

## Tourism Potential Assessment Model of the Monasteries of the Ibar Cultural Tourism Zone

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to determine and highlight the tourism potentials of the Ibar cultural tourism zone monasteries, which is located in the southwest part of Serbia. In the assessment of tourism potential, a quantitative model consisting of two groups of indicators (resource values and state of development) conceived of seven sub-indicators that were ranked and evaluated by respondents in the field, was applied. The results of the study show that the total tourist potential of the Ibar cultural tourism zone is 0.756, which classifies it as an area with high potential. A substantial difference in grading can be noticed by comparing two groups of indicators. The value of the resource is 0.812, and the value of the development state is 0.700. The main value of the study is that for the first time, a model based on quantitative calculations is applied in order to determine the tourist potential of the Ibar cultural tourism zone monasteries. The study also highlights the advantages and disadvantages and contributes to better promotion and development of this area.

**Key words:** *Quantitative model, tourist assessment, tourism potential, monasteries, Ibar zone, Serbia*

### Introduction

Tourism is a development indicator (Kelkay, Abunie, & Sharma, 2019) and can make a significant contribution to economic growth, social functions and sustainable development if methodologically planned (Al Mamun & Mitra, 2012). It also has a leading role in the promotion and international perception of the destination (Dupeyras & Maccallum, 2013). The number of tourists has increased due to more leisure time, more income and high mobility, a result of increased car ownership, national and international road/sea/air public transportation systems and information technology (Kelkay, Abunie, & Sharma, 2019). Regions that until recently had a poorly developed tourism industry are increasingly investing in tourism, in an effort to strengthen their economies (Drakulić Kovačević et al., 2018). As a result, the number of tourist destinations and competitiveness in the tourist market is constantly growing.

When tourism is taken as a whole, the importance of a tourist destination is emphasized. Defining the term tourist destination is not easy. It can be viewed as a changing, dynamic, adaptive and complex system of different and interconnected components (economic, social and environmental) whose key characteristic is the complexity that affects the dynamic state of tourism as a whole (Provenzano & Baggio, 2019). In fact, a tourist destination encompasses different types of spatial units, most often local and regional, then national, and even continental in which tourist traffic takes place (Gunn, 1998). These are places where tourists spend most of their time traveling. Tourism sites are crucial parts of successful tourism as tourism sites are the

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