



**HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCE
SZENT ISTVÁN CAMPUS
RURAL DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING MSC. PROGRAM**

THESIS TITLE:

**IMPORTANCE OF ECOTOURISM IN RURAL AREAS OF KOSOVO
(Case Study Peja & Gyöngyös)**

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Tibor Farkas Ph.D

Author: Laurant Podrimqaku

Neptun ID: S9Q96F

**Institute of Rural Development and Sustainable Economy
Department of Rural and Regional Development**

Gödöllő

2023

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Ecotourism as a factor in Rural Tourism.....	5
2.1 Types of Tourism in Rural Areas	5
2.1.1 Ecotourism.....	5
2.1.2 Agritourism.....	7
2.1.3 Heritage Tourism.....	8
2.2 Tourism Development Factors	9
2.3 Rurality in Kosovo	11
2.4 Ecotourism in Rural Areas of Kosovo	13
2.5 Infrastructure of Kosovo connected to Ecotourism.....	15
2.6 Benefits of Kosovo from Ecotourism.....	17
2.6.1 Tourism Sector Enterprises	17
2.6.2 Using Ecotourism to protect the natural environment.....	18
2.7 Geographical location and influence from nearby countries	19
3. Methodology.....	21
3.1 Collecting the data.....	22
3.1.1 Tourist survey	22
3.1.2 Enterprise interviews	22
3.1.3 The form of Survey Questions and Interview	23
4. Peja/ Rugova and Gyöngyös/ Mátra data analysis	24
4.1 General overview of Peja – Rugova and Gyöngyös – Mátra region.....	25
4.2 Photo comparison.....	27
4.3 Business interview analysis in both locations	34
4.4 Tourist survey analysis.....	39
4.4.1 Peja/ Rugova tourist background	39
4.4.2 Gyöngyös/ Mátra tourist background	41
4.4.3 Statistical comparison between two locations regarding ecotourism	43
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	48
6. Summary.....	51
References	53
Annexes.....	56
Appendices.....	63

1. Introduction

Tourism in Kosovo is a growing sector with many tourists visiting the country every year. By tourism we mean the movement of people for recreation, entertainment, healing, and the expansion of cultural knowledge. Although Kosovo is a small geographical area, with its natural and human motives, it offers good opportunities for the development of some types of domestic, regional, international, stationary, and transit tourism. Today, Tourism is one of the most powerful industries in the world and as such has one great impact on the economic and social development of a country. In some developing countries, Tourism is seen as one of the most important sources of income, and employment opportunities, to diversify the economy, protect the environment, and promote intercultural exchanges.

Considering tourism is more commercial I will be focused on *ecotourism* because it is specifically concerned with the conservation of nature and sustaining the well-being of local people. It's a very new concept, and I firmly think that the new society will safeguard the environment by coexisting peacefully with it and halting aggressive urbanization. Ecotourism can be one of the main factors in developing a rural area by promoting the place, creating an investment, increasing employment and the list goes on. I've been able to identify various Rural Tourism types which are focused on different elements and decided to mention the relevant ones. This study has shown that ecotourism requires sustainable development and that its connection to the environment is much stronger than it is in other industries. I also discovered that tourism is a state priority in both developed and developing countries as well as in underdeveloped countries and that it is crucial to devote resources to making Ecotourism a functional industry in the Republic of Kosovo that meets European standards.

The research area will be between two places that have all the elements of conducting ecotourism in rural areas and comparing them to each other. Peja a city in Kosovo has a mountainous region called Rugova in which a lot of tourism is done by the local and international people. The range of habitats suggests a rich variety of plants. The vegetation in Rugova is similar to that found in central European elevations, but it also contains flora unique to the Balkans or grown only there. Four plant regions are distinct in the Rugova region (beech, oaks, coniferous forests, and alpine

pastures). The term “Ecotourism” is relatively new to the population, so they usually generalize it to “Tourism”. The other place will be Gyöngyös a town in Hungary, more specifically the Mátra region which also has similar characteristics as the previous comparison location I mentioned. Beech and oak thrive in the vast and diverse vegetation of the s. Particularly on the south-facing slopes, the temperature is pleasant, and on the high peaks, long summer days of sunshine have favored well-known resorts and sanatoriums.

Since the two regions (Peja and Gyöngyös) already have professional Tourist Center Information, I will be getting information from these centers, local people or tourists, official statistical data, and rural pictures of both regions converting it into data. The main objective is to understand how much is Ecotourism developing in these regions, what are the trends, how many attractions they offer, are there more local or international tourists. Following the chapters on research and outcomes, four research questions that combine these topics will be examined, analyzed, and addressed after this thesis.

1. How close is the Ecotourism relation between Peja and Gyöngyös taking into account that Hungary is part of the EU and Kosovo is still a potential candidate?
2. Considering all the circumstances, is Ecotourism the right solution for the development of these specific regions, and how much has it contributed to employment, infrastructure, and sustainable development?
3. How much information do people have about Ecotourism, and is it connected to their level of education and background?
4. Does the quality of the ecotourism experience is positively correlated with tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit?

Hypothesis one: There is a connection between the level of education and ecotourism knowledge.

Hypothesis two: The quality of the ecotourism experience is positively correlated with tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit.

2. Ecotourism as a factor in Rural Tourism

2.1 Types of Tourism in Rural Areas

Different types of Rural Tourism depend on the activity they do or what parts of the geographical area they visit! European Community (Eurostat, 1998) has adopted the Rural Tourism term for all kinds of forms that happen in those areas. Through research, I managed to collect these forms: *Ecotourism, Agritourism, and Heritage Tourism.*

2.1.1 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is widely recognized as the most rapidly growing sector within the global tourism industry. By definition, ecotourism is travel to minimally impacted natural areas and associated cultural locales. Ecotourists enjoy nature, and cultures that coexist harmoniously with the natural environment; they are conscious of minimizing their impacts on nature and local cultures and aim to improve socio-economics of local populations (Buckley, 2004).

Ecotourism will be the main my main focus for rural areas of Kosovo. Comparing tourism with ecotourism and determining which should be developed more in a country or region depends on many local and international factors. What makes it more difficult is the fact that there is no internationally accepted definition for any of the concepts. It is their complex nature and interaction with many economic and social activities that have troubled many researchers, who have tried without success to formulate a very precise and comprehensive definition for each of them. Ecotourism belongs to the group of sustainable tourism, which focuses on the protection of nature and the employment of the local population, while tourism is a broader term and includes several types within it.

There are a lot of benefits from this type of tourism. The most important element is to develop that rural region, create more jobs, businesses, and protect the environment. In the table below I will show some benefits and costs of ecotourism.

Table 1. Direct and Indirect benefits of Ecotourism

Environmental Impacts	
DIRECT BENEFITS	DIRECT COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive to protect natural environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of permanent environmental restructuring and generation of waste residuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive to rehabilitate modified environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of tourist activities (wildlife observation, hiking, introduction of exotic species)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funds to manage and expand protected areas 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecotourists assist with habitat maintenance and enhancement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecotourist serve as environmental watchdogs 	
INDIRECT BENEFITS	INDIRECT COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to ecotourism fosters environmentalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of induced environmental restructuring (e.g. unplanned development in adjacent villages due to migration for ecotourism related employment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas protected for ecotourism provide environmental benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to less benign forms of tourism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems associated with the economic valuation of 'nature'
Economic Impacts	
DIRECT BENEFITS	DIRECT COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate revenue and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up expenses (acquisition of land, establishment of protected areas, superstructure, infrastructure)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide economic opportunities for peripheral regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going expenses (maintenance of infrastructure, promotion, wages)
INDIRECT BENEFITS	INDIRECT COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High multiplier effect and indirect revenue and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue uncertainties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulation of mass tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue leakage due to imports and non-local participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports cultural and heritage tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas protected for ecotourism provide economic benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to wildlife

Source: (Weaver, 2001)

2.1.2 Agritourism

Agritourism is a hybrid type of agricultural system that combines elements of agriculture and tourism to create an offer for agricultural products and services as well as to provide experiences for tourists. In some kinds of literature, it is called also Farm Tourism activity is closely intertwined with farm activities and often with the viability of the household economy (Gladstone, J., & Morris, A, 2000). Functions of agritourism may also be viewed in terms of three categories - as expected functions (expected effects of the development of agrotourism), as postulated functions (desirable effects of the development of agrotourism), and actual effects of its development (Gaworecki, 2006).

Some countries like Italy, Spain, Ireland, Slovenia, Croatia, France and Germany also make this sector of tourism very valuable and attractive. The option exists for EU nations to incorporate tourism-related investments into their Common Agricultural Policy “CAP” strategic plans, which will be put into effect beginning in January 2023 (European Commission, 2022). For Albania (Neighboring country of Kosovo) which is largely influenced by Italy, there are some laws that need to be followed in order to start doing agrotourism. The Council of Ministers decision no. 22 sets out the minimum criteria that must be met for a unit to be classified as an agrotourism unit. The criteria are related to the minimum area of agricultural land, capacities accommodation, catering services, product sources (AZHBR, 2018). The six main points contain:

1. Land - 1 ha in open ground or 0.5 ha in protected areas.
2. Services - Agritourism units must offer one of the following services: food, accommodation, and recreational services.
3. Accommodation capacities: - 6 to 30 accommodation rooms.
4. Architecture of buildings: Following conditions, criteria, and procedures for the classification of accommodation structures.
5. Restaurants - from 6 to 60 tables for food service.
6. Origin of the products - at least 30% of the food and drinks offered in the units agritourism must be farm products, and the rest of 70% can be bought from other farms around. So, agritourism cannot be seen as separate from agricultural activities.

2.1.3 Heritage Tourism

Heritage Tourism can be in both urban and rural areas, in this case, we are focused on developing the rural areas so it happens in a village. In a lot of parts of literature, you can find it also as “Cultural Tourism”. Heritage representations are, of course, more than conservation practices and form a web of signifying activities that have powerful effects (Emma Waterton, Laurajane Smith, 2011).

A good example of this can be Hollókő, a village in Hungary that is under the protection (UNESCO, 2022). This village contains a lot of elements of Hungarian culture which are presented there, including costumes, preserved buildings, a historical castle, etc. All these characteristics attract tourists to go and spent some time in the countryside. 3 elements make Heritage Tourism: Fabric, Stories, and Culture (Conzervation, 2020)



Figure 1. Hollókő castle

Source: Civertan Grafikai Stúdió

2.2 Tourism Development Factors

Factors that influence growth can directly or indirectly affect Tourism/ Ecotourism (Bronwyn Jewell; Anna Blackman; Alf Kuilboer, 2004). We can divide them into Environmental Factors, Socio-Economic Factors, Historical and Cultural Factors, Religious Factors, and others.

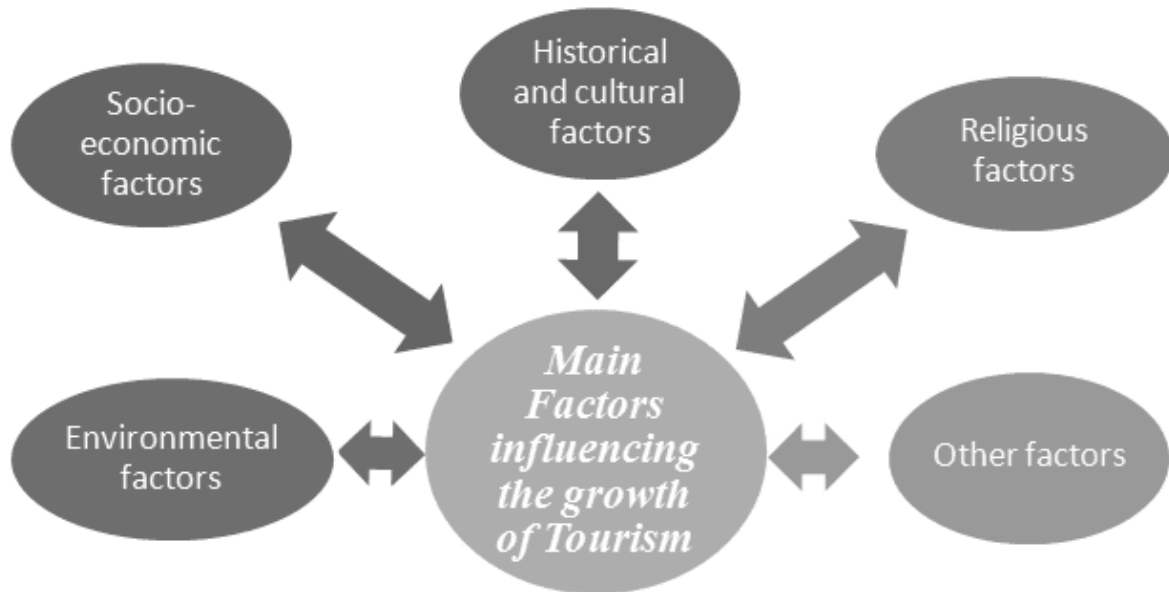


Figure 2. Factors influencing the growth of tourism

Source: Manoj Patil 2013

Environmental factors

Tourists and stakeholders alike are now acknowledging the importance of environmental management in the tourism sector due to the development of ecotourism and the increase in efforts for being environmentally friendly.

Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce. Some of the most commonly noted examples include using up water resources, land degradation, and the depletion of other local resources (Stainton, 2022).

Socioeconomic factors

Ecotourism can boost the area's economy and employment which results in good socio-economic development.

Unrestricted tourism growth could lead to the positive economic effects of tourism being outweighed by significant social and environmental disadvantages, which could in turn translate the economic benefits into disadvantages (Krippendorf, 1982).

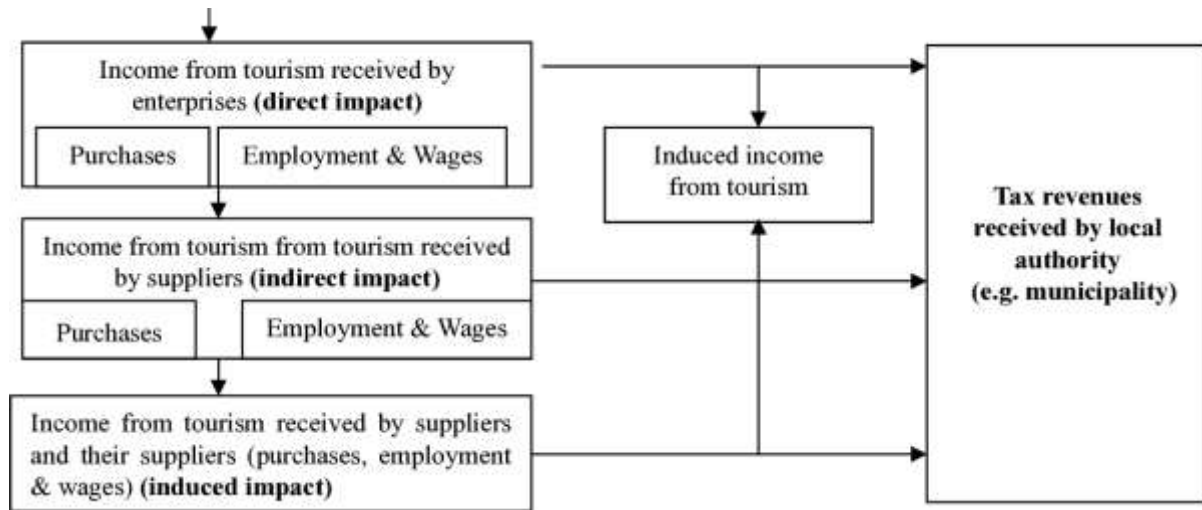


Figure 3. Model of the economic impacts of tourism

Source: (Rätz and Puczko, 2002)

Historical and cultural factors

Culture and history are one of the main factors that can contribute to developing the region. The main elements can be divided: Tourists are most motivated by historical and cultural assets, objects are a valuable resource in modern cities that may be profitable and have a big impact on their economic growth, balancing seasonal variations and dispersing visitor traffic equally across the area, and It "brands" the area, generating a positive perception of it (Gulnara Ismagilova, Lenar Shafilluin, Ilshat Gafurov, 2015). Greece for example is known for both of them and this year has generated revenues of around 18 billion euros (Bali, 2022).

Religious factors – These factors are based of beliefs of people, some of the most frequent places can be: Mecca, Jerusalem, Amritsar, Vatican etc.

2.3 Rurality in Kosovo

Kosovo is a country that is mostly covered by rural areas. Rural areas have different meanings in different locations of the world, the one in general a rural area or a countryside is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Because of their unique economic and social dynamics, they are based in industries such as agriculture, tourism, forestry, and resource extraction. In Kosovo, more than 60% of its territory belongs to rural areas and also the majority of people live there. 62% of the total population lives in Rural Areas (ASK, 2021). Although the majority of the population is located in rural areas several people are moving to urban areas or abroad.

Within Kosovo, there are significant regional differences in the cultivation of crops as well as on land surfaces (size of the farm). In some regions and sub-regions of Kosovo, there are also differences in the development of agricultural sectors. It can be said that most of the territory of Kosovo is covered with fertile soil and has a suitable climate, which guarantees the productivity and profitability of cereals, fruits, vegetables, and livestock (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, 2022).

The Republic of Kosovo has an area of 10,905.25 km². It is located in the part of south-eastern Europe, bordered by Albania to the southwest, Montenegro to the northwest, Serbia to the northeast, and the south with Macedonia. The territory lies within latitudes 41° 51' and 43° 16', and within longitude 19° 59' and 21° 47'. The territory of the Republic of Kosovo is characterized by different altitudes. The lowest point of Kosovo is located in the valley of the Drini i Bardhë river, on the border with Albania, and reaches a height of 270 m above sea level, and the highest is located in the west of Kosovo, in Gjeravicë - 2,656 m. In terms of hydrography, Kosovo is divided into river basins: Drini i Bardhë, Ibri, Morava e Binça, and Lepenec. The rivers of Kosovo flowed into three marine catchments: the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Aegean Sea. The climate of the Republic of Kosovo is mostly continental, resulting in summer warm and cold winters, with Mediterranean and continental influences (the average temperature inside the country fluctuates from + 30 °C in summer to - 10 °C in winter). However, due to the rise of unequal in some parts of the country, there are changes in temperature and rainfall distribution (Cadastral Agency of Kosovo, 2020).

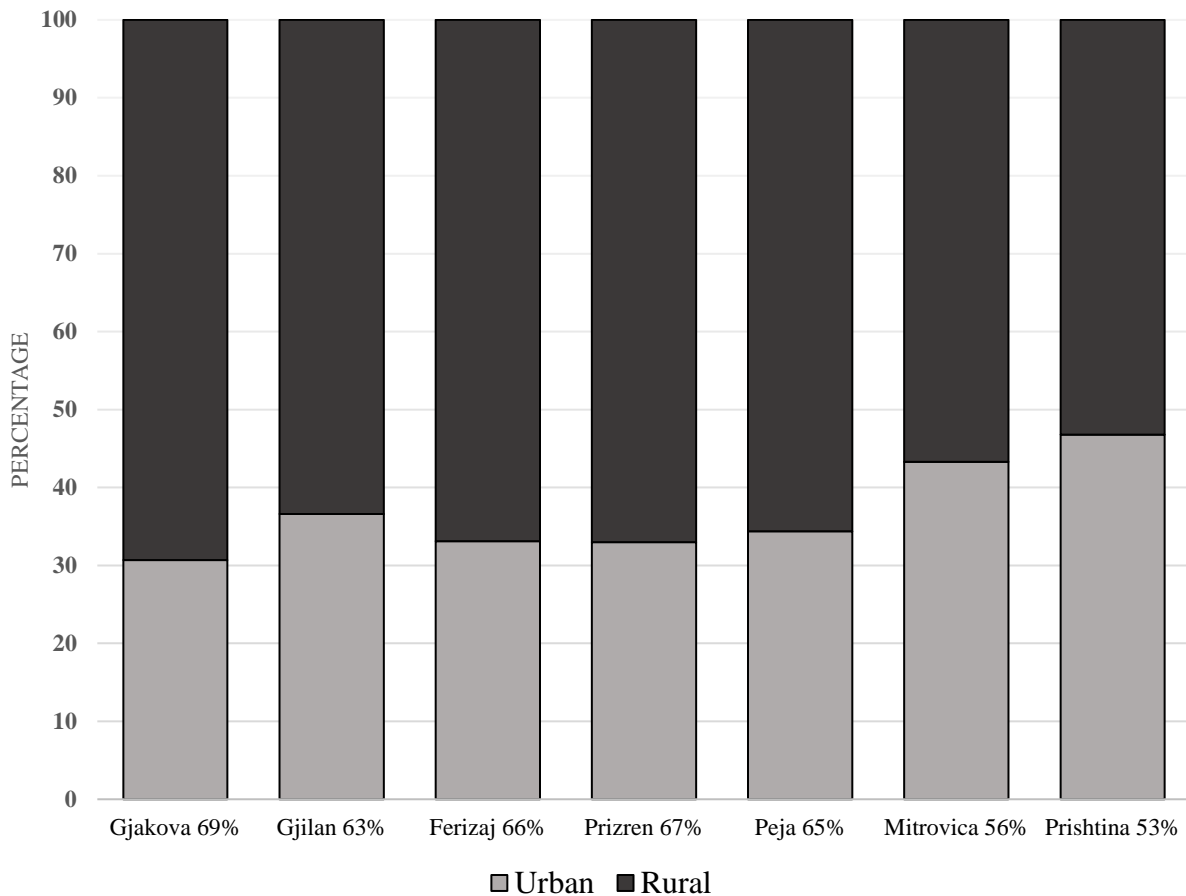


Figure 4. Rurality based on region population

Source: Graph created from the information of (ASK, 2021)

The seven main districts of Kosovo, including the capital city, have more rural areas than urban ones. These rural areas have different structures for maintaining life from one to other. To those who have poorer conditions, the demographic transition in the country has become a problem for the labor force in all sectors of the country's economy, but agriculture remains the most at risk, as the population in rural areas is shrinking at a faster rate than due to internal migration. The availability and quality of rural conditions also basic services are still significantly lower in rural areas, especially in deep and mountainous areas, which suffer from the unstable electricity supply, lack of access to potable water, road networks, internet, etc.

2.4 Ecotourism in Rural Areas of Kosovo

First, we need to define the meaning of Ecotourism and then we can make opinions on why it can be a good factor in further development. Just by the name, we can assume it has to do with nature, eco-friendly, untouched nature and so one which you are not wrong. Down below I will list some of the best key aspects of definitions:

Table 2. Ecotourism key definitions by authors

Author	Key aspects of Definitions
Fennell, 2008	Sustainability resource-based tourism, experience, learning, ethical, local community
Ecotourism Society 1991 (quoted by Blamey, 2001)	Responsible traveling, protection of natural areas, local population
Waver 2001	Learning experience, nature, culture, environmentally and socially sustainable
Powell and Ham 2008	Natural areas, conservation, environmental education, host community

Source: Author

Although Kosovo is a small geographical space, with the natural and human motives it has, it offers good opportunities for the development of several types of local, regional, international, stationary, and transit tourism. Kosovo has tourist sites that can be used by its population for excursions, sports, recreation, rest, culture, education, and training. However, ecotourism has not been, and remains, underdeveloped enough. Ecotourism in Kosovo can be characterized by archaeological heritage from Illyrian, Dardanian, Roman, Byzantine, Serbian and Ottoman times, traditional Albanian and Serbian cuisine, architecture, traditions, and natural landscapes.

The rapid growth of tourism in Kosovo follows the global trends in this sector, especially these last ten years. There is a constant presentation of new tourist products, improvement of the offer in destinations within the country and, in general, services have been modernized and diversified. Tourism is therefore becoming one of the sectors that are giving impetus to economic and social development in the country. More tourist means more people will visit the rural areas of Kosovo.

In 2019 more than 746 million tourists arrived in European destinations and it is estimated that during their stay, each one spent an average of 800 US dollars (World Tourism Organization , 2022). Which was the peak of Tourists, and after that a significant decrease because of Covid Pandemic. In the same year, according to the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, 192,761 foreign tourists came to the country. These visitors are mainly from German-speaking countries, from Turkey as well as from our diaspora. An interesting fact is that many Asians come to Kosovo as part of the Balkan tours. In addition to foreign tourists, local visitors, i.e., residents of Kosovo who choose to spend weekends or vacations in various destinations within the country, are an important group of users of tourist services. This group is also growing year by year. According to the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, in 2018 the number of local visitors who visited various destinations within the country was 108,043.

Activities in nature and rural areas are a necessity of a pleasant tourist offer, which have a positive impact on the decision of tourists to extend their stay at the destination. The tourist offer of Kosovo is interesting and diverse for every type of tourist that comes, there is always something new added to that place so they can attract as many as possible tourists.

Only in 2019, new tourist products were launched in Kosovo, such as a Via Ferrata in Prizren; another Via Ferrata in Peja in addition to the existing two; in Peja, tourists can now experience the thrill of the Tibetan Bridge; parachuting, river kayaking, mountain biking, mountain hiking combined with yoga, winter sports are among the most popular outdoor activities (Kosovo Hiking, 2022). Meanwhile, a long list of products under development is being added to Kosovo's existing offer. In the vicinity of Pristina, the Bear Forest will soon launch the nature trail with six attractions for families and families, near the Lumbardh river in Pejë, a camping area is being built with six products and intertwined activities. Tourists and visitors now find it even easier to experience Kosovo's tourist offer, thanks to a new service that is being developed in the market: that of local guides (Maloku, Ahmetaj, Pllanaj, 2004). These professionals have information about the history, myths, and beauty of the destinations and know how to send tourists to the right places.

2.5 Infrastructure of Kosovo connected to Ecotourism

For any activity including rural tourism activities in this case Ecotourism infrastructure plays a crucial role in allowing tourists to reach their destinations. Infrastructure includes public safety, water supply, conservation and development, transportation, sewer and waste, digital development, transportation, education, and wealth. Tourism infrastructure is considered the physical element that is designed and erected to cater to visitors (Jovanović, 2016). Several writers have theoretically validated the apparent link between infrastructure improvement and tourism growth. Several writers have theoretically validated the apparent link between infrastructure improvement and tourism growth (Adebayo, Iweka, 2014). For instance, Cholik (2017) said unequivocally that tourist infrastructure is viewed as the cornerstone of tourism growth and a foundation for the use of destination resources.

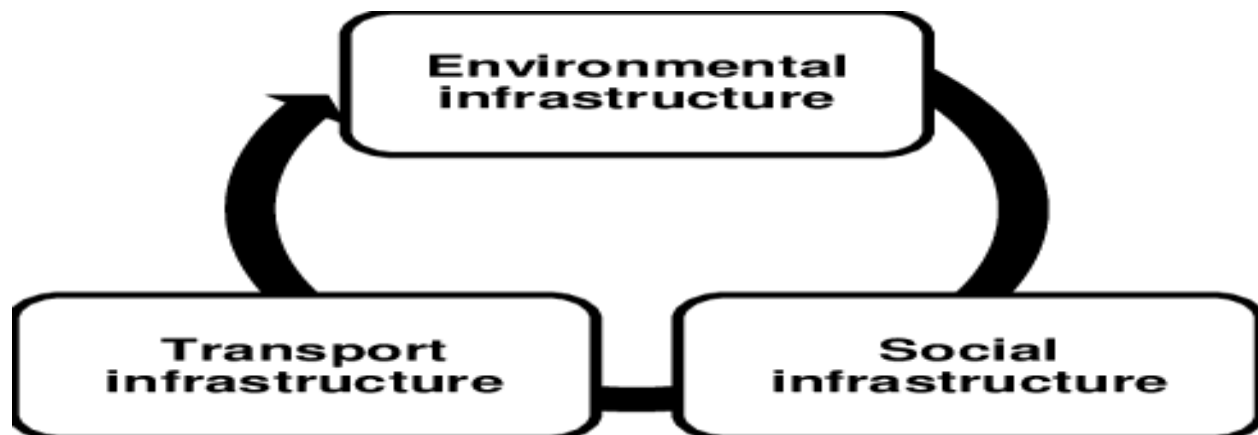


Figure 5. Tourism infrastructure

Source: Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF, 2012)

Kosovo has great environmental and social infrastructure, when it comes to transport infrastructure it can be divided into the road, air, and railway which will attract tourists depending on which region they are coming from.

Significant improvements have been made to the infrastructure. The task of developing the requirements of new for further development with quicker steps in construction technology roads is laid out by improvements of continuous automobile construction, and vice versa, the technical and technological realizations in road construction created a further basis for the development of the automobile industry. In the new geostrategic and geopolitical conditions created in the region of the Balkans and beyond, the infrastructure of road traffic is a determining and stimulating factor for the development of the economy of our country and is a crucial component of economic, scientific, cultural, and free movement of people cooperation that is expanding and deepening every day, being the priority of the time.

The Kosovo region has a *road infrastructure* that is suited for the growth of different commercial enterprises. The primary highways total 630 kilometers in length in the road network. The Ministry of Transport and Post-Telecommunication is in charge of maintaining interstates and regional roads, while Municipality is in charge of local roads. The Department of Road Infrastructure, which works under the Ministry of Transport and Post-Telecommunications, is in charge of all problems relating to the roadways. As a result of the highway's completion with Albania, Kosovo will serve as a crucial crossing point between Western Europe and the Adriatic Sea (MHPI, 2022).

The 330 km long railway network in Kosovo connects the east and west and runs across the whole country's northern and southern regions. In addition to providing passenger transportation for private and public reasons, the railway system also provides commercial freight transportation both inside Kosovo and overseas. Such transportation is done not just by rail but also in conjunction with other modes of transportation. Kosovo Railways makes it possible to build private industrial railroads from railway lines to the nation of the customer. The Commercial Division of Kosovo Railways is in charge of overseeing the bulk of the company's cargo transit (PSHRK, 2022).

Kosovo has only one airport, Adem Jashari Airport, which is one of the most frequented airports in the region. This airport offers flights to the most important European centers but also America. As well as other transports and air transport, in addition to passenger transport, it also transports various goods (cargo) for business purposes. Pristina Airport offers a fast, effective and professional cargo handling service. The airport examines every load through X-rays. Depending on the weight of the load, the fees paid are different (PSHRK, 2022).

2.6 Benefits of Kosovo from Ecotourism

As mentioned in Table 1. Direct and Indirect benefits of Ecotourism, in Kosovo the same direct and indirect elements apply also. It will contribute to the Economy by increasing the number of employed people, enterprises will have more revenue in which case more tax will be paid. The Environment of that particular rural region will be promoted and protected because the whole idea is this form of Tourism is the preservation of nature by maintaining an active lifestyle.

2.6.1 Tourism Sector Enterprises

According to the data of the Tax Administration of Kosovo for the year 2012, the number the majority of businesses in the tourism industry are based in the Prishtina region (36.6%), followed by Prizren (17.2%), Peja (10.1%), Gjilan (9.3%) and so on. The number of businesses registered in the tourism industry in 2012 was 2,089: 1,938 micro, 141 small, 9 medium, and 1 large company (ATK, 2014). The following activities are considered part of the industry: hotels and motels with restaurants and without restaurants, youth hostels and rest mountains camping sites including caravan sites, overnight stays, restaurants, bars, canteens and kitchens, and tourist agencies.

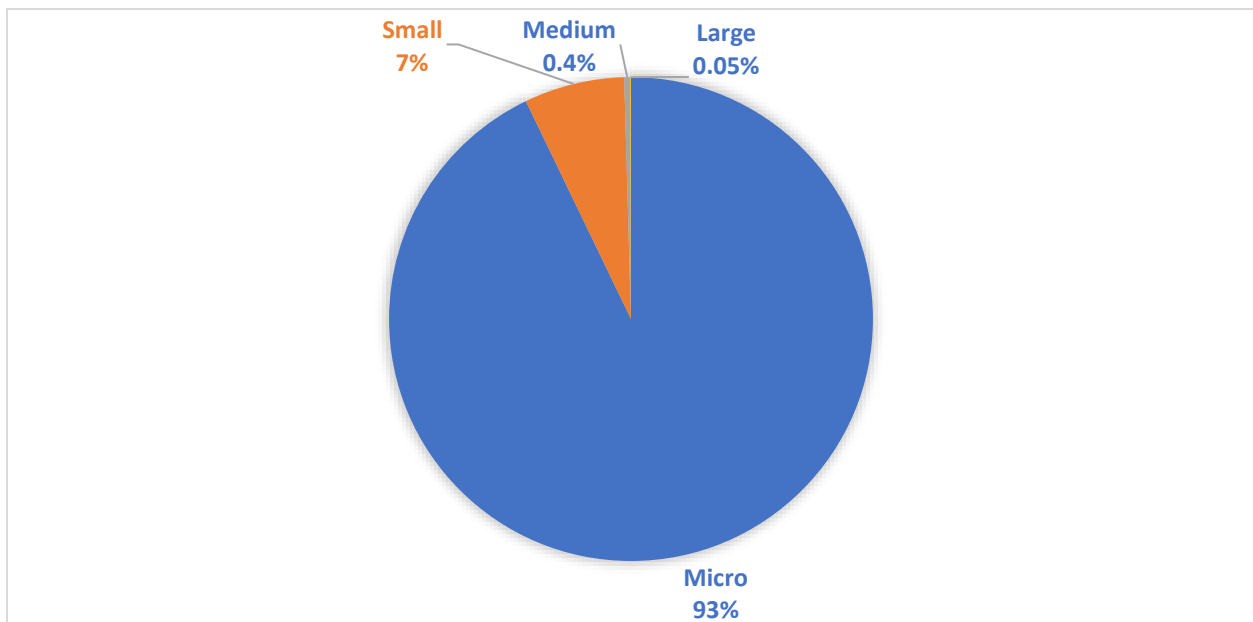


Figure 6. Distribution of enterprises according to size

Source: (ATK, 2014)

2.6.2 Using Ecotourism to protect the natural environment

Both the biodiversity and the mountainous terrain in Kosovo are stunning. Kosovo is a young nation with no international duties to safeguard biodiversity because it is not a signatory to any conventions or parties to any agreements on the preservation of nature. The country contains 97 protected areas, totaling 47,842.34 hectares (or 4.39% of Kosovo's land), that have been designated following International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2019) classifications, according to the "Raporti Gjendja e Natyrës 2008 - 2009 AMMK", published in 2010. Management plans do not exist for any of the protected areas. By this said, maintaining and protecting the areas that are already designated can be done by Ecotourism which in this case will both sides will benefit.

Positive effects on the environment from Ecotourism include the money spent by the tourists will be used in protecting that area. The government and local populations are aware of how crucial it is to preserve the rainforest. The need to hunt animals for food may decline as a result of ecotourism. Ecotourism generates cash by protecting the rainforest; destruction is prohibited since it reduces the amount of money that can be made by tourists (BBC, 2022).

In comparison to the EU Natura 2000 network, which spans over 18% of the EU's land area and more than 8% of its maritime territory, the protected areas' area coverage is very limited. However, Kosovo agreed, through the Sofia Declaration on a Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, to strengthen administrative capabilities for carrying out the environmental commitments of evaluating, supporting, and enforcing compliance with EU goals for biodiversity. A research has determined that Malet e Sharrit, Bjeshkt e Nemuna, Koritniku, Pashtriku, Kozniku, Grmia, Bjeshkt e Kopaonikut, and Mirusha are biodiversity hotspots for Kosovo's flora, fauna, and ecosystems, making them prospective locations for conducting Ecotourism (Zeqir, Avni, Zenel, 2011).

About 44.7% (481,000 acres) of the land in the nation is covered by forests. An estimated 40% of the ownership is in the private sector. The forest area has grown by around 20,200 hectares over the past 10 years owing to natural afforestation (of grasslands, primarily as a result of under-grazing) and by about 4,000 ha due to planted trees. 84% of the forest area is made up of coppice forests (Kosovo, 2016).

2.7 Geographical location and influence from nearby countries

Kosovo is located in Southeastern Europe (SEE) or known as the Balkans where it shares borders with North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania (Gray, Colin S.; Sloan, Geoffrey, 2013). The majority of Kosovo's border with its neighbors is made up of mountains and has a natural character. Not only Kosovo, but the Balkan region, in general, has a great nature with consists of high mountains, rivers, fields, and seashores.

Albania not only has the seaside, which Kosovo doesn't have but also has great mountains and preserved nature. Travel and Tourism were chosen as important sectors with great significance for the economy Albanian and employment as well as for the positive forecasts for growth. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2013 was ALL 68.1 billion leke (4.8% of GDP). This contribution is expected to grow in 2014 by 5.5% to ALL 71.9 billion leke. This contribution also includes the related activities of the restaurant and leisure industries, which are supported directly by tourists and are increasingly playing an important role in the economy Albanian as a source of income and employment (WTCC, 2014). Some of the best places for Ecotourism in Albania offer a great colorful landscape, lakes, high mountains, rivers, valleys, and seas. According to (Sot, 2018) some of the best places are Gryka e Valbones, Liqeni i Pogradecit, Ujevara e Grunasit, Lugina e Valbones, Shpellat, Shqiperia e jugut, Berati, etc.

North Macedonia is a landlocked country like Kosovo and Serbia that doesn't have access to the sea. It is strongly delineated geographically by a center valley created by the Vardar river, which is surrounded by mountain ranges. Between the Ar Mountains and Osogovo, which frame the valley of the Vardar river, the landscape is generally rough. The borders with Albania and Greece are divided by three sizable lakes: Lake Ohrid, Lake Prespa, and Lake Dojran. One of the world's oldest lakes and biotopes is said to reside at Ohrid (Macedonian Ministry of Environment, 2008). Tourism plays an important role in North Macedonia's economy and in 2019 it received around 1 million tourists (Macedonian Statistical Office, 2019). Also according to those statistics, the majority of the tourists were from the Balkan countries and the number is growing year by year.

Montenegro is the second neighboring county that has access to the sea, and the same example as Albania this factor helps to gain more tourists and a large number of them also will do Ecotourism in the rural areas besides beach tourism. There are 50 peaks higher than 2,000 meters in

Montenegro and has a variety of landscapes, including high mountains in the north, karst regions in the center and west, and about 300 km of a narrow coastal plain (Geography and Maps, 2020). For Montenegro, around 25% of the total GDP is from tourism which helped a lot in developing the infrastructure together with hospitality centers (Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism, 2020).

Serbia Officially recognizes tourism as a key driver of both social and economic development. Including the benefits of investment, supply chain, and induced income impacts, the tourist sector contributed RSD 294.6 billion, or 6.7% of GDP, to the Serbian economy in 2017, and was projected to have increased by 2.7% to RSD 302.5 billion in 2018 (OECD, 2020). Also, Serbia is a landlocked country it contains fertile plains in the north of Vojvodina, limestone ranges and basins in the east, and historic mountains and hills in the southeast that make up the region's topography. The more hilly southern areas of Serbia are traversed by the Morava River, a tributary of the Danube.

One indicator of an area's ability to draw tourists is the number of beds it has available in hotels and other lodging facilities. It should be noted that in official tourism statistics, business travelers are counted alongside vacationers and other travelers.

Table 3. Number of beds in hotels and other types of accommodation, 2016 - 2018

	2016	2017	2018
EU-27	11841	11975	12144
North Macedonia	20	21	23
Kosovo	11	11	11
Serbia	52	52	53
Montenegro	31	33	34

Source: Eurostat (online data code: TOUR_CAP_NAT)

There were 121 thousand beds available in hotels and other lodging options throughout the four countries for which data is shown in 2018 compared to Europe with has 12.1 Million beds available. There was no data available for Albania, but comparing Kosovo with only 11 thousand to 3 other countries it has less capacity for accommodation.

3. Methodology

According to the literature, ecotourism may not be the right solution for all rural areas but only for those who have a good geographical location with natural beauties. This study has taken place in the Republic of Kosovo with a particular focus on Rugova, which is situated in the city of Peja. The same methods of research have been applied in Hungary practically in the Mátra region, located between the town of Gyöngyös and Eger. Mátra region will serve as a comparison with Rugova since they are both capable of conducting ecotourism and have mountainous relief.

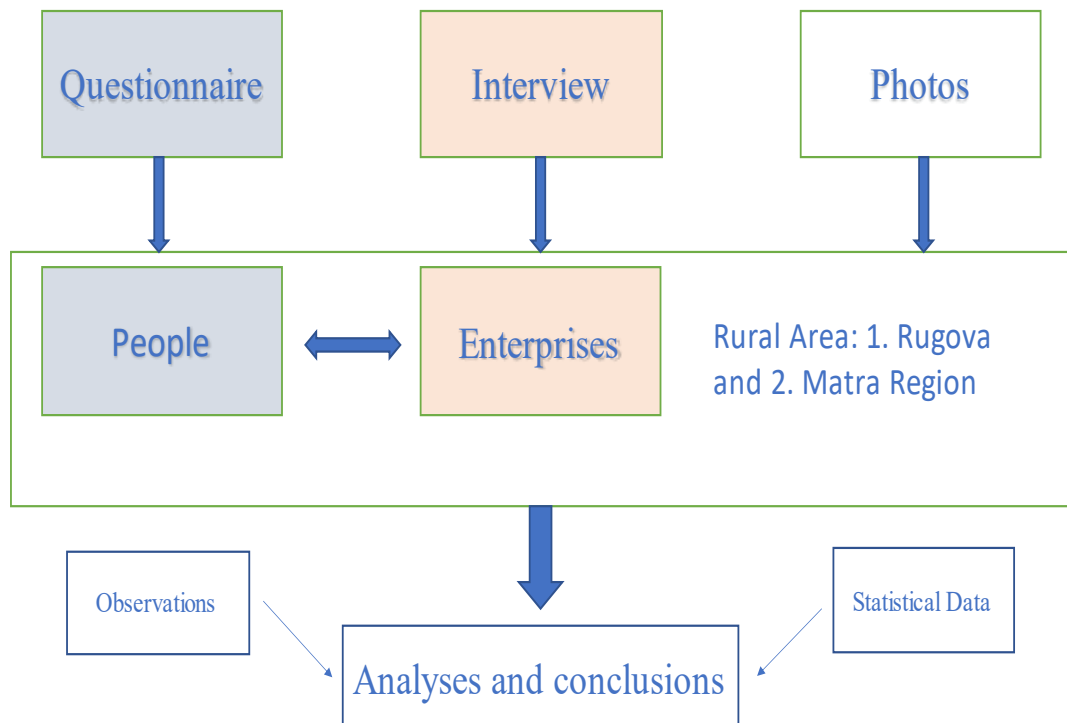


Figure 7. Research Methodology

Source: Author

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study. To gather primary data, quantitative research methods were used. Therefore, secondary data were gathered from thorough official statistical sources of both countries.

3.1 Collecting the data

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires which are distributed in tourist areas. The collection of data is divided into two groups, the first group is the survey questions for the tourists and the second group is interviewing the enterprises in those locations.

3.1.1 Tourist survey

One week of work was done in the Rugova region, more specifically in the parts that attract the most tourists such as Bogë, Drelaj, Kuqishtë, Shtupeq, and Shkrel. I managed to get a good sample of 50 tourists that agreed to complete the survey. Tourists were chosen randomly and understood the reason why are they completing this survey.

Five days of work were done in the Mátra region, in the part of füred, Sástó, háza, and Kékes. I managed to interview 31 Tourists; it was the same survey questions as in the one I used in Rugova. Here I had to translate the survey into the Hungarian language which turned out to be more effective rather than having it in English.

3.1.2 Enterprise interviews

In the same location where the survey was conducted, integrated interview with enterprises was done also. Interviews were conducted with tourism enterprises and some others that had as a default population the following enterprise categories:

1. Hotels
2. Restaurants
3. Information Centers
4. Commercial Business etc.

A total of ten enterprises were interviewed which consisted of five in Peja – Rugova region and the other five in Gyöngyös – Mátra region. The name of the enterprises is written below:

Table 4. List of the interviewed enterprises

Peja – Rugova region	Gyöngyös – Mátra region
<u>O’Deer Caffé</u>	<u>Albán pékség 2</u>
<u>Kompleksi Gafurri</u>	<u>Sziluett Borhotel</u>
<u>Rugova Valley Tourist Info</u>	<u>Tourinform</u>
<u>Hotel Magra Austria</u>	<u>Mátra Camping, Motel Sástó</u>
<u>Restaurant Hani</u>	<u>4 évszak erdei hotel</u>

Source: Author

3.1.3 The form of Survey Questions and Interview

Design of Questionnaires: The questionnaires are designed in such a way that they light on the problem and research questions, so questionnaires collect information on the Ecotourism aspect. It consists of a total of 22 questions where some are with options, open-ended questions, and level of agreement on statements. The questionnaire is in English, during my process of collecting surveys from tourists in the Rugova region, for those who didn’t understand English I assisted them with the Albanian language. As per the survey in The Mátra Region, I translated the survey into the Hungarian language also which you will see more clearly in the Appendix. This means that all the data was collected on the field by approaching the tourists at the random matter.

Form of Interviews: The interviews are conducted in such a way that Managers/ Owners of the enterprise were able to answer 10 of my questions during a 20-minute meeting. They were contacted in advance and booked a meeting in advance so that the Interview process to be undisturbed. The interview is constructed in such a way as to meet the profile of my research and to be in line with tourist questionnaire needs.

4. Peja/ Rugova and Gyöngyös/ Mátra data analysis

This chapter provides an overview of the statistical analyzes performed on the data collected from Kosovar and Hungarian enterprises. All the data information found has been carefully reported to provide an overview of their clearest. Also in this chapter, we will present the differences in terms of different study variables. The data that is collected is enough to conduct this research and make a strong analysis for the purpose of ecotourism in rural areas. You will see a short introduction to the two locations on which you will understand the characteristics, lifestyle, environment, history, geography, and population. The research is based on primary data, and the main reason for this is to compare how much these two locations have in common and what makes them unique.

A good way to interpret the differences is the visual form in which you will see a comparison between the infrastructure, tourist information differences, bus stations, nature, enterprises, etc. All the pictures used in this analysis are captured by me from my field research. Doing this method will give readers a clear view of how similar or different Rugova and Mátra are from each other. One page consists of two photos that belong to the same or close nature of the content, at the bottom of the page you will see a short explanation that is based on my observations.

As already mentioned, five interviews in Rugova and five in Mátra for tourism enterprises are coded and tabulated to be subject to an analysis and evaluation process for the collected data. The SPSS program was selected for data analysis. SPSS help me analyze a correlation between several variables of the study. To facilitate the analysis of all quantitative data responses are coded following the nature of the research questions and analysis comparative. Sane methods are to be applied in survey questionnaires, which include graphs and SWOT analysis to make them more understandable and comparable.

4.1 General overview of Peja – Rugova and Gyöngyös – Mátra region

The fourth-largest city in Kosovo is Peja. The municipality of Peja has 96,450 residents, whereas the city of Peja has 48,962 residents and the countryside has 47,488, according to the 2017 census (ASK, 2021). History, culture, tradition, natural resources, location, protected environment, fertile lands, etc are some of the factors that distinguish Peja as a tourist destination that receives tourists from many nationalities all year long. Peja is known as a big producer and it has one of the largest factories producing beer, coffee, cheese, and milk. The city lies around the same distance northeast of the border with Albania and 10 kilometers east of the border with Montenegro. A short distance from the city in the hilly areas, on the road to the border with Montenegro, are the rivers "Bistrica e Peja" and "Drini I Bardh," the biggest rivers in Kosovo (Cadastral Agency of Kosovo, 2020). Peja, which is surrounded by a varied panorama of cultures and religions, is home to the Patriarchal Monastery, which is likely the most significant structure for Orthodox Christians. The "Visoki Decani" Orthodox monastery is also situated around 15 kilometers south of the city. Since 2004, both monasteries have been listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Rugova is a hilly region in Kosovo, to the northwest of Peja. It is the third section of the Albanian Alps, often known as the Nemuna Mountains. In 2013, the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo designated it as a National Park. Rugova as a region is under the management of the municipality of Peja so in this case, it is a part of it. Rugova is an important ethnographic area for the study of lexicology, etymology, and onomastics, among other areas of linguistics. Mountaineering, skiing, rock climbing, paragliding, family picnics, and other outdoor activities are all acceptable in Rugova. 15% of the total area is made up of alpine pastures, while forests cover 85% of it. With steep limestone slopes and deep, constricting erosional canyons, the landscape is fractured. The mountain's sides typically have a slope of 15° to 30°, although occasionally they might be 45° to 90°. It is made up of a wide variety of karst landforms, including caves, tunnels formed by nature, waterfalls, glacial lakes, etc (Blerim Baruti, Xheme Lajqi, Mensur Kelmendi, 2017). The highest peak in Rugova is considered to be the Hajla, which consists of 2403 meters above sea level. Hajla is a mountain within the Albanian Alps on the border of Kosovo and Montenegro. It lies between the Rugova gorge and the source of the river Iber and it's not the highest peak in Kosovo.

Gyöngyös is a town in Hungary's Heves county, 80 kilometers to the east of Budapest. Same as Peja that Rugova is under its administrative management, and Mátra Region is under the administrative point of view of Gyöngyös. Throughout the town, there are several monuments and tourist attractions such as the home of the Museum, Orczy mansion, Saint Bartholomew's Church, etc. In the 2011 census, the total population was 31,412 people which is declining slowly through the years (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2011). Gyöngyös is known for its production of milk, in different factories including here the sausage factory, milk, etc. It also is home to many vineyard fields and is known for the production of wine, white wine is its best product according to some of the owners.

Mátra region is a mountain range in northern Hungary that is located between Gyöngyös and Eger. By origin, it is a part of Europe's largest young volcanic zone and is a piece of the North Hungarian Mountains. It is situated halfway between the valleys of the Rivers Tarna and Zagyva. The highest peak in Mátra is Kékestető which consists of 1014 meters above sea level, this is the highest peak not only in this region but in the whole of Hungary. In the Mátra range in Heves county, 12 kilometers northeast of Gyöngyös, is Kékestet. After Lake Balaton and the Danube, it is the third most visited tourist destination in Hungary (Földvagy, 1988). In addition to being a notable feature of the Northeast Hungarian Central Mountains, the Mátra Mountain is also a part of the inner, peripheral volcanic belt. Mátra is the second largest region when it comes to producing wine in Hungary but it also includes lowland regions, the eastern Börzsöny foothills, the region of Vác and Veresegyház, and even a small piece of Budapest. The wine area has a mild continental climate. The Mátra mountain's southern slopes are home to vineyards that are shielded from the chilly north winds by the mountain. As a result, various vineyards are impacted by specific microclimates. As the mountain also absorbs the majority of the rainfall, the Mátra wine area is thought to have a rather dry terroir. Typically, spring arrives late, May and June bring heavy rains, and the second half of summer is typically bright and dry. While Mátra has grapes on its sunny southern slopes, it is still regarded as a chilly climate wine area (hungarianwines.eu, 2021).

4.2 Photo comparison



Figure 8. The city center of Gyöngyös

Source: Author



Figure 9. The City center of Peja

Source: Author

In both city centers, there is a good boulevard for the people to walk and enjoy the unique beauties of the locations that have to offer. There are a lot of places that allow people to sit, drink or eat while looking at different monuments and statues. The main difference is that in the Peja center, there are no religious objects like in Gyöngyös the Saint Bartholomew Church, and the river goes through the city center of Peja and divides the city into two parts with 3 main bridges.



Figure 10. Tourist signs in Gyöngyös

Source: Author



Figure 11. Tourist signs in Peja

Source: Author

Signs for Tourists are available and similar in both cities, the main objective is to orientate the visitors to the main attractions. In Peja, they are relatively new and were added 3 years ago, Gyöngyös on the other side has put up these signs a long time ago. In both regions, signs are set in different locations in order to make their objective of orientation more efficient.



Figure 12. Tourist information center in Gyöngyös

Source: Author



Figure 13. Tourist information center in Peja

Source: Author

Tourist information centers look very different from each other, as shown in the picture the office in Peja is built with rocks and stands alone, in Gyöngyös looks more like an office and is attached to a building. Their purpose is the same and somehow offer the same products to the tourists such as guides, local products, different programs, maps, souvenirs, etc.



Figure 14. Buss stop in Mátra

Source: Author



Figure 15. Buss stop in Rugova

Source: Author

Buss stops are built differently, in Mátra they are all made from wood and have green colors in comparison with Rugova they are built from rocks and have an interesting design. In the Mátra region, there is solid public transport which tourists and locals use frequently. The same statement cannot be applied to Rugova, the bus transportation is very poor and has long waiting hours.



Figure 16. Road infrastructure in Mátra

Source: Author



Figure 17. Road infrastructure in Rugova

Source: Author

Road infrastructure is more developed in Mátra and street lines are visible together with the quality of the road. In Rugova the roads in some parts are damaged and need more maintenance. The reason for the bad infrastructure is that in some parts the terrain is rough, and rock slides, not solid planning in infrastructure investments.



Figure 18. Wooden Houses in Mátra

Source: Author



Figure 19. Wooden Houses in Rugova

Source: Author

Wooden houses are more common in Rugova than in Mátra, they also have different designs. The majority of wooden houses or as they are called in Rugova “Villa” have a triangle shape. While in Mátra there use mainly hotels than wooden houses or motels as they call them, in Peja, there are more wooden houses than hotels.



Figure 20. Highest peak in Mátra

Source: Author



Figure 21. Highest peak in Rugova

Source: Author

Considering the highest peak in Mátra is Kékes with 1,014 meters above sea level, it is easily accessible by public transport. The highest peak in Rugova is Hajla with 2403 meters above sea level and you can get there only by hiking with experienced people. Approximately 1026 meters is the difference between these two locations which means is twice higher in Peja.

4.3 Business interview analysis in both locations

Regarding the ownership of the interviewed businesses as shown in **Table 4. List of the interviewed enterprises**, all belong to private-owned enterprises except the Tourist information centers where they both are Publico-Private associations.

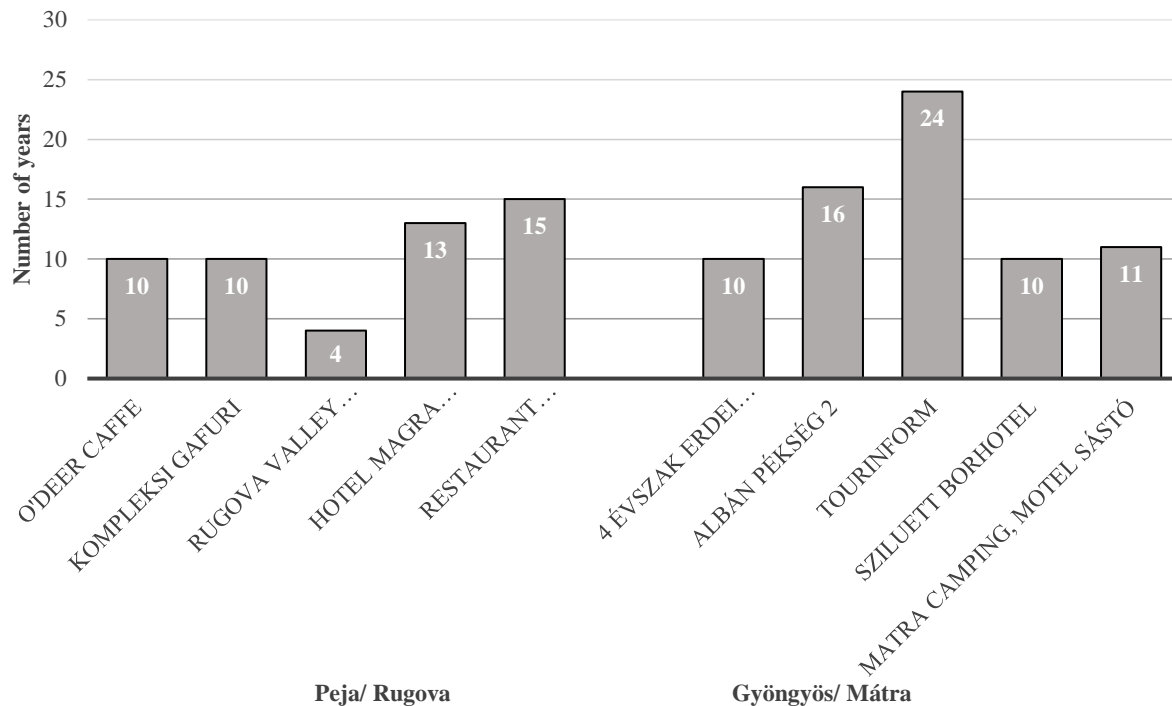


Figure 22. Years of enterprises operating

Source: Author

As we can see on the graph the enterprises have around the same year work of experience in their locations except for the Tourist information centers where is a big difference. Rugova Valley Tourist Info in Peja has only 4 years of experience while Tourinform in Gyöngyös has 24 years. This also explains that Peja has recently started realizing the importance of promoting its mountainous relief and informing the tourists about the main attractions. The average year of the enterprises interviewed in Gyöngyös is 14.2 years in comparison to Peja which is 10.4 years. If we don't include the Tourist Info Centers the average years of work would be 11 for both. These enterprises are stable and more likely to further their activities in their locations, this is an important indicator I understood while having conversations with Managers/Owners.

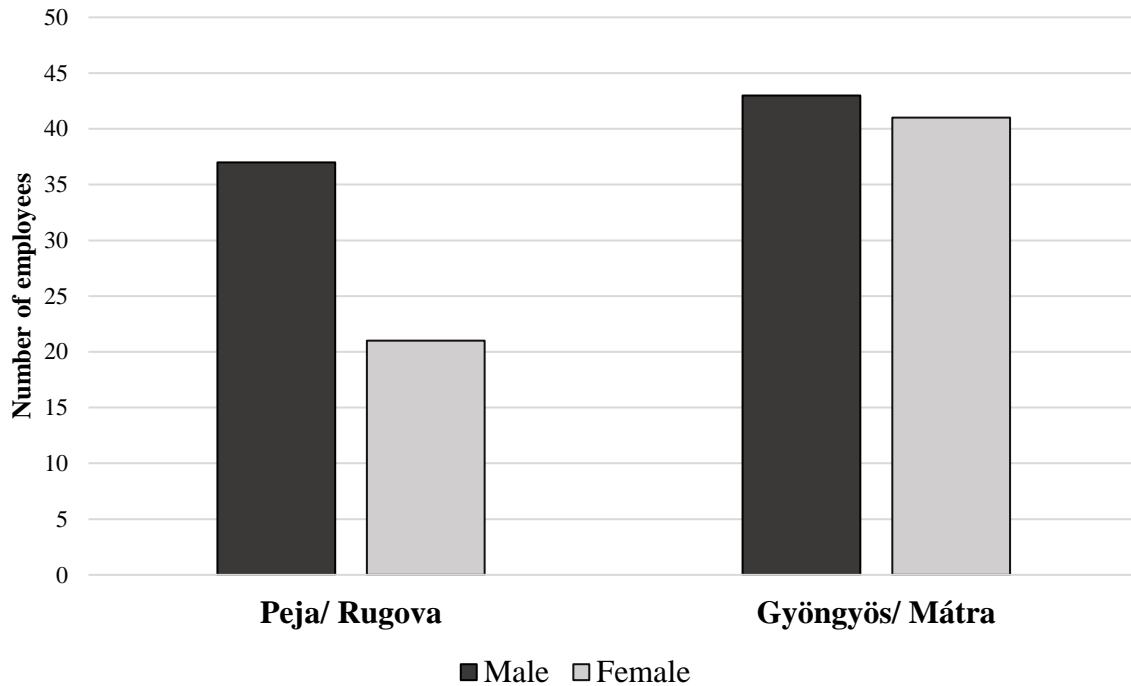


Figure 23. Enterprise employment statistics

Source: Author

The total number of employed people in five enterprises that were interviewed in Peja/Rugova is 58. By number 37 of them are male and 21 females, or if we speak in percentages 63.7% are male and 36.3 female. In Gyöngyös/ Máttra, the total number of employees in 5 enterprises was 84 workers where 43 (51.2%) are male and 41 (48.8%) were females.

If we compare these two, we can say that Gyöngyös/ Máttra has more employees in general, or if we talk with percentage, it has 31% more than Peja/Rugova. The reason for this can be the unavailability to find new workers and the economic situation. It is worth mentioning that some of the enterprises interviewed in Kosovo recently are experiencing a shortage of employees. The number of female workers is almost the same as the number of male workers in Gyöngyös/ Máttra compared to Peja/ Rugova the number of the female working force is much lower.

In conclusion, we can say that in terms of employment and gender equality the Gyöngyös/ Máttra region stands in a better position than Peja/ Rugova.

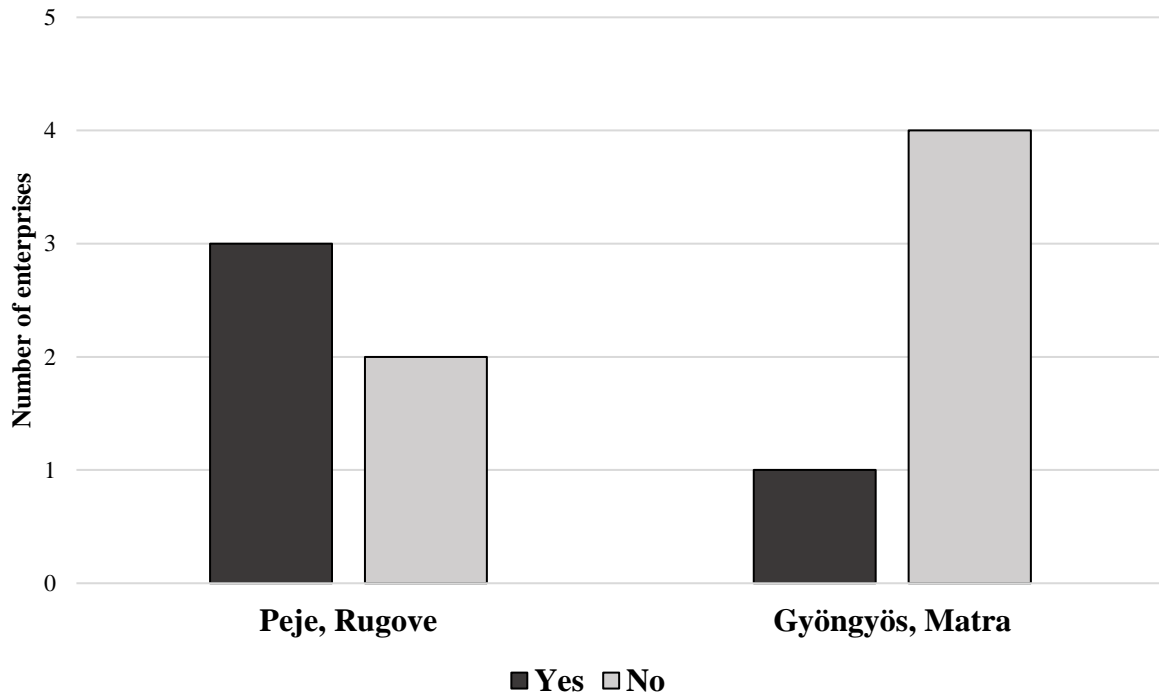


Figure 24. Enterprises receiving government support

Source: Author

Receiving government support is more present in Peja/ Rugova, this comes from public institution programs to support the enterprises, especially since the last covid outbreak in 2020 support has increased substantially. The support is given in different forms to all private enterprises or startups and here enterprises operating in rural areas are included also. Because of that important element, three out of five enterprises declared that they receive government support that includes deductions from taxes, covering the expenses for wages of employees, and subsidies or grants. In order to receive support all enterprises should have legally registered employees, and have all financial statements. In case they didn't complete this task, they can't receive any support that's why the ones who didn't follow this step are starting to take action so they can access the support also. Gyöngyös/ Mátra enterprises declared that the majority of them don't receive any government or don't have an idea that there can be available projects from which they can benefit. Four out of five interviewed enterprises declared that they haven't received any support, except the Mátra Camping – Motel Sástó where the government helped with the construction of some tourist attractions to make the environment eco-friendlier.

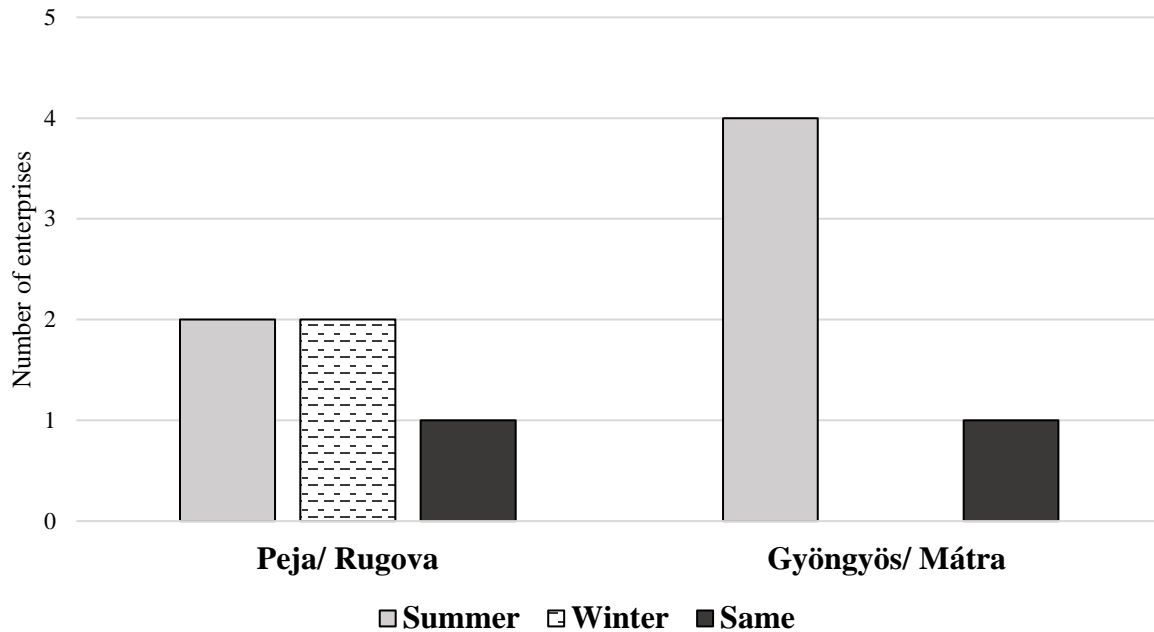


Figure 25. The profitable season for Enterprises

Source: Author

The season in which they receive the most tourist has a big difference between these two regions. Peja/ Rugova region with five interviewed enterprises two declared that summer is the most profitable, other two said that winter, and one said that both seasons are the same. Surprisingly, Gyöngyös/ Mátra enterprises declared that winter is not good for them and none of them listed winter as a profitable season, four of them agreed that summer is the main season of the year, and for one other enterprise, both seasons were the same.

In the question, of whether they managed to maintain good revenue answers were almost the same for all of them. They all managed to recover from the covid pandemic but their earning is not as high as they used to be and there can be many different effects. Inflation affected every field and rural enterprises here are not excluded also, electricity, and supplier prices have an impact of the financial aspect. Depending on their activity they offer Food and drinks, accommodation, information, tours, wellness, sauna, and different sports or enjoyment activity. Every enterprise is taking care of the environment and some of them already have awards for being Eco Friendly like for example Hotel Magra Austria and Mátra Camping – Motel Sástó. Getting an award for being Eco Friendly is becoming an important factor for enterprises and that is why a lot of them like the

example of Sziluett Borhotel in Gyöngyös/ Mátra, have made all the necessary steps of taking care of nature and implementing here also the solar panels will make this enterprise eligible for receiving an award by the end of this year.

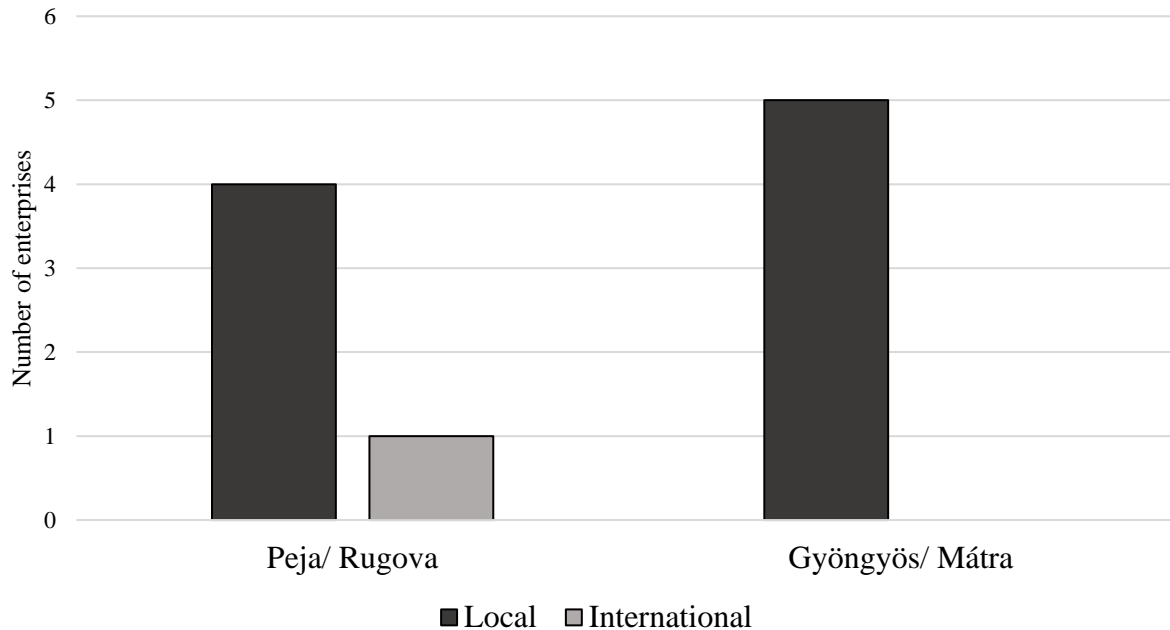


Figure 26. Majority of the Tourists

Source: Author

In Peja/ Rugova region the majority of the tourists are from Kosovo, but an interesting fact is that the enterprise that has more international tourists is the Tourist information center. The Tourist Information response to this question was that local tourists already know this region and don't show that much interest, unlike the international ones where this center is one of the first points to search for guidelines. The factors of success according to the responses of enterprises are hospitality, location, loyal to customers, professionalism, experience, and traditional food.

The majority of tourists in Gyöngyös/ Mátra are from Hungary, even at the Tourist information center 85% of the tourists are Hungarian and a big percentage of them come from Budapest. Enterprises in this region as a factor of their success include these elements: high-tech sports programs, high-quality products, guest satisfaction, wedding organization, location, and a lot of programs.

4.4 Tourist survey analysis

This part will be an in-depth analysis of the background of the tourists, which first will be presented individually between their regions and after that a comparison of ecotourism and tourism-related questions.

4.4.1 Peja/ Rugova tourist background

In the city of Peja where Rugova is a mountainous region, a total of 50 tourists took part in the survey, as you can see in *Table 5. Tourists respondents in Rugova*. Around 40% of the interviewed respondents were from Peja and 60% were from another part of Kosovo including here those living abroad. The average age is 34.06 years old, more detailed information about age in categories and education level can be seen in *Table 6. Age and Education of tourists in Rugova*.

Table 5. Tourists respondents in Rugova

Location	Nr. of Tourists	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Peja	20	40.0	40.0
Prishtina	8	16.0	56.0
Deqan	1	2.0	58.0
Gjakova	2	4.0	62.0
Istog	5	10.0	72.0
Mitrovica	3	6.0	78.0
Prizren	3	6.0	84.0
Outside Kosovo	8	16.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: Author

Table 6. Age and Education of tourists in Rugova

Age group	Percentage	Education level	Percentage
16-25	26.0	High School	36.0
26-49	64.0	Bachelor	48.0
49-65	8.0	Masters	14.0
Over 66	2.0	PhD	2.0
Total	100.0	Total	100.0

Source: Author

Of all the tourists, 52% decide to come and spend only one day in Rugova, 8% spend two days and two or more days 40% of them.

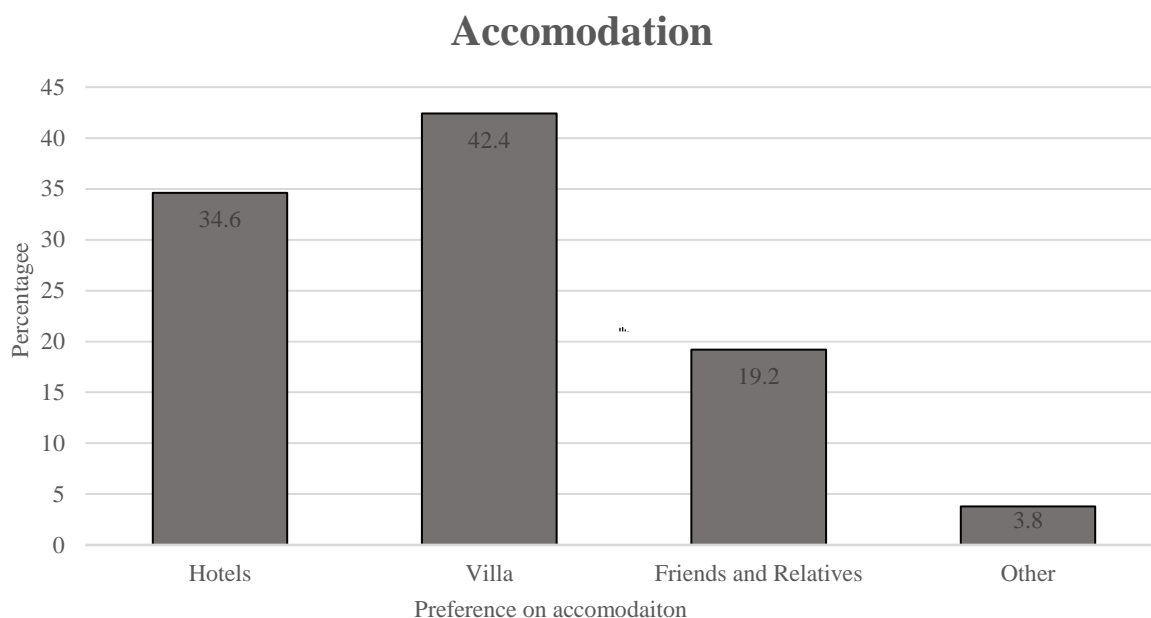


Figure 27. Preference for the accommodation of Rugova tourists

Source: Author

As seen on the graph, the majority of the tourists, or 42.4 % of them prefer to choose the villa as a better place for them to accommodate, 34.6% take the second place, 19.2% go to their friends or relatives (or they have their own house) to spend their stay, 3.8 % chose an alternative accommodation such as a tent, their truck, etc.

Table 7. Tourist companions in Rugova

	Nr. Of Tourists	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Family	15	30.0	30.0
Partner	12	24.0	54.0
Friends	21	42.0	96.0
Alone	2	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: Author

Considering the average age of tourists is relatively young, it makes since that the biggest group is friends, after that family member, couples and alone is the least common.

4.4.2 Gyöngyös/ Mátra tourist background

31 tourists agreed to take part in the survey when it comes to the Mátra region, due to language barriers I was unable to make it to 50 but the analysis with this data is still valid.

Table 8. Tourist respondents in Mátra

Location	Nr. Of Tourists	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Budapest	10	32.3	32.3
Gyöngyös	8	25.8	58.1
Gödöllő	2	6.5	64.5
Kecskemèt	2	6.5	71.0
Other	8	25.8	96.8
Outside Hungary	1	3.2	100.0
Total	31	100.0	

Source: Author

From the table, we can understand that the majority of the tourists are from Budapest 32.3% followed by the local people from Gyöngyös 25.8% who visit the Mátra region

Table 9. Age and Education of Tourists in Mátra

Age group	Percentage	Education level	Percentage
16-25	16.0	High School	42.0
26-49	58.0	Bachelor	39.0
49-65	20.0	Masters	16.0
Over 66	6.0	PhD	3.0
Total	100.0	Total	100.0

Source: Author

The average age of tourists in Gyöngyös/ Mátra is 40.22 years and the biggest age group is from 26 to 49 with 58%. We can notice that also the group aged from 49 to 65 years makes the second biggest share on the percentage with 20%. This proves that older people visit this region a lot, mostly for health-related reasons. People who completed only high school are 42% which is a difference from the Peja/ Rugova tourists who almost 50% finished their Bachelor's degree.

Table 10. Tourist companions in Mátra

	Nr. Of Tourists	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Family	10	32.3	32.3
Partner	14	45.2	77.4
Friends	5	16.1	93.5
Alone	2	6.5	100.0
Total	31	100.0	

Source: Author

Based on the interviewed respondents, the majority of the tourists, or more than 45% chose their partner to visit the Mátra region. The second biggest group of tourists is family members followed by those who come with their friends. If we compare these statistics with Rugova, there is a significant difference in the first group whereas in Rugova there are more who go out with their friends.

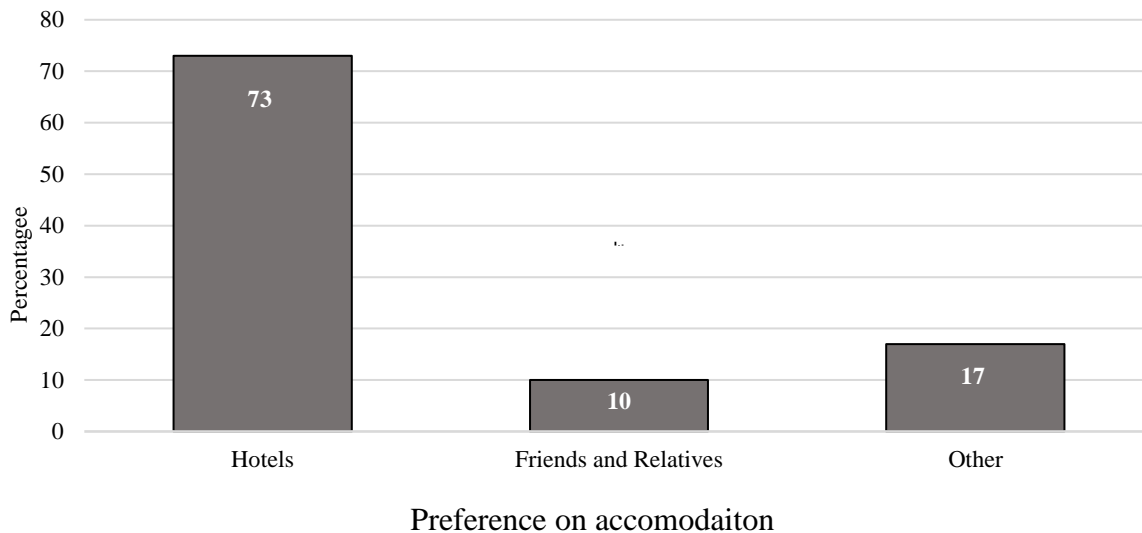


Figure 28. Preference for the accommodation of Mátra

Source: Author

38% of the respondents spend only one day in Mátra, 29 % spend two days and 33% more than two days. Of those who choose accommodation, 73% choose Hotels or Motels, 10% accommodate their friends or relatives, and 17% choose other which include they have their own house or apartment, renting an apartment, etc. Here the concept of “Villa” or wooden houses isn’t popular and no one chose that option as an accommodation form.

4.4.3 Statistical comparison between two locations regarding ecotourism

The majority of the respondents have no information about ecotourism based on my research, even though it is a growing sector and it's expected to grow based on Statista Research Development from 181 billion US dollars to 333.8 billion US dollars by the end of 2027 (Department, 2021).

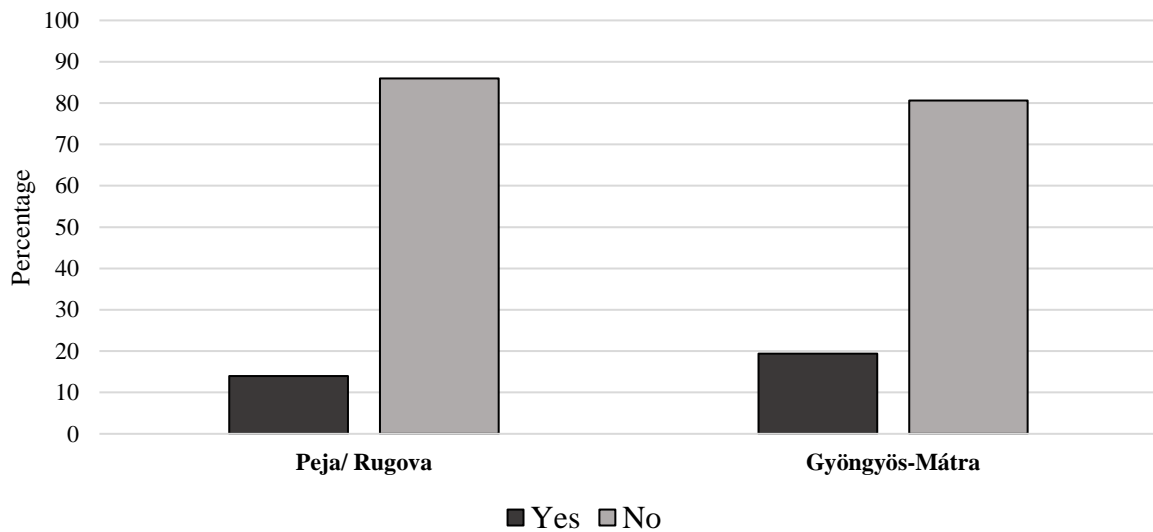


Figure 29. Respondents' information on ecotourism

Source: Author

The results are almost similar with a slight difference, where we say that in Rugova 14 % of respondents know about Ecotourism and 86% don't have information about it. In Mátra 19.4% of the respondents have pieces of information and 80.6% don't.

Almost identical results occur also in the question: Is this your first time here? In Rugova 22% of the respondents answered as their first time and 78 visited this region more than once. In the Mátra region difference is only 1%, first-time visitors in this region 23%, and the ones who already visited this place before is 77%.

Favorite activities in Rugova for the tourists in the open-ended question include hiking, walking, running, enjoying nature, relaxing, skinning, camping, exploring, and breathing the fresh air. Favorite activities for Mátra tourists include cycling, hiking, enjoying nature, relaxing, wellness, running, excursion, wild camping, and sports. All these activities are similar in both regions and we can say that all are part of the ecotourism activities.

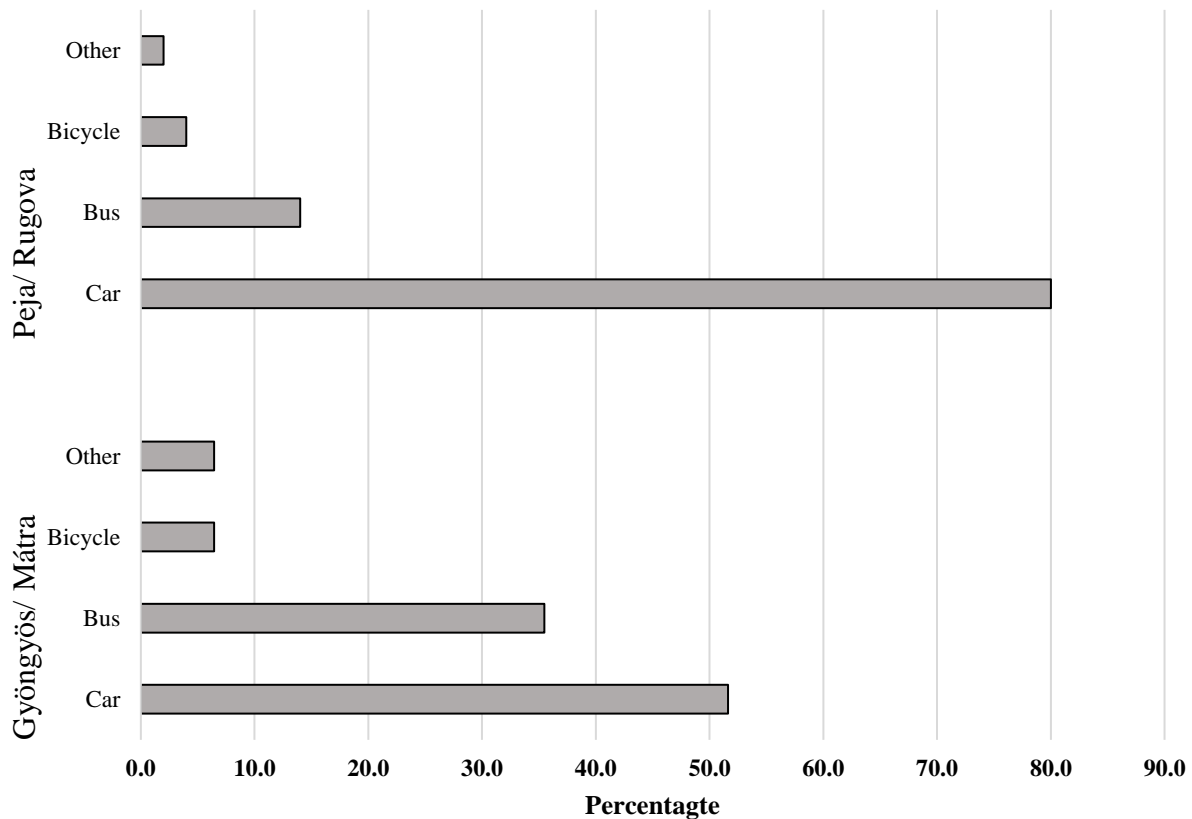


Figure 30. Most used methods of transportation

Source: Author

There is a big difference when it comes to methods of transportation and it's all related to the availability of using public transport. In Peja/ Rugova the people who are coming by bus are most likely to be from some agencies that bring tourists with different offers from Albania or other cities of Kosovo to enjoy a day in nature. There is no public transport to Rugova, only some private lines that have long waiting times and this is the main reason why more than 80% of all respondents use the car as their main transportation choice. Gyöngyös/ Mátra has great public transport which also reflects in the usage of public transport or the bus which sends tourists/ local people to their destination. Not only local people but from all cities of Hungary especially the city of Budapest benefit from this transportation and use it. More than 50% of tourists in Mátra use the car as their choice of transportation besides the fact that there is a good infrastructure for using public transport as mentioned above.

We try to understand if there is any possible connection between education and the possibility of having information about ecotourism. One evaluation of the collected results found a relationship between these variables, and another didn't find it by using the Chi-Square test to test.

There is a connection between the level of education and ecotourism knowledge in Peja / Rugova by using the Chi-Square test. The results show that ecotourism information is not affected by educational background, on the contrary, the data shows that the expected count in the future won't matter how the degree people possess. The reason behind this is that the data shows an even higher level of education such as a Master's or Ph.D. doesn't have much knowledge about this field in some cases even worse than lower ones.

The Chi-Square for Rugova test, that is, the test of statistical significance of this relationship shows that: $\chi^2_{log} = 13.959$, ($\alpha = 0.05$ and the number of degrees of freedom ($df= 3$), $\chi^2_{tab} = 0.03$ So with these results we can say that, $\chi^2_{log} < \chi^2_{tab}$. The connection exists.

So comparing the results we can say that in both cases there was a connection between the cross-tabulated variables.

The test used in the Mátra region shows that there is no significant difference between the level of education and information on ecotourism. The data shows that no matter the level of education the information that they have, information about ecotourism is not relevant.


The Chi-Square for Mátra test, that is, the test of statistical significance of this relationship shows that: $\chi^2_{log} = 7.386$, ($\alpha = 0.05$ and the number of degrees of freedom ($df= 3$), $\chi^2_{tab} = 0.61$ So with these results we can say that, $\chi^2_{log} > \chi^2_{tab}$. There is no relationship between the variables.

As seen in the textbox, the asymptotic significance of Chi-Square is 0.61 that means is bigger than 0.05. By that statement, we can just show the data and the trends but not there is no effect or connection between those two variables when it comes to the Mátra region.

If we interpret the data between these two regions, with Peja/ Rugova whom Chi-Square found a connection, and in Gyöngyös-Mátra a small percentage didn't meet the criteria we can conclude that even if there is a connection the expected count is dropping in higher education, and increasing in the lower one.

For this part of the analysis, we have compared the respondent's answers to ecotourism-related questions with multiple choices: **1= Completely disagree 2= Disagree 3= Agree 4= Completely agree**. To compare the two regions with respondents' answers I have used descriptive analysis on SPSS. Descriptive analysis is a sort of data analysis that aids in accurately describing, displaying, or summarizing data points so that patterns may appear that satisfy all of the data's requirements.

Table 11. Scale form of measurement

Rating scales			
1*	2*	3*	4*
Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely Agree
Agree from 1 to 2			Disagree from 3 to 4

*Remember that the highest average has a greater level of agreement and vice versa.

Based on this scale, the comparison between two regions is made so we can understand agreement level of the respondents on different statements and the average.

Table 12. Respondents agreement level

Statements about the tourist location	Average in Peja/ Rugova	Average in Gyöngyös/ Mátra
The infrastructure is developed	2.88	3.35
There are a lot of activities to do here	3.56	3.58
I will recommend it to others	3.82	3.81
The behavior of people towards the environment is good	2.84	3.13
It is easy to navigate through the area	3.28	3.45
Nature is the main reason I came here	3.72	3.87
Enterprises are very professional here	3.30	3.19
The government is supporting this region	3.00	2.97
Women are involved in different activities	3.38	3.39
The prices are affordable	3.02	2.87
Total Avarage	3.28	3.36

Source: Author

Based on the table, we can make several observations and analyses:

1. Overall satisfaction: The total average score for Peja/Rugova is 3.28, while for Gyöngyös/Máttra it is slightly higher at 3.36. This indicates that tourists are generally satisfied with both locations, but slightly more so with Gyöngyös/Máttra.
2. Activities and Nature: Both locations score high on "There are a lot of activities to do here" and "Nature is the main reason I came here". This suggests that tourists are attracted to both locations because of the range of activities available and the natural environment.
3. Professionalism: Both locations score relatively high on "Enterprises are very professional here". This suggests that businesses and services in both locations are perceived to be run efficiently and effectively.
4. Price: Both locations score relatively low on "The prices are affordable". This suggests that tourists perceive the cost of goods and services in both locations to be relatively high.
5. Infrastructure and Navigation: Gyöngyös/Máttra scores higher than Peja/Rugova on "The infrastructure is developed" and "It is easy to navigate through the area". This suggests that tourists find it easier to get around and have better access to facilities in Gyöngyös/Máttra.
6. Government support: Both locations score around average on "The government is supporting this region". This suggests that tourists perceive the government to be moderately supportive of the tourism industry in both locations.
7. Environmental behavior: Both locations score relatively low on "The behavior of people towards the environment is good". This suggests that tourists perceive there to be room for improvement in terms of how locals behave towards the environment.
8. Gender inclusion: Both locations score relatively high on "Women are involved in different activities". This suggests that tourists perceive women to be actively involved in various aspects of the tourism industry in both locations.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Regarding my first question on how close the ecotourism relation between Peja and Gyöngyös taking into account that Hungary is part of the EU and Kosovo is still a potential candidate? According to my research, I can conclude that there are a lot of things in common between the two regions in terms of what they offer to tourists and tourist satisfaction. The main activities which are connected to ecotourism such as hiking, walking, running, enjoying nature, relaxing, wellness, and wild camping are done by both sides of tourists. Being part of the European Union in general offers a lot of advantages and tourist exchanges but in this case these two regions there is no big difference. The main reason is that the deeper rural areas like Rugova which is part of Kosovo which isn't part of the EU and Mátra part of Hungary which is in the EU, this kind of regions don't get international attention. Since the majority of visitors to both locations are from their own countries, they deeply depend on the satisfaction of their local people.

For the development of Rugova and Mátra which are rich in natural resources and biodiversity, ecotourism may be a practical option. Ecotourism is a form of sustainable travel that prioritizes environmental protection and local community growth while giving visitors an authentic experience. Numerous avenues exist for businesses in these two regions to support infrastructural growth, job opportunities, and sustainable development. First off, ecotourism has the potential to give locals direct and indirect employment opportunities as guides, drivers, chefs, and cleaners. By creating a market for regional goods like handicrafts, food, and housing, ecotourism may also boost the local economy. Moreover, ecotourism can encourage the development of infrastructure, such as transportation, water supply, waste management, and communication, which benefits both tourists and locals. Ecotourism projects can also provide financial support for the conservation of natural resources, such as wildlife, forests, and water bodies, which can have long-term benefits for the region's sustainability. As seen in the examples we showed in the chapter on Business interview analysis, they employed a lot of people and are constantly making innovations for sustainability.

Regarding the information about the term Ecotourism, the majority of the respondents in both regions didn't have any information about it. Overall, ecotourism is a concept that has gained significant attention and importance in the tourism industry as a way to promote sustainable travel and protect natural and cultural resources. The test I ran in SPSS more precisely Chi-Square has shown two different results for two regions. As shown previously educational background didn't have any connection to respondents knowing ecotourism in the Mátra region. The opposite thing was shown in Rugova, where the test was connected with ecotourism and education background but not in the way I envisioned it. The result turned out to be that at higher levels of education like Masters and Ph.D. the knowledge about predicted to drop and the opposite in High School and Bachelors. The reason behind this is that there are more people with lower education with average information and higher education respondents are lower in numbers and didn't have as much information about ecotourism as expected.

The quality of the ecotourism experience is positively correlated with tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit is proved in Rugova and Mátra regions. If we look at *Table 12. Respondents agreement level* we can see the satisfaction level is above the average for both locations. The statement "I will recommend to other people" is among the highest completely agreed sentences together with "Nature is the main reason I come here". More than 78% of the tourist in these regions are revisiting those regions which proves the statement that ecotourism is positively connected to satisfaction and revisits from them.

Recommendations for better ecotourism:

- Give environmental preservation priority. Peja/ Rugova and Gyöngyös/ Mátra ought to give protection and preservation of the natural world—including its species, ecosystems, and biodiversity—a top priority. Responsible tourist methods, such as cutting waste, saving energy and water, and decreasing the impact on natural environments, can help achieve this.
- Involve local communities: Since they frequently serve as guardians of the environment and cultural history, local communities should be given priority in ecotourism initiatives. Employing locals as tour guides and employees, patronizing nearby establishments, and honoring regional traditions are all examples of ways to interact with local populations.

- Offer educational opportunities: Ecotourism should provide educational opportunities for visitors to learn about the environment, culture, and history of the destination. This can include guided tours, workshops, and interactions with local experts.
- Promote responsible behavior: Ecotourism should encourage responsible behavior from visitors, including following designated trails, respecting wildlife and natural habitats, and minimizing waste and pollution.
- Support conservation efforts: Ecotourism can also support conservation efforts through financial contributions and partnerships with local conservation organizations.
- Monitor and evaluate impacts: Ecotourism operators should regularly monitor and evaluate their impacts on the environment and local communities, and adjust their practices accordingly to ensure that they are contributing to sustainable development.
- Overall, the key to better ecotourism is to prioritize sustainability and responsible behavior, while also providing meaningful and educational experiences for visitors. By doing so, ecotourism can contribute to positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes, while also promoting the conservation of natural and cultural resources.
- The region of Peja/ Rugova needs a better road infrastructure, this way it will make more easy access for tourists to access some of the areas which are hard to reach by car.
- The region of Peja/ Rugova should also make better transport for people who want to come from the city center of Peja in the Rugova mountains by bus. This element will significantly increase the number of tourists, making it less traffic on the roads and creating less gas pollution.
- The region of Gyöngyös/ Mátra needs better methods of promoting its offers, to gain more new tourists and needs a better strategic plan. The direct train from Budapest to Gyöngyös is one of the innovations that has been made.
- Businesses in Gyöngyös/ Mátra need more support from the government to help them and offer different development programs in which these enterprises can participate.

6. Summary

Different types of rural tourism depend on the activity they do or what parts of the geographical area they visit! European Community has adopted the Rural Tourism term for all kinds of forms that happen in those areas. Through research, I managed to collect these forms: Ecotourism, Agritourism, and Heritage Tourism. Ecotourism is the highlight of this thesis which is all about sustainability and the development of those rural areas that give priority to using this concept of tourism. More rural regions than urban ones make up Kosovo's seven main districts, including the capital city, and each of these rural locations has a unique set of mechanisms for sustaining life. Despite its small size, Kosovo presents strong prospects for the growth of ecotourism tourism due to its natural and people resources.

The environmental, social, and transport infrastructure plays an essential role in attracting more tourists which should be considered and are taken as the main elements in conducting this research. Kosovo as a landlocked country which is situated in the Balkans, has a lot of influence from the neighboring countries, therefore, saying that it has one of the lowest capacities for receiving tourists. One indicator of an area's ability to draw tourists is the number of beds it has available in hotels and other lodging facilities. There were 121 thousand beds available in hotels and other lodging options throughout the four Balkan countries for which data is shown in 2018 compared to Europe with has 12.1 Million beds available.

The fourth-largest city in Kosovo is Peja which has a mountainous region called Rugova, which makes the best example of conduction ecotourism and comparing it with the Mátra region which also is a mountain range located in northern Hungary that is located between Gyöngyös and Eger. Comparing two different locations can provide insight into what factors contribute to the success of a particular location. By examining what makes one location more popular or successful than another, we can identify common themes or trends that could be applied to other locations to help them become more successful.

With the picture comparison, we have been able to visibly see similarities and differences between images, which have been used to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions based on the results of the analysis. Throughout the enterprise interviews with eleven years of work on average in the tourism field, we understood that they help a lot when it comes to the employment

and gender equality of the people in those areas, they managed to keep their activity ongoing even after the covid outbreak, and they do their best to be environmentally friendly and not all of them receive government support.

By analyzing those elements I concluded ecotourism is the right solution to develop those regions and it doesn't have that much effect if the country belongs to European Union or not which were also the first two questions. From the interview of the tourists, two hypotheses have been tested: H1 – Ecotourism connected to educational background, in Rugova there was a connection, and in Mátra it had no relevance. Education had no influence on respondents' knowledge of ecotourism in the Mátra region. Rugova, where the exam was related to ecotourism and educational background, demonstrated the contrary and the cause of this is that there are more persons with lower levels of education who have average information, whereas students with higher levels of education are less numerous and didn't have as much knowledge about ecotourism as predicted.. H2 - The quality of the ecotourism experience is positively correlated with tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit, it was approved in both locations based on the respondents' survey answers. The overall satisfaction from the survey and return rate of the tourist was high enough to approve this statement which makes them good locations for ecotourism activities.

References

- Adebayo, Iweka. (2014): Sustainable infrastructure upgrade in slum settlements. *Environmental Research*, 53-60.
- ASK. (2021): Retrieved from THE POPULATION BY GENDER ETHNICITY AND SETTLEMENT: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1613/popullsia-sipas-gjinis%C3%AB-eticitetit-dhe-vendbanimit.pdf> (September 2022)
- AZHBR. (2018): *Albanian agency for rural and agricultural development* . Retrieved from <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf> (September 2022)
- Bali, K. (2022, 8 19): *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/greeces-tourism-industry-is-booming-after-pandemic-slump/a-62870577> (October 2022)
- BBC. (2022): *BBC Natyre* . Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zq4hvcw/revision/7#> (September 2022)
- Blerim Baruti, Xheme Lajqi, Mensur Kelmendi. (2017): The Natyre of Rugova. *Journal of International Environmental Application and Science*, 103 (1).
- Bronwyn Jewell; Anna Blackman; Alf Kuilboer. (2004): Factors contributing to successful tourism development . *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 63 -70.
- Buckley, R. (2004): *Environmental Impacts Of Ecotourism*. CABI Pub, wallingford, 389 p.
- Cadastral Agency of Kosovo: (2020). *General information* . Retrieved from <https://akk.rks-gov.net/>. (August 2022)
- Conzervation, D. o. (2020): *Three elements of heritage*. Retrieved from <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/heritage/managing-heritage/three-elements-of-heritage/> (November 2022)
- Department, S. R. (2021, 11 22): *Statista*, Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1221034/ecotourism-market-size-global/> (September 2022)
- Emma Waterton, Laurajane Smith. (2011): The Recognition and Misrecognition of Community Heritage. 14-17.
- European Commission. (2022): *European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development*. Retrieved from https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/funding-guide/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development_en (August 2022)
- Eurostat. (1998): Retrieved from European Environment Agency: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/eea-glossary/rural-tourism> (December 2022)

- Földvary, G. Z. (1988): *Geology of the Carpathian Region*. USA: World Scientific Publishing, Singapore 573pp.
- Gaworecki, W. (2006): *Tourism*. PWN, Warsaw 161 - 177 p.
- Geography and Maps. (2020): *GothayTravel*. Retrieved from <https://www.goway.com/travel-information/europe/montenegro/geography-maps/> (January 2023)
- Gladstone, J., & Morris, A. (2000): *Farm accommodation and agricultural heritage*. Multilingual Matters Limited, Clevedon, 6 - 22 p.
- Gray, Colin S.; Sloan, Geoffrey. (2013): Practical and Popular Geopolitics. In *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy* Routledge, New York, 133 p.
- Gulnara Ismagilova, Lenar Shafilluin, Ilshat Gafurov. (2015): Using Historical Heritage as a Factor in Tourism Development . 157 - 162 pp.
- hungarianwines.eu. (2021, 11 5): *Mátra Guide – Wineryard of the mountains*. Retrieved from <https://hungarianwines.eu/matra-guide-vineyard-of-the-mountains-2> (March 2023)
- Infrastructure, D. o. (2022): *Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure*. Retrieved from <https://www.mit-ks.net/sq/departamenti-i-menaxhimit-te-rrugeve> (September 2022)
- IUCN. (2019, 4 16): *International Union for Conservation of Nature*. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/201904/iucn-welcomes-kosovo-its-newest-member> (October 2022)
- Jovanović, S. &. (2016): Infrastructure as important determinant of tourism development. *Ecoforum Journal*, 2-4.
- Kosovo Hiking. (2022): Retrieved from Via Ferrata : <https://kosovohiking.com/project/via-ferrata-2/> (September 2022)
- Kosovo, R. o. (2016): *Action plan for Biodiversity* , 78p.
- Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. (2011): *ÉVI NÉPSZÁMLÁLÁS*. Miskolc 251p.
- Krippendorf, J. (1982): Towards new tourism policies: The importance of environmental and sociocultural factors. Elsevier Ltd, Bern, 135-148. p.
- Macedonian Ministry of Environment. (2008): *State of the environment report*. Skopje: http://www.moe.gov.mk/soer2/ohrid_a.htm. (September 2022)
- Macedonian Statistical Office. (2019): *Tourism in December*. Retrieved from https://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/8.1.20.03_mk.pdf (September 2022)
- Maloku, Ahmetaj, Pllanaj. (2004): *Gjeografia e Kosoves*. Dukagjini, Prishtine 234 pp.
- MHPI. (2022): *Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planification and Infrastructure* . Retrieved from Department of road managment : <https://www.mit-ks.net/sq/departamenti-i-menaxhimit-te-rrugeve> (July 2022)

- Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism. (2020): *Montenegro Tourism* . Retrieved from <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/montenegro-tourism> (September 2022)
- OECD. (2020): *Tourism Trends and Policies*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934078908> (October 2022)
- PSHRK. (2022): *Infrastructure*. Retrieved from <https://www.kosovo-mining.org/kosova/infrastruktura/> (September 2022)
- Bota sot (2018): *Best Tourist attractions in Albania*. Retrieved from Tourism: <https://www.botasot.info/turizem-lajme/853583/20-vendet-qe-duhet-vizituar-ne-shqiperi/> (August 2022)
- Stainton, H. (2022): *TourismTeacher*. Retrieved from <https://tourismteacher.com/environmental-impacts-of-tourism/#0-why-the-environment-is-so-important-to-tourism> (September 2022)
- TTF. (2012): *Tourism Infrastructure Policy and Priorities*. Retrieved from <https://www.ttf.org.au/> (September 2022)
- UNESCO, (2022).: *Herritage locations*. Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/401/> (September 2022)
- Weaver, D. (2001): *Ecotourism*. Australia, Wiley, 386 pp.
- World Tourism Organization (2022): *UNWTO*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/unwtotfb/current> (November 2022)
- WTCC. (2014): *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact*. Retrieved from <https://wtcc.org/search-results?Search=albania> (September 2022)
- Zeqir, Avni, Zenel. (2011): *Potential Zones for Ecological Network*. Research Gate 1-4.

Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire for the Enterprise interview

Interview Questions for Enterprises/ Organizations

Enterprise name	
Location	
Owner / Manager	

1. How long do you work in the tourism field?	
2. What kind of products do you offer for the tourists?	
3. Form of organization/ enterprise ownership?	
4. Number of employees (Male & Female)?	
5. Have you managed to maintain a good revenue?	
6. Does your company take care of environmental sustainability?	
7. Do you receive any governmental support?	
8. Which season do you receive more tourists?	
9. Which is the most important factor in your success?	
10. From where are the majority of the tourists?	

Annex 2: Survey questions for the tourists

Questionnaire for Tourists/ Kérdőív turistáknak

General Questions / Általános kérdés:

1. What's your age / **Hány éves vagy?**

2. What is the level of your education/ **Milyen a végzettsége?**

High School/ **Középiskola** Bachelors/ **Főiskolai diploma** Masters/ **Mester** PhD

3. From which city are you from/ **Melyik városból származol?**

4. How did you arrive at this place/ **Hogyan érkezett erre a helyre?**

Car/ **Autóval** Buss/ **Busszal** Bicycle/ **Biciklivel** Other/ **Egyéb**

5. How long are you planning to stay/ **Mennyi ideig tervez itt maradni?**

One day/ **Egy Nap** Two days / **Két nap** More than two days/ **Több mint két nap**

6. If two days and more, where are you staying/ **Ha két nap vagy több, hol tartózkodik?**

Hotel/ **Szálloda** Villa Friends and Relatives/ **Barátok és rokonok** Other / **Egyéb**

7. How did you learn about this destination/ **Honnan szerzett tudomást erről az úti célról?**

I already knew it/ **Már Ismertem** Media Friends and Relatives/ **Barátok és rokonok** Other / **Egyéb**

8. Is this your first time here/ **Először jársz itt?**

Yes/ **Igen** No/ **Nem**

9. How satisfied are you with this tourist destination/ **Mennyire elégedett ezzel a turisztikai célponttal?**

Satisfied/ **Elégedett** No opinion/ **Nincs véleményem** Dissatisfied/ **Elégedetlen**

10. Who is accompanying you on this visit/ **Ki kíséri Önt ezen a látogatáson?**

I'm alone/ **Egyedül vagyok** With partner/A **párommal** With family/ **Családdal**

With Friends/ **Barátokkal**

11. What is your favorite activity here/ **Mi a kedvenc tevékenységed ?**

12. How much information do you have about Ecotourism/ **Mennyi információval rendelkezik az ökoturizmusról?**

Az alábbiakban felsoroljuk azokat a témákat, amelyek ennek a turisztikai helynek az általános megítélésére vonatkoznak. Kérjük, minden állításnál jelölje meg egyetértési szintjét.

1= I totally disagree/ Teljesen nem értek egyet **2= Disagree/ Nem ért egyet** **3= I somewhat agree/ valamennyire egyetértek** **4= I completely agree/ Teljesen egyetértek**

Topic	1	2	3	4
1. The infrastructure is developed / Az infrastruktúra fejlett				
2. There are a lot of activities to do here/ Rengeteg tevékenység van itt				
3. I will recommend it to others / Ajánlani fogom másoknak is				
4. The behavior of people towards the environment is good/ Az emberek viselkedése a környezettel szemben jó				
5. It is easy to navigate through the area/ Könnyű navigálni a területen				
6. Nature is the main reason I came here/ A természet a fő ok, amiért idejöttem				
7. Enterprises are very professional here/ A vállalkozások itt nagyon profik				
8. The government is supporting this region/ A kormány támogatja ezt a régiót				
9. Women are involved in different activities/ A nők különböző tevékenységekben vesznek részt				
10. The prices are affordable/ Az árak megfizethetőek				

Annex 3: SPSS Chi-Square Test

Peja/ Rugova Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Education * Ecotourism_Info	50	100.0%	0	0.0%	50	100.0%

Crosstabs

Education * Ecotourism_Info Crosstabulation

			Ecotourism_Info		Total
			Yes	No	
Education	High School	Count	0	18	18
		Expected Count	2.5	15.5	18.0
	Bachelors	Count	3	21	24
		Expected Count	3.4	20.6	24.0
	Masters	Count	4	3	7
		Expected Count	1.0	6.0	7.0
	PdD	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.9	1.0
Total		Count	7	43	50
		Expected Count	7.0	43.0	50.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.959 ^a	3	.003
Likelihood Ratio	12.851	3	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.225	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	50		

Gyöngyös-Máttra Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Education * Ecotourism_Info	31	100.0%	0	0.0%	31	100.0%

Education * Ecotourism_Info Crosstabulation

			Ecotourism_Info		Total
			Yes	No	
Education	High School	Count	4	9	13
		Expected Count	2.5	10.5	13.0
	Bachelors	Count	1	11	12
		Expected Count	2.3	9.7	12.0
	Masters	Count	0	5	5
		Expected Count	1.0	4.0	5.0
	PdD	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.8	1.0
Total		Count	6	25	31
		Expected Count	6.0	25.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.386 ^a	3	.061
Likelihood Ratio	7.530	3	.057
Linear-by-Linear Association	.209	1	.647
N of Valid Cases	31		

Annex 4: List of Figures/ Pictures

Figure 1. Hollókő castle	8
Figure 2. Factors influencing the growth of tourism	9
Figure 3. Model of the economic impacts of tourism	10
Figure 4. Rurality based on region population	12
Figure 5. Tourism infrastructure	15
Figure 6. Distribution of enterprises according to size	17
Figure 7. Research Methodology	21
Figure 8. The city center of Gyöngyös	27
Figure 9. The City center of Peja	27
Figure 10. Tourist signs in Gyöngyös	28
Figure 11. Tourist signs in Peja	28
Figure 12. Tourist information center in Gyöngyös	29
Figure 13. Tourist information center in Peja	29
Figure 14. Buss stop in Mátra	30
Figure 15. Buss stop in Rugova	30
Figure 16. Road infrastructure in Mátra	31
Figure 17. Road infrastructure in Rugova	31
Figure 18. Wooden Houses in Mátra	32
Figure 19. Wooden Houses in Rugova	32
Figure 20. Highest peak in Mátra	33
Figure 21. Highest peak in Rugova	33
Figure 22. Years of enterprises operating	34
Figure 23. Enterprise employment statistics	35
Figure 24. Enterprises receiving government support	36
Figure 25. The profitable season for Enterprises	37
Figure 26. Majority of the Tourists	38
Figure 27. Preference for the accommodation of Rugova tourists	40
Figure 28. Preference for the accommodation of Mátra	42
Figure 29. Respondents' information on ecotourism	43
Figure 30. Most used methods of transportation	44

Annex 5: List of Tables

Table 1. Direct and Indirect benefits of Ecotourism	6
Table 2. Ecotourism key definitions by authors.....	13
Table 3. Number of beds in hotels and other types of accommodation, 2016 - 2018.....	20
Table 4. List of the interviewed enterprises.....	23
Table 5. Tourists respondents in Rugova	39
Table 6. Age and Education of tourists in Rugova	39
Table 7. Tourist companions in Rugova	40
Table 8. Tourist respondents in Mátra	41
Table 9. Age and Education of Tourists in Mátra	41
Table 10. Tourist companions in Mátra	42
Table 11. Likert scale form of measurement.....	46
Table 12. Respondents agreement level	46

Appendices

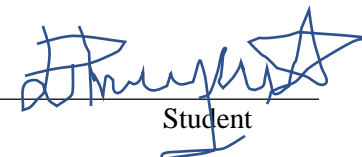
Appendix 4 – Declaration

STUDENT DECLARATION

Signed below, Laurant Podrimqaku, student of the Szent István Campus of the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Science, at the MSc Course of Rural Development Engineering declare that the present Thesis is my own work and I have used the cited and quoted literature in accordance with the relevant legal and ethical rules. I understand that the one-page-summary of my thesis will be uploaded on the website of the Campus/Institute/Course and my Thesis will be available at the Host Department/Institute and in the repository of the University in accordance with the relevant legal and ethical rules.

Confidential data are presented in the thesis: no*

Date: 14/04/2023



Student


SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

As primary supervisor of the author of this thesis, I hereby declare that review of the thesis was done thoroughly; student was informed and guided on the method of citing literature sources in the dissertation, attention was drawn on the importance of using literature data in accordance with the relevant legal and ethical rules.

Confidential data are presented in the thesis: yes no *

Approval of thesis for oral defense on Final Examination: approved not approved *

Date: 20.04.2023.



signature

Appendix 5 – Sample Abstract

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

IMPORTANCE OF ECOTOURISM IN RURAL AREAS OF KOSOVO (Case Study Peja & Gyöngyös)

Laurant Podrimqaku

Course, level of education: Rural Development Engineering, Masters

Host Department/Institute: Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Science

Primary thesis advisor: Dr. Tibor Farkas Ph.D.

Ecotourism has emerged as a popular and promising form of sustainable tourism that seeks to promote responsible travel to natural areas while conserving the environment, supporting local communities, and providing educational and recreational opportunities for visitors. This thesis aims to find the importance of ecotourism in the rural areas of Kosovo and compare the differences and similarities between two different regions; Peja which is located in Kosovo and Gyöngyös located in Hungary. The study contains a mixed research approach, combining a visitors survey, qualitative interviews with enterprise owners, and picture comparisons between two locations to examine the social, environmental, and economic impacts of ecotourism. The analysis of combining all the methods suggested that tourist satisfaction and willingness to return are strongly connected with the quality of the ecotourism experience offered by the location and enterprises that operate there. The majority of them don't have information about the term "Ecotourism" even though all the activities they do are connected to it. This research contributes to growing information about the ecotourism category on how to encourage more ethical and sustainable tourist practices for policymakers and everyone who is orientated in this form of development.