (HIA) is that this approach has global importance (developed and implemented by ICOMOS) and because it is implemented in localities and areas in need of sustainable tourism development such as the Ohrid tourist area (International Council on Monuments and Sites – ICOMOS, 2011). The main purpose of this methodological approach is to determine the positive and negative impacts that a certain type of development may cause on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the analyzed area. In this sense, examined were the impacts that mass tourism may cause on existing cultural resources located in the rural region of the Ohrid tourist area. More specifically, the territory in question is the territory of the National Park "Galichica" which belongs to the Municipality of Ohrid, i.e. the Ohrid tourist area (Risteski & Kocevski, 2015). Thus, the two types of heritage were valorized (natural and cultural heritage). This method has the essential function of predicting different impacts on cultural heritage in rural areas.

The results of the valorization (assessment) of the impacts of tourism development on the cultural values in the rural region of the Ohrid tourist area are presented in tables below. This type of valorization is usually being done for specific undertakings on certain territories (most often these are larger urban or infrastructural undertakings or construction activities). In the interest of this paper, examined are the potential impacts that uncontrolled tourism development (mass tourism) may cause on individual cultural values in the Galichica National Park. The sites were identified by the author's research activities as part of the project *Heritage Impact Assessment - Potential impact of the Expressway Ohrid – Peshtani on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property of the Ohrid Region* (Korunovski, Patcev, Risteski & Markovikj, 2015). The territory of the national park has been selected due to the fact that it is mostly rural space with the most favorable conditions for development of rural tourism in the Ohrid tourist area. Furthermore, both natural and cultural values are incorporated in the territory of the national park, which represents an area with an integrated protection regime that provides sustainable development (Risteski, 2019).

In the interest of this paper and due to the volume of the research materials, only those sites are presented (in tables) for which results were obtained that show the highest impact by mass tourism and which require future undertakings

in order to counterbalance the negative effects. In this sense, the following cultural and historical sites were included in the research activities: Early Christian Basilica "Studenchishta", Archaeological site "Ancient Furnace" - St. Stefan, Church of the Assumption of the Holy Theotokos - Velestovo, Church of the Holy Trinity - Velestovo, Church of the Annunciation - Racha, site of St. Stefan - "Pancir", Church of St. Mina - Elshani, Church of St. George - Peshtani, Church of St. Paraskevi (Sveta Voda) - Peshtani, Church of St. Nicholas, Archaeological site Dzhamishte - Peshtani, Cave Church of the Holy Mother of God - Peshtanska, Church of the Holy Mother of God – Zahumska (Risteski, 2019). Presented are the sites that show the highest impacts by mass tourism.

**Table no. 1 – Valorizing the impacts of the increased number of visitors on the Early Christian Basilica “Studenchichta”**

<b>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY:</b>	<b>High</b>	<p>The earlychristian basilica „Studenchishta“ is an archaeological siteand part of the archaeological heritage of the Ohrid region. It is an inegral part of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the region.</p> <p>The building is insufficiently researched in a scientific and archaeological manner. It has not been conserved recently and is not defined as a distinctive locality. The site does not have a new function, ie it is only used by tourists and visitors who walk through the area and the only access is a an untrimmed and marked hiking trail</p> <p>As a receptor, it exhibits high sensitivity</p>				
	<b>Buildings/fabric Moderate or large (Negative)</b>	<p>The increasing number of tourists implies the need for improving accessibility of the site as well as its equipping/trimming. The increased number of tourists and visitors to this site can have a significant impact, ie negative impacts at a medium level. This is due to the lack of measures to protect this value for regulating the movement and behavior of the visitors to the site.</p>				
	<b>Context/setting Neutral</b>	<p>The elements of the surrounding area of the site will not be disturbed by the increased number of tourists because the remnants of this cultural resource are limited only to its foundations. This cultural resource is almost invisible from all the points that make the entire cultural landscape of the site.</p>				
<b>IMPACT MAGNITUDE</b>						
<b>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY</b>		<b>No change Context/ Setting</b>	<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Moderate Buildings/fabric</b>	<b>Major</b>
	<b>Very high</b>	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or large	Large or very large	Very large
	<b>High</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	Slight	Slight or moderate	<b>Moderate or large</b>	Large or very large
	<b>Medium</b>	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Slight	Moderate	Large
	<b>Low</b>	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight	Slight or moderate
	<b>Negligible</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight

**Table no. 2 – Valorizing the impacts of the increased number of visitors on the cave church of the Holy Mother of God - Pehanska**

<b>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY:</b>	<b>High</b>	The cave church is considered an integral and constituent part of the exceptional universal value of the region (OUV). This derives from its cultural and historical significance, as well as its incorporation into the surroundings and attractive landscape. The frescoes are endangered by damaging that is mostly due to moisture. Nevertheless, the frescoes are the best preserved of all the cave churches on the shores of Lake Ohrid. This necessitates the need for conservation activities as well as finding models for active protection. As a receptor this church exhibits high sensitivity, due to its easy accessibility and the risk of unintentional damage, as well as vandalism. Thus, receptor sensitivity is valorized as high.				
	<b>Buildings/fabric Large or very large (Negative)</b>	The increased number of tourists implies the need for improving the equipment, equipping and protection of the building itself. Tourists and visitors of this site can cause significant negative impacts. The degree of impact on the building/fabric of the site is valorized as large or very large. This is due to the lack of current protection measures against visitors and tourists. This situation would be significantly exacerbated by the increased number of visitors. The necessary precautions would regulate the movement and behavior of visitors to the site itself.				
	<b>Context/setting Moderate or large (Negative)</b>	The church is significantly integrated into the surrounding landscape. If greater efforts are made to increase the number of visitors and tourists, ie the current high level of attendance is not regulated, the appearance of the site and its surroundings would be significantly endangered. Therefore a medium or high level of impact (negative impact) can be ascertained.				
<b>IMPACT MAGNITUDE</b>						
<b>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY</b>		<b>No change</b>	<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Moderate Context/ Setting</b>	<b>Major Buildings/fabric</b>
	<b>Very high</b>	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or large	Large or very large	Very large
	<b>High</b>	Neutral	Slight	Slight or moderate	<b>Moderate or large</b>	<b>Large or very large</b>
	<b>Medium</b>	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Slight	Moderate	Large
	<b>Low</b>	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight	Slight or moderate
	<b>Negligible</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight

**Table no. 3 – Valorizing the impacts of the increased number of visitors on the church Holy Mother of God - Zahumska**

<b>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY:</b>	<b>High</b>	Also the church of the Holy Mother of God Zahumska is considered an important part of the outstanding universal value of the Ohrid tourist region. Because of its importance, but also the complexity of the site where it is located, as well as the relatively poor protection regime applied, this site can be valorized with a high degree of receptor sensitivity.
	<b>Buildings/fabric Moderate or large (Positive)</b>	The recently built konaks (lodgings) are thought to be the reason for the increase in the number of visitors and tourists in the area. The small port facilitates access by vessels. Currently the visits to the facility is relatively low. However, if the total number of tourists and visitors to the Ohrid tourist area increases, many of them will also visit this site. This would cause the need for conservation and restoration of the physical character of the building, ie its building and fabric. Therefore, this site can be valorized with a medium or high level of impact, in a positive sense.
	<b>Context/setting Large or very large (Negative)</b>	The context/setting of this facility is valorized negatively, but with a higher degree of impact than the building/fabric of the site (large or very large degree of impact). This conclusion arises from the fact that the church represents one of the best incorporated cultural and historical values in the surrounding natural environment. The site has a particularly attractive landscape. Therefore, even new undertakings for arranging, equipping and increasing the accessibility have had negative impacts. With the increase of the total number of tourists and visitors to the Ohrid tourist region, it is considered that the landscape will be particularly endangered by the impact of mass tourism and unregulated visits.

		IMPACT MAGNITUDE				
		No change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate Buildings/fabric	Major Context/ Setting
RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	Very high	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or large	Large or very large	Very large
	High	Neutral	Slight	Slight or moderate	<b>Moderate or large</b>	<b>Large or very large</b>
	Medium	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Slight	Moderate	Large
	Low	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight	Slight or moderate
	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight

The significance of the impact of mass tourism on the cultural resources on the territory of the rural area of the Ohrid tourist area (National Park Galichica) can be seen from the previous valorization. A detailed review of the valorization of individual cultural resources showed that most of the values analyzed are not directly endangered by the possible uncontrolled increase in the number of visitors and tourists in the Ohrid tourist area. However, some of the valorized values can be distinguished which show a greater risk of damage or destruction which can lead to their values being reduced. In this sense, preventive and corrective actions should be taken regarding the following sites: Early Christian Basilica "Studenchishta", Cave Church of the Holy Mother of God - Peshtanska, Church of the Holy Mother of God – Zahumska. For the other valorized cultural sites (Archaeological site "Ancient Furnace" - St. Stefan, Church of the Assumption of the Holy Theotokos - Velestovo, Church of the Holy Trinity - Velestovo, Church of the Annunciation - Racha, site of St. Stefan - "Pancir", Church of St. Mina - Elshani, Church of St. George - Peshtani, Church of St. Paraskevi (Sveta Voda) - Peshtani, Church of St. Nicholas, Archaeological site Dzhamishte - Peshtani) results were obtained that show neutral impact by mass tourism (Risteski, 2019). These sites are also often characterized by unfavorable conditions related to tourist visits, which, on the one hand, can be considered a positive thing, as they are not affected by mass tourism. However, on the other hand, such cultural values are not sufficiently included in the existing tourism offer. Thus, immediate actions should be undertaken in order to eliminate this disadvantage.

### 3. QUANTITATIVE VALORIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE OHRID TOURIST AREA BY USING THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATOR SYSTEM FOR SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS TOOLKIT (ETIS) AND FACTORS, ATTRACTORS AND SUPPORT SERVICES (FAS) - METHODOLOGY

One of the most widely used approaches for valorizing the degree of sustainability of tourist destinations is the **European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Destinations Toolkit (ETIS system/toolkit)**. This system consists of 43 key indicators (and even more sub-indicators) grouped into 4 general categories: Destination Management, Economic Value, Social and Cultural Impact, Environmental Impact (European Commission, 2016). The selection and use of the number/type of indicators is not the same for all tourist destinations. It mainly depends on the specificity of the tourist areas themselves (Risteski, 2019). This system allows the creators of tourism policies and strategies to make the right development decisions. In addition, the aforementioned research methodology was combined with the **“Factors, Attractors and Support Services” – system (FAS - methodology)**, developed by the UNWTO (Risteski & Kocovski, 2018). The results in fact derived from the project *Innovative Solutions for Improved Access to Services at Local Level: Creating a Network for Inclusive Development of the South-West Planning Region of the Republic of Macedonia, Mapping of potentials for development of different types of rural tourism and preparing a Register of Potentials for Rural Tourism* in which the author was directly involved. The research included both, cabinet and field activities (Jankuloski, Risteski, Marinoski, Cavdaroska & Geshoski, 2016). The research showed that the environment of the Ohrid tourist area is characterized by favorable conditions for the development of nature – based types of tourism. Namely, numerous rural settlements and locations exist in the area, which are very attractive for tourists. This represents a unique opportunity for widening the current tourist offer, besides the fact that Ohrid is a recognizable lake-based and cultural tourism destination. The region has the most favorable tourist – geographical location, in relation to the other regions in the Republic of N. Macedonia (Sekulovska, Marinoski, Nestoroska & Risteski, 2018). The conducted research also showed that a relatively large surface area is covered by forests, arable land and unique biodiversity. However, the unfavorable results obtained from the research must also be mentioned. In this sense, the treatment of solid waste and wastewater is on a

relatively low and unsatisfactory level. The South-west Planning Region (SWPR), in which the Ohrid tourist area is located, accounts for more than half of the total generated waste on the national level. The Ohrid tourist area abides a specific protection and management plan, for which long-lasting solutions must be determined in order to create undisturbed sustainable development conditions for tourism (Risteski, 2019).

The analysis of the natural and cultural values by using the FAS-methodology allowed determining concrete attractions and their significance to different aspects of tourism development. The results were obtained from a questionnaire with a sample of 300 respondents, as well as from conducted interviews with different stakeholders in the SWPR (Jankuloski et al, 2016). In that sense, the following natural values have been determined as the most important attractions: Springs of St. Naum (Black Drim springs), River Black Drim, National Park Galichica, Cave Samotska Dupka and Ohrid Lake. These natural attractions, when compared with the other defined attractions of the planning region, show higher obtained results (by using a Likert-scale of grading) in terms of attractiveness, visitation, accessibility. Furthermore, analyzed were the possibilities for improvement and opportunities for increasing the number of visitors. The most favorable results were also obtained for the Ohrid tourist area, regarding the aforementioned categories. The research also showed that most of the defined natural attractions of the planning region are located in the Ohrid tourist area (more than 25 % at the regional level, or from a total of 9 municipalities). Similar results were obtained from the valorization analysis of the cultural values by using the same methodology (FAS). The cultural values were analyzed in terms of the same categories (as for the natural values): visitation, accessibility, attractiveness, possibilities for improvement and opportunities for increasing the number of visitors (Jankuloski et al, 2016). However, for the cultural values even higher results were obtained. Namely, from the total number of defined cultural attractions in the planning region (52 attractions in SWPR), more than 2/3 are located in the Ohrid tourist area (37 attractions in the Ohrid area) (Risteski, 2019). Some of the most important cultural values that were defined as attractions by the research team, respondents and stakeholders were the following: churches and monasteries (St Kliment – St. Panteleimon, St. Sofia, Mother of God Perivleptos, St. John Kaneo, Holy Mother of God and St. Nicholas – Bolnichki, St. Nicholas Gerakomija, St. Naum, Holy Mother of God Zahumska, St. Stefan, St. Erasmus, etc.), mosques (Ali Pasha, Zeynel Abedin Pasha, Sinan Chelebi - turbe), fortresses (Samuil Fortress, Gradishte), Ancient Theater, Archaeological sites (Ohrid Citadel, Plaoshnik, Bay of Bones - Mikjov Grad), museums (House of Robev Family, Gallery of Icons, House of Hristo Uzunov, House of Grigor Prlichev, Museum on water), cultural/religious/sports events (Epiphany – Vodici, Easter, celebrations of St. Erasmus, St. Naum and St. Kliment, Ohrid Summer Festival, Balkan Festival of Traditional Songs and Dances, Ohrid Fest, Prlichevi Besedi, Ohrid Swimming Marathon) (Rakicevik & Risteski, 2017). The most important cultural attraction is actually the Old Urban Core of the city of Ohrid, protected by UNESCO (Marinoski & Risteski, 2019).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper aims not only to widen the theoretical research and scientific thought, but also to contribute in a practical sense through the valorization of specific natural and cultural values that are most suitable for the development of alternative types of tourism, such as rural tourism. Tourism valorization is still insufficiently used in the current research activities for the creation of development plans, programs and strategies. Thus, this paper should widen the idea of detailed valorization analysis in concrete tourism destinations and territories. The 3 research methodologies used in this paper (ETIS, HIA and FAS) have international significance. In order to create more competitive tourist products and destinations in the Republic of N. Macedonia, the aforementioned methodologies as well as similar practices should be used, when considering development directions and creating strategic development documents. Thus, the research activities and results examined in this paper can be used in other similar tourism destinations in the Republic of N. Macedonia and beyond.

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