

## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY: ANALYSIS OF SERBIAN TOURISM MARKET AND IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR MARKET SEGMENTS

Ivan Paunović

Singidunum University, Belgrade

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*The study is a contribution towards identifying major tourism market segments in Serbia. An overview of market shares is presented through descriptive statistics, together with analysis of variance tests performed in SPSS with a goal to differentiate groups of tourists both on the supply and demand side of the market. Analysis of variance post-hoc Tukey test was used to identify major market segments, using following six variables: daily spending, age, length of stay, core motive, region of origin, destination. The study should serve as the basis for gaining deeper understanding of the Serbian tourist market as well as identification of the best market segmentation approach (common-sense, data driven, activities-interests-opinions, etc.). The study identified that the two major so-called common sense market segmentation variables (age and country of origin) should not be used together, as tourists coming from different regions show no statistically significant difference in terms of age. However, pairs of variables, such as daily spending-country of origin, as well as length of stay-country of origin showed much potential as important pairs of variables in conducting destination market segmentation in Serbia.*

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**Keywords:** *Market segmentation, Serbian tourism, destination marketing, tourist behavior*

## **INTRODUCTION**

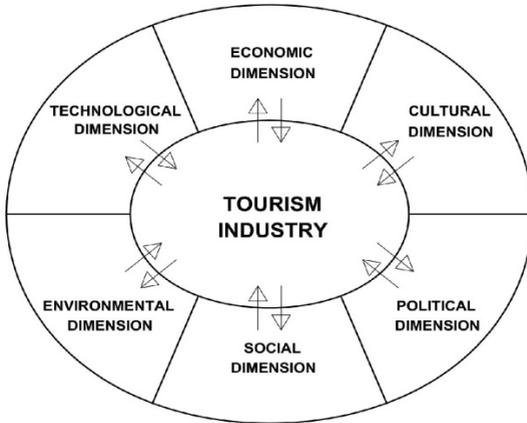
Market research has not yet been fully utilized as a basis for tourism decision making and destination policy creation in the Republic of Serbia. Tourism decision makers and policy creators in Serbia are facing a difficult task of reaching decisions, creating government policies, as well as creating advertising campaigns with insufficient data. The focus of the study was the identification of the best methodology for segmenting the tourism market in Serbia, as well as identification of the characteristics of the major market segments, using the 6 variables: daily spending, age, length of stay, core motive, region of origin, and destination. Identified market segments should form the basis for developing marketing and communication strategies which are effective and efficient especially given the scarce DMO promotion budgets. There are numerous methodological considerations regarding market segmentation, including proper variables selection. However, in practice the already collected data sets often prevent the application of particular methodology.

### **Global trends in the tourism markets**

As Hudson (2008) notes, tourism industry is a powerful economic force which operates in a global environment. Therefore, in order to understand the global competitive environment in tourism, besides economic dimensions, it is important to consider also cultural and political dimensions. Additionally, Hall (2008) identified environmental and social dimensions of tourism to be as equally important. Holloway (2004) emphasizes the profound effect that ICT has on the global tourism industry. Altogether, tourism industry is a complex, multidisciplinary phenomenon operating in a global environment, with economic, cultural, political, social, environmental and technological implications.

**FIGURE 1: Tourism industry in the global market**

**TOURISM INDUSTRY  
IN THE GLOBAL MARKET**



Source: Author

As identified by the UNWTO(2011), major global trend on the demand side of the market will be the continuing domination of Europe as the region of origin with the largest share of tourists in the global tourism market, both to advanced economies, and to emerging economies. However, Asia and Pacific Region will be the region with the highest growth of outbound tourism to other regions.

*Table 1: Global tourism market trends*

		Market share (in %)				
		Actual data			Projections	
		1980	1995	2010	2020	2030
<b>To advanced economies</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>43</b>
From:	Africa	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
	Americas	15.9	11.9	8.9	7.4	6.3
	Asia and the Pacific	5.1	8.2	8.8	9.9	10.7
	Europe	47.5	42.5	34.4	29.1	24.8
	Middle East	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
<b>To emerging economies</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>
From:	Africa	1.0	1.8	2.7	3.4	4.4
	Americas	9.8	9.0	8.1	8.2	8.3
	Asia and the Pacific	3.8	8.4	12.9	16.4	19.2
	Europe	13.7	15.8	19.7	20.9	21.2
	Middle East	1.5	1.6	3.6	3.9	4.2

Source of data: (UNWTO, 2011)

### Tourism market research

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) present an overview of contemporary tourism research techniques and postulate that although early tourism research has been criticized for lacking academic rigour and for being too descriptive, contemporary tourism research uses a variety of methods. The authors contend that many of the contemporary tourism research techniques are very complex, while the most popular methods include multidimensional scaling (MDS), analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), factor analysis, cluster analysis, case studies, as well as ethnographic research techniques.

Market research deals with systematic measurement and analysis of markets (Medlik, 2003). It is important to understand the notion of the market research, as Holloway (2004) defines it, as a research which deals with the consumers. In contrast, marketing research, besides consumers, deals with promotion, sales, performance monitoring research (Middleton, et al., 2009) as well as product, price, distribution and publicity research (Holloway, 2004). There are three major types of market research: geographic, demographic and psychographic research (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009).

Effective marketing depends on market research and survey methodologies (Sheldon, 2006). The importance of the market research for the overall tourism marketing activities can be seen on the example of Piedmont region in Italy. Otgaar et al. (2010) present an example of the specialized research and development agency (*Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo*), which is a public company with 2 major goals: 1) *market research and statistics*, as well as 2) *strategic marketing based on research and statistics*. In this agency, only after this the two major goals, come the following goals: 3) *product development*, 4) *website promotion*, and 5) *administration and logistics of promotional material*. However, as Veal (2002) noticed, many public-sector agencies tend to see market research as a one-time activity, while private sector organizations mostly see market research as a continuous activity.

## **Market segmentation**

Modern marketing practice moves away from the mass marketing because it is both more effective and efficient to identify and target market segments (Hudson, 2008; Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). In tourism marketing, there are few vacation destinations which have such a universal values to be universally marketed (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Also, the very nature of consumer needs is that they are heterogeneous, which means that different consumers have different needs (Zivkovic, 2013; Dolnicar, 2012). Market segmentation is identified as one of the most important marketing tools used in tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), as well

the first step in the marketing process which affects all later stages of the process (Middleton, 2001). It is only after the identification of the market segments, that the marketers can devise specific marketing mix for each market segment. In the later stages of the marketing process, marketers can also prioritize the development of the most competitive products/services in each marketing segment (Kozak & Andreu, 2006).

**McCabe (2009) defines market segmentation as:**

“...the process of dividing up the total market (all the people the organization can sell its products or services to) into identifiable, measurable and discrete groups who share some common characteristics or needs and whose attitudes or reactions towards communications messages about products or services might be similar.”

The purpose of the market segmentation is to enable cost effectiveness by identifying target groups which share common characteristics and product preferences (Medlik, 2003). Solomon et al. (2006) go as far as to state that market segmentation means targeting a specific groups of people rather than everybody, even if that makes other people uninterested about the service, or even makes them avoid the product.

Kotler and Armstrong (2006) have grouped market segmentation variables into 4 groups: *geographic*, *demographic*, *psychographic* and *behavioral* variables. Barry and Weinstein (2009) have found that today, *psychographics* have become one of the most accepted segmentation methods, particularly in consumer markets. The authors give examples of the companies like Ikea and Porsche, which use it to a point where entire product launch campaigns are designed around customer personality profiles. Mc Cabbe (2009) notes that *Psychographics*, with the three types of appeals (personality, identity and lifestyle) have become very common in the tourism and hospitality industry as well. This means that travel in itself can become the source of identification with certain social groups, the projection of the aspired status in society, or statement about own personality traits.

Dolnicar (2012) has identified country of origin as the most frequently used criteria for commonsense tourism market segmentation, along with age, brand loyalty and visitor status regarding disability, which are also commonly used. Prokopoulos and Saveriades (2010) agree that the market of origin is important, and propose the use of ethnographic techniques to profoundly explore the factors influencing the satisfaction levels. This way, new information can potentially surface as an input for the marketing system. Decrop and Kozak (2009) emphasize the usefulness of the travel market segmentation based on the trip purpose (pleasure, visiting family and friends, business, etc.). The underlying rationale is that the tourists in one group will have similar approach to making decisions.

Dolnicar (2012) points out that unless a need for a more complex approaches (such as data-driven market segmentation) is identified, commonsense segmentation should be used in order to keep the process as simple as possible. Furthermore, although commonsense market segmentation is often criticized as being raw, for many destinations it can serve its purpose in creating the competitive advantage and effectively serving the market. The author emphasizes that segmenting the tourism market by country of origin can be very effective in European destinations, because the marketing messages need to be customized to each country because of the different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Besides data driven market segmentation, one of the most popular complex methodological approaches to constructing a market segment is AIO (activities, interests, opinions) (McCabe, 2009; Gonzalez Fernandez, et al., 2006). This approach is often combined with the social, economic and demographic variables (Gonzalez Fernandez, et al., 2006). Other authors (Tuma, et al., 2011; Graham Tonks, 2009; Quinn, 2009) however emphasize that the real world selection of segmentation variables and sample sizes is often limited by already collected data sets, where methodological considerations are of no relevance any more; or is limited by lack of manager's knowledge and understanding of the market segmentation techniques. Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) also investigated the problems Australian managers have in using the market

segmentation as a marketing tool, and found the following main problems: poor understanding of the market segmentation fundamentals which affects the interpretation and use of the solutions, unawareness of the importance of up-to-date and specialized research for data driven segmentation, as well as unawareness of the speculative nature of the market segments.

Contemporary market segmentation should take into account the growing role of women in the tourism decision making (Barles, et al., 2010; Hudson, 2008), increased integration of marginalized groups into mainstream socio-economic developments (gay tourism, accessible tourism) (Diez, 2011), as well as important role of diaspora and its connection to cultural heritage (Cohen, et al., 2008). Solomon et al. (2006) similarly identify the gay community, single women and disabled people as the new, trendy and lucrative general market segments. The role of the Destination Management Organization can be very important in discovering all the market segments it serves, however small they are, and serving them in the best possible way. In that sense, Bailey et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of techniques such as customer insight and customer relationship management in conducting the market segmentation. The authors identified the following market insight techniques: market predictions, customer segments, opportunity analytics, as well as customer value analytics.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology follows recommendations for commonsense, a priori segmentation made by Dolnicar and Kemp (2009), where 4 most frequently used types of variables are: *behavioral*, *geographic*, *socio-demographic* and *psychographic variables*. At later stages, the study also conducts post-hoc analysis.

The research was designed to explore the possibilities of creating market segments in the Serbian tourism market. For this purpose, six market segmentation variables were used, presented in the table

below. The three variables in the second group (geographic and behavioral) were classified as follows:

- **Core motive for travel** (Pleasure, Fun& Entertainment, Nature, Culture, Sport& Adventure, Health, and Business)
- **Origin of tourist** (Domestic, Western Europe and the rest of the World, Central Eastern Europe, Ex-Yugoslavia, Expatriates/Emigrants)
- **Major tourism destinations** (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Kopaonik, Zlatibor & Western Serbia)

**Table 2:** Market segmentation variables used in the research

Market segmentation variables used in the research	
1. Demographic and psychographic variables	2. Geographic and behavioral variables
1.1 Daily spending	2.1 Core motive
1.2 Age	2.2 Origin
1.3 Length of stay	2.3 Destination

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Each one of the three variables in the first group was combined with the three variables in the second group, in order to create nine hypothesis. The statistical test was the one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) in the SPSS software, with post-hoc Tukey test which was used to identify further characteristics of the market segments.

### Collection of the data

The data was collected through Serbia Guest Survey 2011. The survey has been conducted as a component of the EU financed project: “Support to implementation of the National Strategy for Tourism”, by HD-European Consulting Group. It produced a large amount of data, out of which only one portion is used in the presented study. The objectives of

the survey were to assess tourist profiles, core motives for travel, booking habits, expenditures, satisfaction and image perception of Serbia.

Total sample was 1500 respondents on the following locations in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Zlatibor, Guca, Kopaonik, Fruska Gora, Zasavica, Vrdnik, Erdevik, Sremska Mitrovica, Divcibare, Valjevo, Banja Vrujci, Sokobanja, Vrnjacka banja, Banja Koviljaca, Niska banja, Nis, Subotica, Vrsac, Palicko jezero, Belocrkvanska jezera, Srebrno jezero, Ecka, Skorenovac. The fieldwork was done only for the summer season: from July 11 2011 to September 5 2011 by MASMI market research agency.

**FIGURE 2: Data collection locations in Serbia**



Source of data:(Grabler & Mamula, 2011; Geodetski zavod Republike Srbije, 2009)

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

**Table 3: Hypotheses tested through analysis of variance**

Hypothesis no.	Variables	Level of significance	Critical Value for the F distribution	F	P-value

H 1	Motive-daily spending	0.01	2.8	6.59	0
H 2	Motive- age	0.01	2.8	42.75	0
H 3	Motive-length of stay	0.01	2.8	25.09	0
H 4	Origin-daily spending	0.01	3.32	78.13	0
H 5	Origin-age	0.01	3.32	3.15	0.014
H 6	Origin-length of stay	0.01	3.32	11.14	0
H 7	Destination-daily spending	0.01	3.32	14.38	0
H 8	Destination-age	0.01	3.32	13.57	0
H 9	Destination-length of stay	0.01	3.32	6.75	0

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

The nine hypotheses tested:

- H1<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean daily spending.
- H2<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean age.
- H3<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean length of stay.
- H4<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean daily spending.
- H5<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean age.
- H6<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean length of the trip.
- H7<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean daily spending.

- H8<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean age.
- H9<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean length of stay.

Out of the nine tested null hypothesis, only *hypothesis H5<sub>0</sub> was accepted*, while eight null hypothesis were rejected, and *alternative hypothesis were accepted (H1<sub>A</sub>, H2<sub>A</sub>, H3<sub>A</sub>, H4<sub>A</sub>, H6<sub>A</sub>, H7<sub>A</sub>, H8<sub>A</sub>, H9<sub>A</sub>)*, all at the 0.01 significance level.

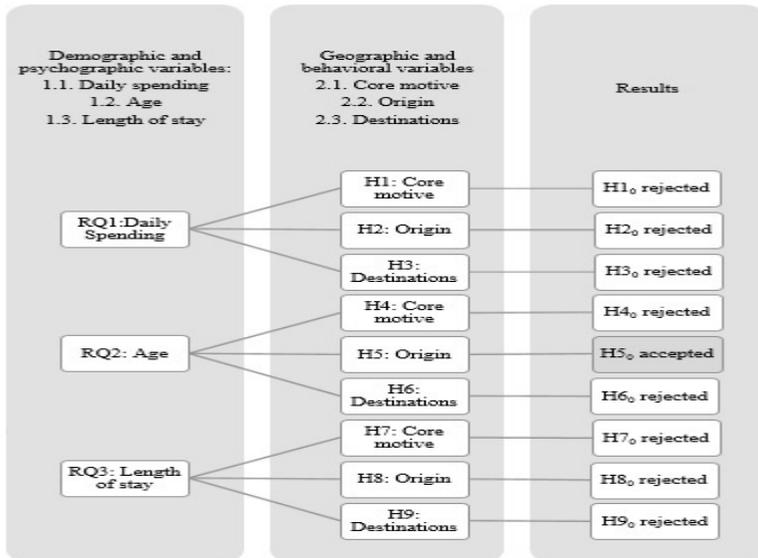


FIGURE 3: ANOVA hypotheses testing results

Source: Author

## Market shares

In order to better understand the full relation between supply and demand market segments, the study also concentrated on calculating the

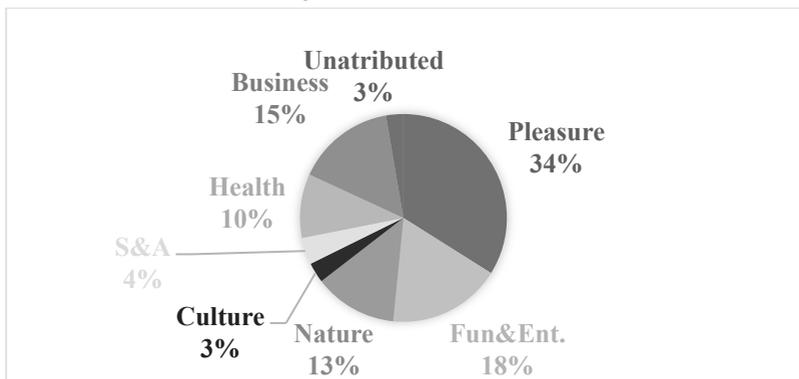
market shares of each one of the market variables in the second group, through a following formula:

$$\text{Market share of the segment} = \frac{\text{average daily spending} \times \text{length of stay} \times \text{segment sample size}}{\text{total sample size}}$$

The calculated values were:

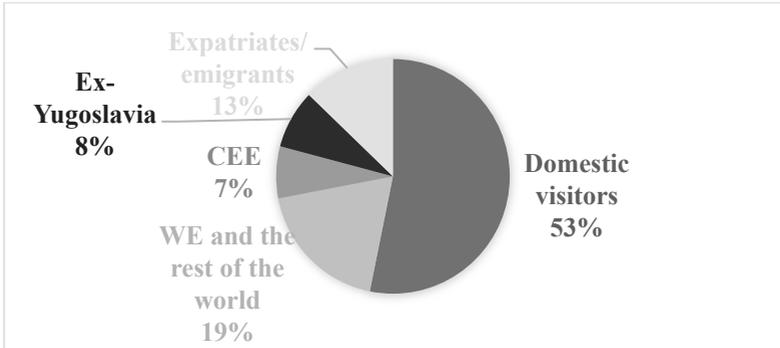
- Core motivation for travel (Pleasure 34%, Fun & Entertainment 18%, Nature 13%, Culture 3%, Sport & Adventure 4%, Health 10%, and Business 15%)
- Region of origin (Domestic 53%, Western Europe and the rest of the world 19%, Central Eastern Europe 7%, Ex-Yugoslavia 8%, Expatriate/Emigrant 13%)
- Destinations (Belgrade 22%, Novi Sad 5%, Nis 7%, Kopaonik 19%, Zlatibor 13%, Other 34%)

**FIGURE 4: Market shares by core motive for travel**



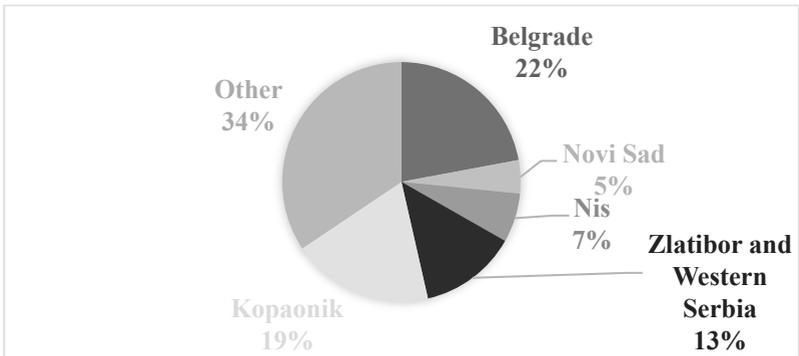
Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

**FIGURE 5: Market shares by region of origin**



Source: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

**FIGURE 6: Market shares of major tourism destinations**



Source: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

### ANOVA Post-hoc analysis and discussion

**Table 4: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H2 (origin-daily spending)**

Origin	Subset for alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Domestic	4.52		
Ex-Yugoslavia		5.99	
Expatriates/ emigrants		6.18	
Central eastern Europe		6.54	6.54
Western Europe and the rest of the World			7.35
P value	1	0.24	0.22

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin. Svensson et al. (2011) also found that only having German nationality influences the daily expenditures on the destination.

**Table 5: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H3 (destination-daily spending)**

Destination	Subset for alpha=0.01	
	1	2
Novi Sad	4.54	
Nis	4.7	
Ex Yugoslavia	5.1	
Zlatibor and Western Serbia	5.16	
Kopaonik		
Belgrade		6.13
P value	0.09	1

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Tourists visiting Belgrade have higher daily spending from tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia. This finding is supported by study conducted by Svensson et al.(2011), which also found that destination area has a great influence on daily spending.

Table 6: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H4 (motive-age)

Motive	Subset for alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Sport and adventure	26.3		
Fun and entertainment	29.37		
Pleasure		36.94	
Business		37.44	
Culture		38.28	
Nature		39.38	
Health			46.97
P value	0.56	0.79	1

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

The 7 core motives for travel can be clustered into three separate groups by age, with differences between groups: 1 Younger (Sport, Fun& Entertainment), 2 Middle aged (Pleasure, Business, Culture, Nature), 3 Older (Health). This was the only criteria that clustered the whole market with 7 core motives for travel into 3 clear cut groups, which are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.

Table 7: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H7 (motive-length of stay)

Motive	Subset for Alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Culture	1.67		
Fun and entertainment	1.78	1.77	
Business	1.79	1.79	

Nature	2.16	2.16	
Pleasure		2.17	
Sport and adventure			2.73
Health			2.86
P value	0.01	0.09	0.98

**Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)**

Sport& Adventure and Health form a cluster with the length of stay which is higher than that of any other group.

**Table 8: Post-hoc Tukey for hypothesis H8 (origin-length of stay)**

Origin	Subset for alpha=0.01	
	1	2
Domestic	2.07	
Central eastern Europe	2.12	
Ex Yugoslavia	2.12	
Western Europe and the rest of the world	2.27	
Expatriates/ Emigrants		2.9
P value	0.67	1

**Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)**

Expatriates/Emigrants have longer length of stay, from all other tourists in Serbia, regardless of their region of origin.

The major findings of the post-hoc analysis, which relate to the previous similar research are the following:

- Tourists visiting Belgrade have higher daily spending from the tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia. This finding is supported by Svensson et al.(2011), who also found that destination area has a great influence on daily spending.

- Domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin. Svenssonet

al.(2011) similarly found that having German nationality influences the daily expenditures on the destination.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The major finding of the study is the need for complex market segmentation in Serbia (either data driven or AIO). This is because the two variables that were identified by Dolnicar(2012) as the most important variables for commonsense market segmentation: country of origin-age where the only pair of factors, out of 9 tested, that proved no statistically significant differences. This means that although the two variables are important when used separately, they cannot be used together or combined to identify market segments. This two variables can only be used separately for common-sense market segmentation. However, it also means that more attention should be paid to the two other combinations that include origin: origin-daily spending, and origin-length of stay, which showed much potential in the post-hoc analysis, and created solid market segments.

Following the recommendations for further research about the role of demographics as a discriminating factor among tourism market segments (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012), the results showed the statistically significant connection between age and core motivation for travel, as well as age and destination.

The study confirmed the two findings of the previous study performed by Svensson et al.(2011) which support the hypothesis that geographic characteristics determine the travel spending:

- Destination region influences the travel spending, because the study has found that the tourists visiting Belgrade have a higher daily spending from the tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia.

- Region of origin influences the travel spending because the study has found that domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin.

Major geographic region to focus the international marketing activities of emerging economies, such as Serbian economy, is Asia and the Pacific. According to the UNWTO(2011), this outbound market will have almost equal share to that of the European tourists (around 20%) in the emerging economies by 2030. Also, the high demand for the cultural tourism by Serbian diaspora should be considered as an important demand side factor, and focus marketing of cultural tourism products on countries where large Serbian diaspora exists.

The Serbian tourism market is very rich in small market segments on both supply and demand side of the market. This study demonstrated the important differences these groups of tourists exhibit in terms of key variables. Tourism policy should address the identified groups of tourists with specially designed marketing and communication strategies, appropriate to the tourist's needs and attitudes. Special attention should be given to the growing role of women and marginalized groups in tourism.

The 4 major Serbian tourism market segments identified:

- Younger tourists travelling with motivations: sport and adventure, fun and entertainment
- Older, domestic tourists travelling for health, with low daily spending, travelling outside Belgrade
- Young expatriates/emigrants with motivation sport and adventure, staying for longer periods of time on the destination
- Old expatriates/emigrants with motivation health, staying for longer periods on the destination
- Foreign tourists in Belgrade with high daily spending

As a continuation of the Serbia Guest Survey 2011, another survey should be conducted during the winter season, and be repeated each year. The questionnaire should also include the secondary motivation for trip in order to better understand motivation for trip. UNWTO(2005) shows that

culture is a strong secondary motivator for visits, especially for city tourism, while Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) emphasize that all groups of tourists are most likely to be influenced by multiple motivations.

Public agencies related to tourism in Serbia use market research only as a one-time activity, and not on a continual basis. International experiences show that tourism market research should be conducted continuously. The best way to ensure that is to make market research and statistics a primary goal of the specialized tourism agency/organization (such as Tourism Organization of Serbia). The collected data should then serve as a basis for any subsequent marketing activities.

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**Ivan Paunović**([ivan.paunovic.12@singimail.rs](mailto:ivan.paunovic.12@singimail.rs)) is a doctoral studies student at Singidunum University, Danijelova 32, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia