

Faculty of tourism and business logistics,
Goce Delcev University of Stip,
Republic of Macedonia

One of the major attractions motivating tourists to travel has always been the exposure to the various components of another culture in a different country. Therefore, now, a destination that can provide a combination of historic monuments, artifacts, traditions, customs, religions, legends, music and food can be referred as a cultural destination.

Vevcani is one of the few very old settlements in the Republic of Macedonia and the area on which it was inhabited has been inhabited since antiquity. The area is older than the customs this village practices, and not even entirely explored. Vevcani classifies itself as a Republic with their own passport and money, practices pagan customs, has numerous churches and convents and one of the most delicious food obtained from ecologically cleanest fields in the Republic of Macedonia. This village is a destination where the culture cannot only be seen but felt through the culture of living of the locals.

hotel, culture, heritage, tourism, development

INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism represents one of the oldest types of tourism, where undoubtedly those were the pilgrimages and expeditions taken by ancient Greeks and Romans in a form of educational or leaning type (Mikos von Rohrscheidt, 2008). As a result of the growing demand for cultural travels in the recent decades, in tourism, these culture trips appear in a service as an offer, creating the concept culture tourism. There is an increasing recognition of the importance of culture trips for tourist motivation, behavior and experiences (Isaac, 2008) and with hospitality being all about the service, a concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure of guests that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service, culture tourism can contribute to hospitality industry development.

The challenge for every village, city or a country that is a destination for cultural tourism is to find a balance, between “niche qualities” — it needs to make identification of the unique points of the cultural elements in the destination and their sophisticated communication to the public (Russo and Van der Borg, 2002). With Vevcani, being a destination where the culture cannot only be seen but felt through the culture of living of the locals, a possibility for hotel development is inevitable.

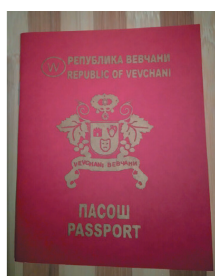
e-mail:
cvetanka.ristova@ugd.edu.mk

Analyzing the cultural tourism elements in Vevcani, Republic of Macedonia

The cultural tourism elements distinguish the destination and provide the opportunity for authentic cultural exchange between locals and tourists. The tourists are not only taking photos but also are sharing memories of unique experiences. One of the most important elements of cultural tourism is the issue of identity. The identity is the primary value both for cultural tourists and their hosts (Mousavi *et al.*, 2016). In general, the cultural tourism elements consider the following: archaeological sites and museums, architecture (ruins, buildings), art, crafts, sculpture, music and dance, language, religious or folk festivals, events and pilgrimages. On the next page, the cultural tourism elements in Vevcani will be pointed out, to help us emphasize their value in hotel development.

1. **Legends:** Legend of white board “Ascension of Jesus”, Legend of Spase and Spasica, Legend about the settlement of Vevcani and the Legend of Priest Naum.
2. **Passport and money:** In 1987 while Macedonia was still part of Yugoslavia, in August in the village Vevcani there were numerous protests about taking the water from the springs. The government at that time had planned to captive the springs for the pretext that it was carrying water for the inhabitants of the nearby village Oktisi, while in fact the water was intended to be used for the elite weekend settlement Ellen Kamen. Beside the numerous interventions with the police and the protests, the water from Vevcani to Oktisi was enabled (Angelski and Kushov, 2002). This event carries to the self-proclamations of Vevcani as “State Vevcani” with her own passport and money “licnici”.

Figure 1. Republic of Vevcani’s passport



Source: Authors

Figure 2. Vevcani’s money – 2 licnica



Source: Authors

3. **Vevcani’s carnival:** An event that only occurs once a year and it celebrates the incoming of the New Year according to the old calendar. The celebration of the carnival is inseparable and traced ritual from the pagan customs (Kalanoski, 2001). Traditional masks for the carnival are the masks of the “bride and groom”, worn by men dressed in old traditional folk costumes. They are accompanied by the “brothers by friendship” – a mask of the Devil and the mask of the Fools Augustus.

Figure 3. Bride and groom



Source: Authors

Figure 4. Fools Augustus masks



Source: Authors



4. **Festival of folk culture “Pobrazenje”:** A festival where in three days the whole villages celebrate. Traditional Macedonian meals and drinks are prepared in every house. The grand opening of the festival has been always on August the 19th and it begins with a grand march in the streets of the village with folk music.
5. **Traditional folk costumes:** The traditional folk costumes in Vevcani represent a gathered reflection of the people’s cultural tradition. The geographical area had a lot of influence in the creation of the costumes, especially in the woman’s outfit. The most noticeable woman costume is the bride’s one dating from the 19th century. It features: a shirt, knitted with cross and “vasilicarka”, smaller knitted shirt, “zoban” that has velvet sleeves and knitted decoration from a sterling silver, “klasenik”, “sokaj”, “jube”, “bovca resacka”, belt, “kolance-prepaska”, scarf, chin piece with coins, “scaft with “kesme””, as for the lower part of the clothing there are: socks and shoes. Decorative elements are “kiska”, belt with coins, “caprak”, needle, “tunturici”, “panzur” and earrings. The male, groom’s costume is characterized with linen decorated with black lace. It has: shirt, “becvi”, “djamadan”-vest, “gunce”, red woolen belt, “dolama”, shallow hat – “kece”, red socks – “arganojci” and leather shoes.

Figure 5. Bride and groom in traditional folk costumes



Source: Authors

6. **Cultural Art Society Drimkol:** This cultural art society has left his own mark on the Macedonian cultural history with the long-continued existence through the years. There are 150 active members in this cultural art society, who are divided into several well-known unions: Folklore ensemble “Drimkol”, Traveling theater “Bow and fall”, Singing group “Kadanka” and Orchestra of folk instruments. The folk ensemble “Drimkol” can be counted on the list of the first 5 ensembles in the Republic of Macedonia and according to the criteria of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, this ensemble is categorized in the Ensembles from the first category.
7. **Architecture:** The old architecture in Vevcani eventually was under influence of the new modern European architecture, but still managed to keep the permanent values in the tradition of the Macedonian houses using domestic materials for building, the well-known porch, using certain rooms for the summer and another for winter only (Kalanoski, 2015). One of the well-kept and preserved houses despite the harsh conditions of time in Vevcani are: the house of Duckinovci – a palace, vertical division onto three parts, the porch is at the very beginning and byzantine admixtures are present, the house of Pluskovci – a house with specific porch that has broken down through the space, the house of Pesinovci – a tall house with two story vestibule, double mid porch with deep defined winter apartment and a summer apartment on the upper story, the house of Dascalovci – a small house with closed porch, the house of Korunovci – house with three part division and a middle porch, and specific architecture noticeable in the middle aged churches, the house of Kitanovci – a house with a three part divisions and central placed porch, the house of Kalajdzievci – a tall house with narrow front, vast porch, summer apartment and massive winter apartment between the floors, the house of Kostojcinovci – small house with pillars around the front of the house, while the lower part is made out of stone brick and the higher is made out of mud plaster, the house of Gogovci – a house with double oriented middle porch, the house of Popovci – a house with high architectural and structural expression.



8. **Sanctuaries:** Temple of Mother of God (build 1921-1928), Church “Saint Nicholas (build 1834)” Church of the Ascension of Jesus (build 1985-1900), Monastery of the Ascension of Jesus (build second half of XIX century), Church “Saint Varvara” (build 1996), Church “Saint George the Victorious” (build 2013), Chapel “Saint Demetrious”, Chapel “Saint Petka”, Chapel “Saint Nedela”, Chapel “Saint Sreda” (build 1972) and little Church “Saint John” (Kuskoski, 2002).
9. **The house of Mihajlo Pupin:** Build on the 1880 from the family that Mihajlo Pupin origins. The house represents a museum setting for the life and work of the exceptional Mihajlo Pupin.
10. **Watermill:** There is an old watermill at the entrance of the Vevcani springs built from stone where the locals bring corn for grinding. Despite being two or three centuries old, the mill still works.
11. **Archaeological site Vajtos:** The site is located between the Vevcani, Oktisi and Gorna Belica. Through the centuries many things have happened here, leaving evidence of a well-developed settlement. On the north side of the site there is a wall from the Hellenistic period 2.20 meters long made from rock bricks 1.30 meters long in “opus isodomum” technique. In the western part the site was widened and enlarged with plaster during the Roman Empire (Kuskoski, 2004).
12. **International art colony “Vevcani Gatherings”:** The purpose of this colony is to represent an area where a large number of world renowned artists are united each year, inspired by Vevcani and Vevcani’s springs, to promote cooperation and respect among people and states while creating art works.
13. **Gallery Fairy:** Settled in a house with traditional architecture this gallery is an object where all old objects such as antiques, handcrafts, art paintings, carvings and parts of the Vevcani’s material cultural heritage can be found (Kondev, 2013).

Analyzing the status of accommodation in Vevcani, Republic of Macedonia

The need of a place to stay outside the home is as old as the first nomadic journey (Ristova, 2015, p.19). After the period of Merchandisers travelling and settling within a private house or an inn, comes the period of cultural travelling for religious purposes or pilgrimages and the first hospitality accommodation arise. Therefore, analyzing through history, the cultural trips are the ones that encouraged the development of the hospitality.

Nowadays, the cultural tourists have evolved. Cultural tourists now are increasingly searching information which enables them to “experience” the destination instead of just simply obtain facts about “how the destination is”. A cultural tourism element, such as a monument, does not make a cultural tourism product (Freud and Munsters, 2016). Of the elements of cultural tourism to become a tourism product the element had to be embedded in a whole of services such as accommodation and catering to information. Regarding this, we will analyze the accommodation status in Vevcani as of 2018 and compare it with the level of the cultural tourism elements attraction.

Table 1. Accommodation in Vevcani

No.	Name of accommodation property	Number of rooms	Number of beds
1.	Apartments Vevcani	2	4
2.	Apartments Via Ignatia	1	2
3.	Apartment Sutovski	5	12
4.	Domakinska house	5	12
5.	Kutmicevica	2	5
6.	Pelvec	3	8
7.	Pupin’s house	3	8
8.	Rooms Batkovski	2	4
9.	Rooms Vevcani	8	22
10.	Via Indzenering	8	15
11.	Villa Alula	3	6
Total:		42	98

Source: Authors



98 tourists can be housed in the total hotel accommodation of 42 rooms in Vevcani. In 2015 the BBC declares the Vevcani Carnival as the best pagan carnival in the world, and in 2018 from unofficial reports from the media there were 20.000 tourists even from England, Nigeria, Croatia, Serbia and Poland. Regardless of the fact that the Republic of Macedonia does not keep track of attendance of tourists by events or even cities, the number still points out the lack of hotel accommodation in Vevcani during cultural events, in this case the Vevcani's Carnival who lasts for three days.

Can cultural tourism elements influence of the hotel development in Vevcani, Republic of Macedonia?

Cultural tourism elements can play an important role in and contribute to the development of hotels and destination in general. The elements promote the cultural heritage, thus support their identity and create the possibility of the development of other industries while generating income. Cultural tourists, noticed the increase of shorter trips several times during a year (Freud and Munsters, 2016). Which means, cultural tourism elements now are visited more frequently over the year, and the cultural tourists are more engaged to participate in activities that the other tourists (Isaac, 2008).

With previously named the cultural tourism elements of Vevcani, and their date of occurrence, a good possibility exists for an offer of shorter trips to be created and therefore directing influence of the hotel development if Vevcani.

Table 2. Cultural tourism elements happening

No.	<i>Cultural tourism elements</i>	<i>Date of occurrence</i>
1.	Annual concert Cultural Art Society Drimkol	January, 11th
2.	Vevcani's carnival	January, 12-14th
3.	Visitation of Little Church "Saint John"	January 19th
4.	Visitation of Church of the Ascension of Jesus	January, Thursday
5.	Quinquagesime	February, 14th or March, 20th
6.	Lazarus Saturday	April, May a week before Easter
7.	Visitation of Church "Saint George the Victorious"	May, 6th
8.	Visitation of Church of the Ascension of Jesus	May of June, Thursday
9.	International art colony "Vevcani Gatherings"	June, 15th to July, 10th
10.	Visitation of the mountain lake Vevcani	July, 12th
11.	Festival of folk culture "Pobrazenje"	August, 16 – 19th
12.	Visitation of Chapel "Saint Demetrious"	November, 8th
13.	Visitation of Church of the Ascension of Jesus	November, Thursday

Source: Authors

Even so, most of the cultural tourism elements happen through all of Republic of Macedonia, such as: visitation of Little Church "Saint John", visitation of Church of the Ascension of Jesus, Quinquagesime, Lazarus Saturday, visitation of Church "Saint George the Victorious", visitation of the mountain lake Vevcani, visitation of Chapel "Saint Demetrious" all of them are culturally celebrated in Vevcani, by keeping to the tradition, instead of accepting the modern ways of the century. For example, visitation of Little Church "Saint John" is for the holiday Epiphany where locals and tourists gather and wait for the priest to throw the cross in the Vevcani's springs. The visitation of Church of the Ascension of Jesus is in the holiday, Ascension of Jesus, which is celebrated three times in Vevcani, by visiting the church. The holiday is annually celebrated on Thursday in the mentioned months, only the date changes within the year. Quinquagesime is Vevcani is celebrated by the custom of the kids collecting spruce from the mountain and making a cottage with them, squeezing them like pillars in the ground, making a roof and putting bunches of corn from above. The cottages are burning at midnight, while the kids are singing traditional folk music. This holiday has a competitive character, by who



makes the tallest cottage. Lazarus Saturday is annually celebrated a week before Easter, whose date changes within a year, and here little girls from the village sing traditional folk music while going from door to door dressed in traditional costumes. Visitation of Church "Saint George the Victorious" is for the holiday Saint George's Day as well as the visitation of Chapel "Saint Demetrious" for the holiday Saint Demetrious. For the holiday Feast of Saints Peters and Paul, the locals and tourists visit the mountain lake Vevcani traditionally every year couple of days and sleeping on the mountain.

Supporting the statement that a cultural tourism element, such as a monument, does not make a cultural tourism product (Freud and Munsters, 2016), by presenting the cultural tourism elements by occurrence in Vevcani within a year and combining them with other elements, is it unquestionable that they can influence on a hotel development in Vevcani. The yearly around cultural happenings and the other cultural tourism elements will keep the hotels booked through the entire year. As mentioned before, even if the Republic of Macedonia does not keep tract of attendance of tourists of events or even cities to support the statements of this paper, the lack of hotels and accommodation is obvious in Vevcani.

Cultural tourism elements with crucial role in hotel development in Vevcani, Republic of Macedonia

Vevcani fulfills the need of diversity when it comes to cultural tourism and cultural elements. The municipality in this case can have his own share of benefits if it is properly handled. Through the explanation of the cultural tourism elements and analyzing the current status of hotel accommodation in the village it is more than clear that Vevcani can offer itself as a cultural destination, but lacks the possibility of generating more income from the tourists and keeping them a bit longer in the village, all through the shortage of accommodation.

Since Vevcani and the locals together represent the culture, the cultural tourism elements can have their crucial role in hotel development by turning authentic and old houses, historic buildings into hotels and keeping the culture within. This will enable the tourists a relaxing context away from the standardization of the international hotel chains. Therefore, the hotel stays will be an experience by itself. With the trend of taking short cultural trips more often through the year, the hotels having a cultural component along with the cultural tourism elements can have double benefits, from the opportunity of the hotels of creating a cultural program for visiting the village during certain times of the year.

Vevcani with his rarities is a destination not for cultural tourism only, but for others as well, but we think that only by the cultural tourism elements that it possesses, this village has a chance of hotel development and economics, because it gives the chance of life that tourists want to live in a connection with the locals in a real context holding environment, culture and traditions that nowadays fade away in the Republic of Macedonia. With the influence of cultural tourism elements towards the hotel development, Vevcani is avoiding the risk desertification and abandonment, by becoming an additional source of income and territorial development.

CONCLUSION

Vevcani is a village in the Republic of Macedonia that by far possess a sufficient mass of terms in cultural elements to develop a viable tourism industry. But many authors discuss that the cultural tourism elements by itself do not make a tourism product. As in the case of Vevcani, the village is widely visited by tourists during a cultural event or just by visiting a cultural monument, but if the tourists decide to stay, the lack of hotels and accommodation appears. As mentioned before, Vevcani is a village where, among cultural, other types of tourism exist, but due to the identification of unique cultural elements and sophisticated communication with the tourists, the cultural tourism plays a crucial role in hotel development. With the trend of short trips, but several cultural trips taken by tourists and the engagement of the hotels to plan, combine and offer the cultural elements into cultural tours around the year, the hotels will be booked entirely through all the year. Furthermore, only with the hotel development, Vevcani can complete the offer of cultural tourism product, because whatever is the size, history or attractiveness of monuments, sights and other cultural elements is, is not sufficient for a destination to establish itself as a cultural tourism destination without hotel accommodation.



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