



Growth and Quality of Family Accommodation in the Function of Tourist Development of Slavonski Brod

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**GROWTH AND QUALITY OF FAMILY ACCOMMODATION
IN THE FUNCTION OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
OF SLAVONSKI BROD**

**RAST I KVALITETA OBITELJSKOG SMJEŠTAJA
U FUNKCIJI TURISTIČKOG RAZVOJA
SLAVONSKOG BRODA**

ABSTRACT

The city of Slavonski Brod has been intensively developing as a tourist destination. Although the main motives for the arrival of tourists are business and family gatherings and other types of social events, and "food and accommodation" in cases of guests in transit, tourist traffic shows a tendency to grow which implicitly leads to an increase in accommodation. From the data of the eVisitor system, it is evident that more progressive growth is recorded in non-hotel compared to hotels and similar accommodation establishments. This is primarily due to the fact that, in the circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic and the conditions in which the hospitality sector operates under the epidemiological measures, family accommodation owners continue to operate relatively well (in the period from January to December 2020 family accommodation recorded a decrease of 31,71% compared to the same period in 2019, which is even 14,27% less than the average decline at the level of all city accommodation establishments). The research goals of this paper were to determine the attitude of local population regarding apartmentization and to find out if the owners of private rooms/apartments intend to provide accommodation services in future, and/or expand/modernize existing accommodation units. In the research we applied a questionnaire among local citizens and in-depth interviews with several owners of family accommodation as methods. The hypothesis we tried to prove is that both the growth and the quality of family accommodation in a destination is in the function of its tourist development. The research results should motivate the local population that has excess living space to provide accommodation services as additional activity and assist local government units in adopting measures to encourage private entrepreneurship in tourism.

Keywords: Slavonski Brod; family accommodation; tourist apartmentization

SAŽETAK

Grad Slavonski Brod se tijekom posljednjih dvadesetak godina intenzivno razvija kao turistička destinacija. Iako su osnovni motivi dolaska turista poslovni skupovi te druga društvena i obiteljska okupljanja, kao i „hrana i smještaj“, u slučajevima kad je riječ o gostima u tranzitu, turistički promet pokazuje tendenciju porasta što implicitno dovodi i do porasta broja smještajnih objekata u gradu. Iz podataka dostupnih posredstvom sustava E-visitor evidentno je da se progresivniji rast bilježi kod komplementarnih smještajnih u odnosu na osnovne smještajne objekte. Isto je prvenstveno uvjetovano činjenicom što, u izvanrednim okolnostima pandemije koronavirusa i otežanih uvjeta poslovanja ugostiteljsko-turističkog sektora zbog primjene epidemioloških mjera, vlasnici obiteljskog smještaja i dalje posluju relativno dobro (u razdoblju od 1. siječnja do 31. prosinca 2020. turistički promet u obiteljskom smještaju bilježi pad od 31,71% u odnosu na isto razdoblje 2019., što je čak za 14,27% manje u odnosu na prosječni pad na razini svih gradskih smještajnih objekata). Cilj istraživanja koje smo proveli među domaćom populacijom je bio utvrđivanje stava domicilnog stanovništva glede turističke apartmanizacije te spoznaja o tome imaju li se privatni iznajmljivači namjeru i dalje baviti pružanjem usluga smještaja, odnosno proširivati/modernizirati postojeće smještajne jedinice. Primjenjena je metoda anketiranja lokalnog stanovništva i dubinskih intervjua s nekoliko vlasnika obiteljskog smještaja, a hipoteza koju smo kroz istraživanja pokušati dokazati bila je da su i porast i kvaliteta obiteljskog smještaja u gradu u funkciji njegovog turističkog razvoja. Rezultati provedenih istraživanja trebali bi motivirati domicilno stanovništvo koje ima višak stambenog prostora na bavljenje pružanjem usluga smještaja u dopunskoj djelatnosti te pomoći jedinicama lokalne uprave i samouprave prigodom donošenja mjera kojima se u turističkoj djelatnosti potiče privatno poduzetništvo.

Ključne riječi: Slavonski Brod; obiteljski smještaj; turistička apartmanizacija

1. Introduction

Most empirical research does not burden the definition of a tourist destination at all, but simply deals with the locations where visitor traffic takes place or where it could take place (Hitrec, T., 1995, 43-51), all in order to meet the needs of tourists (Lončarić, B., 2012, 140). A prerequisite for this is, among other things, appropriate equipment for the arrival and stay of tourists, where the laws of tourist markets give priority to tourist demand (market oriented concept) which has the most intensive effect on the destination, ie its offer (Magaš, D., Vodeb, K., Zadel, Z., 2018, 48).

According to Buhalis (Buhalis, D., 2000), in the analysis of a tourist destination, in addition to attractions, available packages and activities, accessibility (the entire infrastructure system), facilities (accommodation and catering facilities, retail trade, other tourist services), and ancillary services (bank services, post offices, hospitals, etc.) should be taken into account, so the destination must have an offer that will meet the requirements of visitors (Travis, AS, 1989).

2. Basic reasons for traveling to Slavonia and consumption of tourists in this region

According to the results of the research "Tomas Croatia 2019", conducted by the Zagreb Institute of Tourism, the reasons for tourists traveling to Adriatic and continental Croatia are significantly different. While tourists traveling to the Adriatic in more than 90.00% of cases cite "vacation" as the main reason for traveling, tourists moving to the regions of continental Croatia, in addition to vacation (they cite it as a reason to travel in 62.70% of cases), travel for business reasons as well, in 21.70% of cases.

Table 1 Main reasons for tourist traveling to the regions of continental Croatia, in %

Reasons	Continetal Croatia, total	Zagreb	Slavonia	Northern Croatia	Central Croatia
Business	21,70	28,10	29,70	21,40	9,80
Vacation	62,70	57,30	37,80	60,50	79,10
Visit to relatives and friends	6,20	5,00	19,30	8,10	3,50
Health reasons	3,40	3,10	2,00	4,90	3,40
Religious reasons	0,40	0,00	0,20	0,80	0,60
Education	1,60	2,00	2,40	1,00	1,20
Something else	4,00	4,40	8,50	3,30	2,40

Source: *Tomas - attitudes and consumption of tourists in Croatia 2019*, Institute of Tourism, Zagreb, 2020, p. 103

Regarding the reasons for traveling to Slavonia, the data in Table 1 show that, unlike other regions of continental Croatia where tourists mostly come for vacation, in Slavonia, besides traveling for vacation (in 37.80% of cases), tourists also travel for the reasons of work (in 29.7% of cases), but also for visiting relatives and friends (in 19.30% of cases, which is

13.10% more than the average at the level of continental Croatia). It is also interesting to note that as many as 8.50% of tourists traveling to Slavonia do not cite work, vacation, education, health or religious reasons as the reason for their trip, but "something else".

The results of the research "Tomas Croatia 2019" also showed that the structure of average expenditures of tourists staying in Adriatic and continental Croatia does not differ significantly, with tourists in Adriatic Croatia spending an average of 128.49 euros per day, and in continental Croatia 12.65 % less. In both cases, the largest share of expenditures (average 64.69%) relates to accommodation and food in restaurants (average 21.19%).

Table 2 Structure of average daily tourist expenditures in regions of continental Croatia, in %

Average daily expenditures	Continental Croatia, total	Zagreb	Slavonia	Northern Croatia	Central Croatia
Accommodation	55,15	58,99	36,26	54,01	56,87
Food in restaurants	17,61	16,80	24,81	16,03	16,40
Trade	12,95	11,20	26,06	9,41	12,33
Culture and entertainment	1,77	1,56	2,17	0,99	2,90
Sports and recreation	0,79	0,56	0,99	0,21	1,956
Excursions	1,09	1,51	0,39	0,46	0,67
Local transport	7,86	6,89	7,06	12,97	7,41
Other things	2,79	2,49	2,26	5,92	1,46

Source: *Tomas - attitudes and consumption of tourists in Croatia 2019*, Institute of Tourism, Zagreb, 2020. p. 180

When it comes to the region of Slavonia, the data from Table 2 are very indicative. They show that tourists in Slavonia spend less money on accommodation (36.26% of total expenditures) compared to tourists staying in other regions of continental Croatia, and significantly more, compared to other regions, on food in catering facilities (24.81%, meaning 7.20% more than on average at the level of continental Croatia) and trade (26.06%, meaning 13.11% more than on average).

The conclusion that we can draw from these data is that tourists in Slavonia use cheaper types of accommodation during their stay in the region, but at the same time set aside significant amounts for non-board consumption in the part related to consumption of catering services and shopping.

3. Tourist trends in the region of Slavonia

According to the eVisitor system, during 2019, 523.339 overnight stays were realized in the region of Slavonia (8.79% more than in 2018), after which year there was a drastic drop in tourist traffic in 2020 (by as much as 50.30%).), which was due to the coronavirus pandemic (Table 3).

Table 3 Tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the area of five Slavonian counties, 2018-2020

County	Overnight stays 2018	Overnight stays 2019	Overnight stays 2020	Arrivals 2018	Arrivals 2019	Arrivals 2020
Osijek-Baranja	202.287	234.018	119.244	100.415	111.134	47.813
Vukovar-Srijem	141.606	140.483	57.291	82.590	82.136	32.360
Brod-Posavina	59.774	64.399	37.900	35.145	37.810	17.678
Virovitica-Podravina	40.276	38.194	17.398	16.033	15.341	7.703
Požega-Slavonia	37.108	46.245	28.288	16.465	20.718	28.288
SLAVONIA	481.051	523.339	260.121	250.630	267.139	133.842
CROATIA	106.051.638	108.643.554	54.394.810	19.719.329	20.691.621	7.761.717

Source: *Information on statistical indicators of tourist traffic - January-December 2019*, Croatian National Tourist Board, Zagreb, 2020, p. 19; *Information on statistical indicators of tourist traffic - January-December 2020*, Croatian National Tourist Board, Zagreb, 2021, p. 17

The data in the same Table also show that the entire region of Slavonia, whose share in the total tourist traffic of Croatia is less than 0.5%, is insignificant for tourism, if we look only at statistical indicators achieved in the sector of accommodation services. Analyzing the results by individual counties, we can determine that almost half of tourist overnight stays are realized in Osijek-Baranja County, while Brod-Posavina County is in third place in the region of Slavonia in terms of tourist traffic and arrivals, while tourists stay in this county on average around 2 days.

When it comes to the tourist offer in the region of Slavonia, in the part related to accommodation by type, it should be said that the share of the number of beds available to tourists in this region (according to the Institute of Tourism, in 2018 Slavonia had at disposal 9,979 beds), is only 0.62% of the total accommodation capacity of Croatia.

Table 4 Accommodation establishments by type in the area of five Slavonian counties in 2018

County	Hotels and similar accommodation establishments ¹	Non-hotel establishments ²
Osijek-Baranja	41	345
Vukovar-Srijem	22	86
Brod-Posavina	19	64
Virovitica-Podravina	8	56
Požega-Slavonia	3	52
SLAVONIA	93	603

Source: *Strategic marketing plan of tourism of Slavonia with branding plan for the period 2019-2025*, Institute of Tourism, Zagreb, 2019, p. 18

When it comes to the number of accommodation establishments in Slavonia, non-hotel establishments in total accommodation capacities participate with as much as 86.64% (Table 4), although, looking at the number of beds, hotels and similar accommodation establishments, according to data from the eVisitor system, have a predominance share of 53.00%.

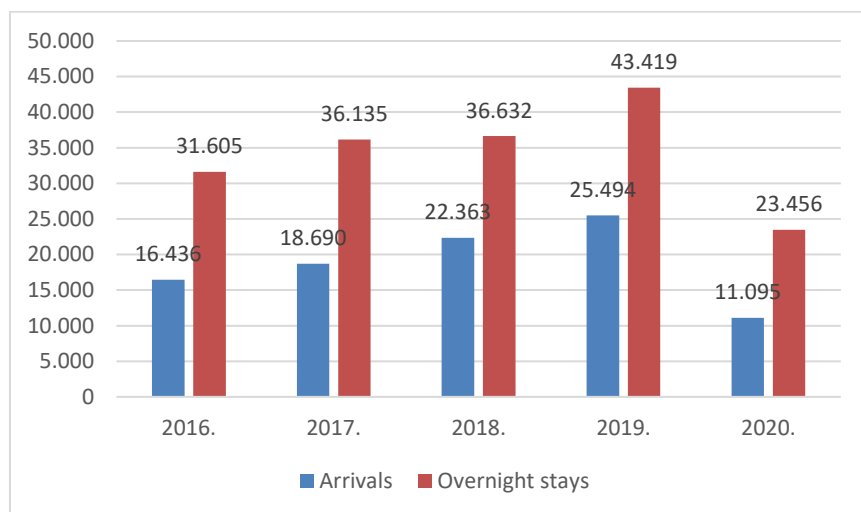
4. Tourist movements in the area of the city of Slavonski Brod

In the city of Slavonski Brod, during the period 2016-2019, there was a continuous growth of tourist traffic, with the fact that in 2020, as well as at the level of Croatia and the region of Slavonia, there was a drastic drop in the number of overnight stays, due to the coronavirus pandemic (Figure 1). In 2019, in which excellent results were achieved and in which the total number of overnight stays increased by as much as 18.53% compared to the previous year, the share of tourist traffic realized in family accommodation was 33.00% (Figure 2).

¹ Similar accommodation establishments include boarding houses, hostels and hosterlies.

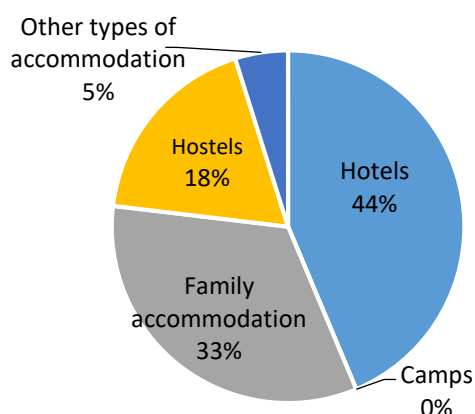
² Non-hotel establishments include rooms, apartments and establishments in rural households.

Figure 1 Trends in tourist demand in the area of the city of Slavonski Brod in the period 2016-2020



Source: *Action Plan for Adaptation of Tourism Management of Slavonski Brod in Crisis Situation Caused by the C19 Pandemic*, Institute of Tourism, Zagreb, 2020, p. 5 (further processed)

Figure 2 Tourist traffic in the city of Slavonski Brod by types of accommodation establishments in 2019



Izvor: *Action Plan for Adaptation of Tourism Management of Slavonski Brod in Crisis Situation Caused by the C19 Pandemic*, Institute of Tourism, Zagreb, 2020, p. 7 (further processed)

The growth of tourist traffic in the previous period was accompanied by an increase in the number of accommodation establishments operating in the city. According to the data of the eVisitor system from February 2021, there are currently 68 of them, and 41 have the family (non-hotel) accommodation status.

Table 5 Number of beds in accommodation establishments in the city of Slavonski Brod in the period 2016-2020

Year	Hotels and similar accommodation	Family (non-hotel) accommodation
2016.	447	165
2017.	498	205
2018.	576	226
2019.	551	273
2020.	551	267

Source: *eVisitor system and own processing*, February 2021

Although family accommodation, measured by the number of beds, accounts for only one third of the city's reception capacity, from the data in Table 5 it can be noticed that the number of beds in family accommodation in the period 2016-2020 increased as much as 1.62 times, while in hotels and similar accommodation establishments the percentage increase in the number of beds in the same period was only 23.27%.

Table 6 Tourist traffic in Slavonski Brod realized in 2019 and 2020

Type of accommodation	Overnight stays 2020	Overnight stays 2019	Index 2020/2019
Hotels and similar accommodation establishments	13.609	29.000	46,93
Family (non-hotel) accommodation establishments	9.847	14.419	68,29

Source: *eVisitor system and own processing*, February 2021

The data from Table 6 are also interesting, showing the current structure of family accommodation in Slavonski Brod, in which the share of rooms and tourist apartments that were awarded three or more stars in the categorization is as high as 89.96%.

The reason for this lies in the fact that the coronavirus pandemic and epidemiological measures implemented at the state and local level to combat it, less affected the owners of family accommodation, which in 2020 compared to 2019 recorded a decline in tourist traffic of 31.71%, what is as much as 14.27% less than the decrease in the number of overnight stays recorded in hotels and similar accommodation establishments (Table 6).

Also interesting are the data from Table 7 which show the current structure of family accommodation in Slavonski Brod in which rooms and tourist apartments to which three or more stars have been assigned in the categorization participate with as much as 89.96% in the whole number of categorized household establishments. This shows that the owners of family accommodation in Slavonski Brod, in accordance with tourist demand, when arranging their

accommodation units, have taken into account the importance of quality of family accommodation.

Table 7 Family accommodation in Slavonski Brod by individual categories

The name of a group of categorized objects	Number of categorized objects in a group
Household establishments*	2
Household establishments**	3
Household establishments***	27
Household establishments****	15
Household establishments *****	1

Source: *eVisitor system and own processing*, February 2021

5. Results of primary research conducted in January 2021

Before presenting the results of primary research that we conducted in January 2021, it is necessary to briefly look at the geo-traffic position of the city of Slavonski Brod, but also the economic characteristics. What should be emphasized is that the Brod-Posavina County, whose headquarters are in the city of Slavonski Brod, has the best traffic position of all five Slavonian counties because in the county there is the intersection of two main European transport corridors X and Vc, and the county, as well, is of all Slavonian counties closest to Zagreb and the rest of Croatia (Institute of Tourism, 9).

Through the city of Slavonski Brod passes the A3 Bregana - Zagreb - Slavonski Brod - Bajakovo motorway (the so-called Posavska motorway). This motorway is the part of the pan-European transport corridor X Salzburg - Ljubljana - Zagreb - Belgrade - Niš - Skopje - Thessaloniki, and the international European road communication E-70, which connects La Coruna in Spain via France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, with the city of Poti in Georgia (Institute of Tourism, 2019, 8).

Through Slavonski Brod also passes the railway, which connects the city to the west with Zagreb and further to Western Europe, and to the east via Vinkovci with Belgrade in Serbia and further to the southeast of Europe. It is also significant that the distance of the city from the Zagreb Airport is only 180 km, and from the Osijek Airport 100 km.

The Sava River is also of great importance for the entire Brod-Posavina County because it is an international waterway, with Slavonski Brod being one of the four internal ports of the Republic of Croatia along the state border with Bosnia and Herzegovina (Brod-Posavina County, 2020, 54).

When it comes to the economy, it should be noted that the driving force of the economy of the Brod-Posavina County, and within it the city of Slavonski Brod, is the manufacturing industry, which is the most represented activity and in which almost half of the county's total revenues are generated. This activity is accompanied by trade with a share in total revenues of 17.54% and construction sector with a share of 10.99% (Croatian Chamber of Commerce Slavonski Brod County Chamber, 2021, 2).

The above features also determine the profile of tourists who come to Slavonski Brod and realize tourist consumption in the city. Unlike business tourists, who mostly spend the night in hotels, as shown by the results of some previously conducted research, family accommodation establishments are mostly occupied by guests in transit who are on way to their destinations; furthermore, participants in private gatherings, sports competitions and other social events, and at times of the year with more favorable weather conditions, also construction or seasonal workers.

These data have been obtained by ten owners of family accommodation establishments from the city, which makes up one fifth of the total number of registered owners in this sector. Talks were held in January 2021, in the form of in-depth structured interviews, with two three-star apartment owners, three four-star apartment owners, one five-star apartment owner, two three-star rooms owners and two four-stars rooms owners. To the last three questions from the interview, concerning their business in the coming period ("Do you believe in a quick recovery after the epidemic?"; "Do you intend to continue providing services in family accommodation ?;" "Do you intend to expand or modernize existing accommodation units? "), all interviewees responded positively.

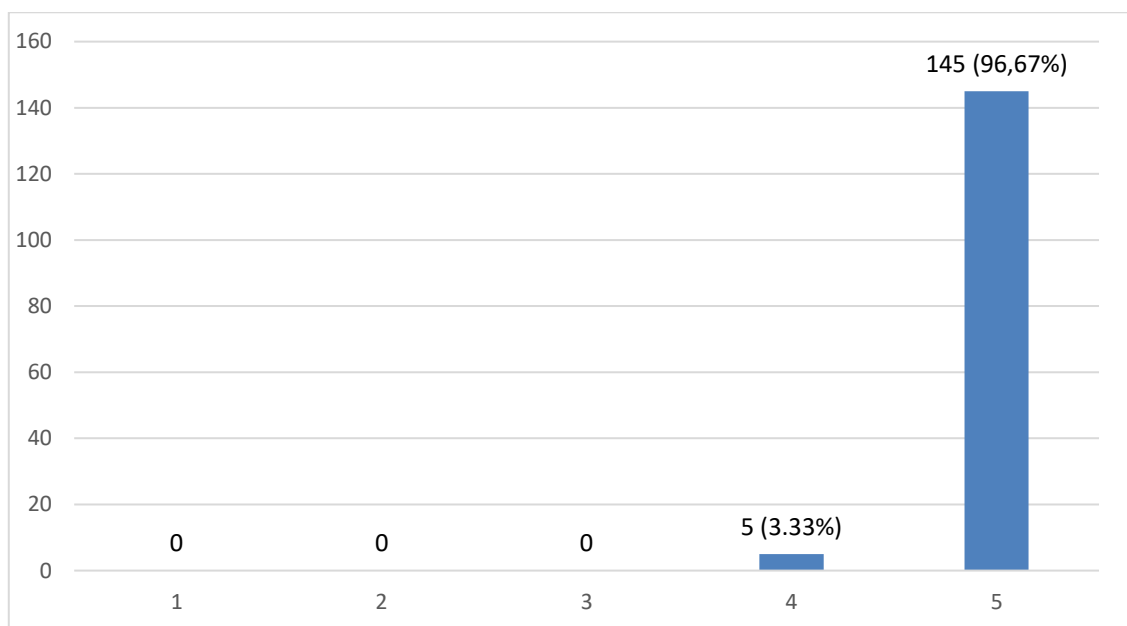
To determine the attitude of the local population regarding apartmentization, we conducted another primary research using questionnaires for the visitors to the City Colosseum shopping center in Slavonski Brod, on the second Saturday in January 2021, during the afternoon. We surveyed, by the method of random selection, only visitors who have a place of residence in Slavonski Brod, 150 of them.

Almost 80.00% of respondents expressed the opinion that the main comparative advantage of Slavonski Brod, when it comes to tourism development, is its geo-traffic position. Furthermore, 63.33% of respondents said that, in the case of a visit to Slavonski Brod, as tourists, they would choose family accommodation establishments instead of hotels, and this, due to the lower prices (which was answered by 93.33% of respondents), ie due to the hospitality of the host, which answer was chosen by 62.00% of respondents. As many as 145 of a total of 150 respondents (96.67%) agreed with the statement that the tourist development of the city of Slavonski Brod does not depend only on the increase, but also on the quality of family accommodation (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Quality of family accommodation in the function of tourist development of the city of Slavonski Brod, question and answers

Do you agree with the statement that the tourist development of the city of Slavonski Brod depends on the growth and quality of family accommodation?

(Possible answers ranging from 1 - I do not agree at all to 5 - I completely agree.)



Source: *Independently conducted research*, January 2021

6. Conclusion

Tourism development generates different economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects for the community (Lee, T.H., 2013, 37) and can also affect the living standards of residents (Anderek., K.L., Nyaupane, G.P., 2011, 248). Assessing these effects, local residents build their attitudes towards tourism and its future development (Soldić Frleta, D., Smočić Jurdana, D., 2020, 170), what we showed on the example of the city of Slavonski Brod in which we conducted a primary research. Results of the research showed that the inhabitants of the city provide support for the future development of tourism in the part related to the increase of both the number and the quality of family accommodation.

Demand for family accommodation throughout Europe is growing, and the growth rate of this sector, in which numerous innovations are being introduced, is faster than the growth rate of hotel accommodation (Hulten, S., Perret, S., 2019), while as the key attractive attributes are cited: authenticity, human touch, personality, warmth and homely atmosphere (Ministry of Tourism, 2013, 14).

The National Program for the Improvement of Family Accommodation from 2013, prepared by the Institute for Tourism for the needs of the Ministry of Tourism, states that “in addition to improving the quality of family accommodation in the coastal area, considerable attention

should be paid to the development of family accommodation in the Adriatic hinterland and in the continental area, where priority should be given to areas that, due to the characteristics of the resource-attraction base and/or tradition in the tourism industry, have a chance of success in the short term."

Concerning the previously mentioned favorable geo-traffic position, the city of Slavonski Brod as a tourist destination has established itself as a city through which tourists "pass" on the way to their final destination, but stop for a short time, mainly for overnight stays, short breaks and food. This leads to the realization of tourist consumption and positive economic effects.

This was also recognized by the domicile population that has a "surplus of living space" and which, in increasing numbers, makes decision to engage in additional activities of providing accommodation services, mostly of high quality, what has been conditioned by the needs of today's tourists and even those in "passing". Namely, the needs of modern tourists are more complex, even when it comes to those "existential" (for sleep, food and drink), although in practice, on the occasion of meeting them in market catering, they take on a secondary character (Ružić, D., 86).

The conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that both the increase and the quality of family accommodation are in the function of tourism development of the city of Slavonski Brod. What we expect is that the results of this research will help the competent departments in the City of Slavonski Brod and the Brod-Posavina County to propose measures which will be in the function of improving the business conditions of family accommodation owners, all in the function of improving the hospitality and tourism industry.

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