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# EXPLORING TOURIST INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN OLIVE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE CROATIAN NORTH ADRIATIC REGION

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## ABSTRACT

*Purpose - the purpose of the paper is to explore tourists' (N=452) familiarity with Northern Adriatic local olive tourism offer and their intention to participate in selected olive tourism activities during their stay in the destination. Design/methodology/approach - survey sampling method is used in this preliminary study. The hypotheses are tested using T-test and ANOVA. Findings - the results of the study show that only a small proportion of tourists (18.8%) are familiar with the olive tourism offer on Northern Adriatic, with TB offices being the main source of information about this offer. Familiarity of the offer, as well as frequency of olive oil consumption and attitudes towards olive tourism, were found to be significant predictors of an individual's intention to participate in olive tourism activities. Originality of research - scientific literature in the field of olive tourism is sparse. The results of this study can be used to develop further marketing activities and strategies related to olive tourism.*

**Key words:** olive oil tourism, olive cultivation, Northern Adriatic, Croatia, prediction of behavioural intentions

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a significant economic activity in Croatia, whose turnover accounts for almost a fifth of GDP (Sectoral Analysis, Zagreb Institute of Economics, 2019). In 2019, almost 17 million tourists

visited Adriatic Croatia out of a total of 19,566 658 recorded tourist arrivals to Croatia (CBS, 2019). Staying tourists, in particular for Adriatic Croatia, are hence an important source of income.

Croatian tourism is highly seasonal and is mainly concentrated in the months of June, July and August, when 64.8% of the total annual overnight stays take place (Sectoral analyses, Zagreb Institute of Economics, 2019). The common strategic goal for the development of Croatian tourism is to reduce seasonality (Kožić, 2013). Measures to extend the tourist season are at the heart of the management activities of all three ranks of tourism associations - national, regional and local. Often, the extension of the season is based on the organisation of events and activities that offer visitors experiences even in the part of the year when the sun and the sea are no longer the main motives for visiting a destination. A large part of these early and late season activities is certainly focused on the gastronomic offer of a particular destination (Pivčević and Lesić, 2020).

Gastro tourism brings together visitors, both foreign and domestic, whose primary travel motive is related to activities involving real food and local gastronomy (Williams, 2014). Olive tourism (hereafter OT) is directly related to gastro tourism (Alonso and Krajšić, 2013; Millán et al. 2014); it is otherwise considered a form of tourism of special interest associated with olives, olive oil and rural areas. This form of tourism has enormous potential to increase the value of olive production by maintaining existing jobs and creating new ones, preserving the traditions and history of olive cultivation in a given region, and improving the sale of olive oil (Alonso and Northcote, 2010; Campón-Cerro et al., 2017). In recent years, olive tourism has attracted the attention of researchers. The potential and strategies for developing this form of tourism have been explored (Vázquez de la Torre and Agudo Gutiérrez, 2010; Millán et al. 2014; Folgado-Fernández et al. 2019), as well as the actors involved in this form of tourism, whether as suppliers (DuarteAlonso, 2010; Tregua et al. 2018) or demanders (Millán et al. 2018; Moral-Cuadra et al. 2020). The joint conclusion of the studies points to the importance of olive tourism for the sustainable development of the rural Mediterranean, as well as the need for further research to form a recognisable tourism product.

In Croatia, the area under olive cultivation has increased significantly in the last thirty years, with 18,683 hectares of olive groves in Croatia (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). In addition to the increase in the area under olive cultivation, the technological process of harvesting, processing of olives and preservation of olive oil has also been improved. Today, thanks to the use of modern technology, the olive oil produced in the Northern Adriatic area is among the best in the world (Oreggia, 2020). Such success on the world stage of extra virgin olive oil provides scope for targeted marketing activities to increase the value of olive oil and the range of OT activities throughout the year.

In order for marketing activities to have the greatest possible impact, they must be adapted to potential visitors. OT studies in Croatia are relatively scarce. Čehić et al. (2020), in their analysis of secondary data sources, examined the range of OT and activities available in Croatia (Table 1).

Table 1. The main activities of olive tourism and their offer in Croatia

| No. | Activities  | Offer in Croatia |
|-----|---|------------------|
| 1   | Oil mills open for visitors   | ✓                |
| 2   | Museums and interpretation centers dedicated to olives and olive oil  | ✓                |
| 3   | Olive farms open for visitors   | ✓                |
| 4   | Protected geographical indications (protected designation of origin – PDO and protected geographical indication - PGI) of olive oil | ✓                |
| 5   | Olive groves  | ✓                |
| 6   | Events/fairs dedicated to olives and olive oil  | ✓                |
| 7   | “Olive oil roads”   | ✓                |
| 8   | Specialized shops for olive oil – <i>oleotece</i>   | ✓                |
| 9   | Olive oil tasting   | ✓                |

Source: RuizGuerra et al. (2011), Murgado (2013.), Campón-Cerro et al. (2014.), Tudisca et al. (2015.), Vázquez de laTorre et al. (2017.), Čehić et al. (2020.)

Most of OT’s offerings are available for many months of the year, i.e. in the pre-season, seasonal and post-seasonal periods, with the exception of events and functions that take place on set dates and are usually daily or multi-day events. Olive groves are an integral part of the landscape, while olive oil with PDO (Protected Designation), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) is available from producers who produce olive oils according to the specifications of the protected designation of the product.

Among other research related to olive cultivation and tourism in Croatia, Grković (2005) mentions the potential that can be achieved by combining these two activities in terms of improving the sale and marketing of olive oil through tourism, as well as the possibility of extending the tourist season in connection with the activities of the olive harvest, which takes place in October. An exploratory study conducted with visitors to olive growing and olive oil farms in Istria shows that the main motives for visiting farms are tasting, learning and buying olive oil (Čehić et al. 2019). Similar motives have also been shown to be important for tourists visiting the Olive Oil Museum (Oplanić et al. 2020).

However, tourists’ familiarity with the destination of the OT offer, their intentions to engage in OT activities, and the factors influencing these intentions have not yet been studied.

The object of the work, therefore, is as follows:

1. To determine the extent to which visitors to Istria and Primorje-Gorski County are familiar of the local olive tourism offer.
2. To determine the intentions of visitors to Istria and Primorje-Gorski County to participate in selected olive tourism activities.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted on a purposive sample of 452 visitors from the beginning of July to the end of September 2018 in hotels and camps in Istria and Primorje-Gorski County. These locations were chosen because Istria has been awarded the world's best area for extra virgin olives for the fifth year in a row (Oreggia, 2020), while the neighbouring Primorje-Gorski County has two PDO olive oils, namely "Ekstra djevičansko maslinovo ulje Cres" and "Krčko maslinovo ulje".

The questionnaire consisted of 6 groups of questions, namely: (1) familiarity of the offer of OT, (2) source of information about OT, (3) attitude towards OT, (4) frequency of olive oil consumption, (5) intention to participate in a particular OT activity, (6) questions about socio-demographic characteristics and behaviour of the subjects travelling. The question of familiarity of the services offered by OT was dichotomous (I know/no idea). Respondents were also asked about the frequency of olive oil consumption (daily consumption, weekly consumption, monthly consumption and less frequent). In addition, the respondents' attitude towards OT was explored with two statements: (1) "OT to me is an additional motive to come to the destination" and (2) "OT is the preferred part of the tourist offer in the Mediterranean destination". The statements were measured using a 3-point measurement scale, where 1 - indicated disagreement and 3 - indicated agreement with these statements. Intention to participate in specific activities from OT during the stay at the destination was measured using a 5-point scale (with 1 representing "I do not intend to participate in any such activity at all during this vacation" and 5 representing "I intend to participate very strongly during this vacation"). Intention was measured only for those activities that were available in the time period and location of the survey. Intention to participate in the following OT activities was examined: (1) "olive oil routes", (2) interpretation centres and museums about olives and olive oil, (3) guided olive oil tastings, (4) visits to olive oil mills, (5) visits to olive oil producing farm. Socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, employment, income) and respondents' travel behaviour (type of accommodation, length of stay and number of previous visits to destinations) were recorded using closed multiple choice questions. Prior to conducting the main survey, the questionnaire had been tested on a smaller sample (N=30) to check the clarity of the questions proposed. In addition to the Croatian version of the questionnaire, the survey used questionnaires translated into 4 foreign languages (English, German, Italian, and Slovenian) to be suitable for surveying foreign tourists. The four foreign languages were selected relative to the speaking areas from which the majority of visitors to the northern Adriatic come.

For data collection, trained researchers were used to approach tourists and ask them to participate in the survey. The researchers explained the purpose of the survey to the respondents, informed them that the survey was anonymous, and provided them with a questionnaire in their language. During data collection at the hotels, the researchers were stationary while the respondents were mobile, while at the camps, the researchers were on the move and the respondents remained in place (Veal, 2006). A total of responses were collected from 471 respondents out of which 452 duly filled questionnaires were included in the processing of data. Univariate and bivariate statistical analyses were used to process the collected data. Frequencies and distributions were used to describe the sample, while T-test and ANOVA tested the hypotheses, with a post-hoc Tukey test used to test for differences within the sample.

## **2. 1 Development of hypotheses**

### **2. 1. 1 Influence of familiarity on tourists' behavioural intentions**

Familiarity with the offer of a particular destination is defined in tourism research as an element that explains the difference in behaviour between first-time visitors and those who have already visited the destination (Chi et al. 2020). Destination familiarity allows us to understand how an individual creates an image of a destination (Chen and Lin, 2012). Studies show that familiarity with a destination has a positive effect on loyalty towards the destination (Sun et al. (2013). However, the influence of familiarity on tourists' behavioural intentions is still under-researched, especially when it comes to forms of special interest tourism (Wen and Huang, 2019).

*H1: Familiarity with the olive tourism offer influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.*

### **2. 1. 2 Impact of the frequency of product consumption on tourists' intentions**

The frequency of consumption of a particular product is related to the consumer's intention and behaviour towards the product, but also to the specific form of tourism associated with the product. For example, studies show that the frequency of wine consumption has a positive influence on the use of wine tourism products (Brown, Haviz, and Getz 2005) and that wine tourists consume wine regularly (Mitchell et al. 2000). In addition, winery managers perceive two basic characteristics of their visitors, namely that visitors look forward to experiencing wine and consume wine regularly (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). Frequency of wine consumption is one of the variables that makes a clear difference between wine tourists and non-wine tourists, namely wine tourists drink regularly (Marzo -Navarro et al. 2010). Given the similarity of the profile with olive tourists, a hypothesis is made.

*H2: Frequency of olive oil consumption influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.*

### **2. 1. 3 Influence of attitude on tourists' intentions**

The term attitude generally refers to expressing a positive or negative feeling toward a person, object, or problem (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Attitudes are said to be formed through direct experience with the object or through exposure to various messages that may alter certain attitude-related beliefs (Albarracin et al., 2005).

The influence of attitudes on behavioural intention is an often studied relationship (Zhang et al., 2020). One significant predictor of tourists' future behaviour is attitudes toward visiting destinations (Lam and Hsu, 2006). Similarly, in studies of recreation (hunting, sporting events), attitudes towards an activity have been found to be critical in deciding whether to engage in it during leisure time (hunting and sporting events) (Hrubeset al., 2001; Kaplanidou and Gibson, 2010). The influence of attitude towards a tourism offer on intention to participate has not been explored in detail, although we can establish a link between the influence of the affective

dimension of attitude and more positive behaviour towards the facility/product (Ahn and Back, 2018). This finding nowadays guides most tourism facilities with the aim of making the business sustainable through the development of loyalty programmes based on the creation of positive affective attitudes (Bowen and Shoemaker, 2003).

*H3: Attitude towards olive tourism influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.*

### 3. RESULTS

A total of 452 respondents were included in the analysis. The respondents are predominantly female, have a university degree, are employed, between 41 and 55 years old and have an income between 1,501 and 2,500 euros. In terms of country of origin, they come mainly from Austria and Germany, countries that do not produce olive oil (Table 2).

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

| Socio-demographic characteristics (N=452)   |                | N                    | %    |      |
|---|----------------|----------------------|------|------|
| Variable                                    | Gender         | Male                 | 187  | 41.4 |
|   |                | Female               | 255  | 56.5 |
|   | Education      | Primary school       | 13   | 3.1  |
|   |                | Secondary school     | 134  | 31.8 |
|   |                | University and more  | 275  | 65.1 |
|   | Occupation     | Self-employed        | 74   | 17.4 |
|   |                | Employed             | 306  | 71.8 |
|   |                | Retired              | 26   | 6.1  |
|   |                | Student              | 16   | 3.8  |
|   |                | Unemployed           | 4    | 0.9  |
|   | Age            | Up to 25             | 35   | 8.5  |
|   |                | 26-40                | 134  | 32.5 |
|   |                | 41-55                | 181  | 43.9 |
|   |                | 56-66                | 46   | 11.2 |
|   |                | 67 and more          | 16   | 3.9  |
|   | Monthly income | Up to 700 euro       | 18   | 5.2  |
|   |                | 700 – 1.000 euro     | 53   | 15.3 |
|   |                | 1.001 – 1.500 euro   | 84   | 24.2 |
|   |                | 1.501 – 2.500 euro   | 101  | 29.1 |
|   |                | More than 2.500 euro | 91   | 26.2 |
| County of origin                            | Austria        | 101                  | 23.8 |      |
|   | Germany        | 90                   | 21.2 |      |
|   | Italia         | 86                   | 20.2 |      |
|   | Croatia        | 32                   | 7.5  |      |
|   | Slovenia       | 31                   | 7.3  |      |
|   | Other          | 85                   | 20   |      |
| Country producer /not producer of olive oil | Producer       | 150                  | 35.3 |      |
|   | Not producer   | 275                  | 64.7 |      |

Source: Own source

Respondents are predominantly accommodated at a hotel, have resided in the destination for 7 days or more, and have visited the destination three or more times in past (Table 3).

Table 3. Behaviour of respondents on journey

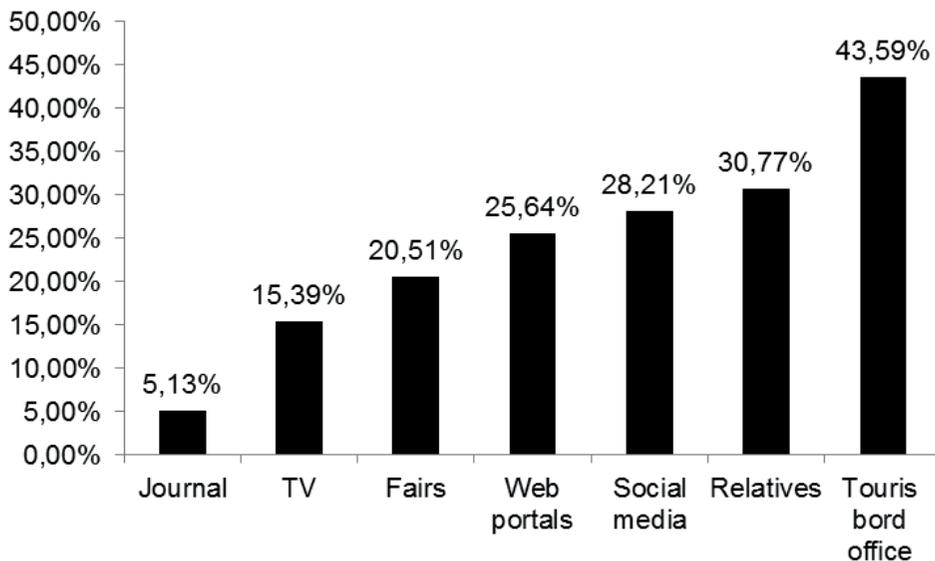
| Behaviour on journey (N=452) |                        |                  | N   | %    |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----|------|
| Variable                     | Type of accommodation  | Hotel            | 338 | 74.8 |
|                              |                        | Camp             | 114 | 25.2 |
|                              | Length of stay         | 1 – 2 days       | 4   | 1    |
|                              |                        | 3 – 6 days       | 96  | 24.2 |
|                              |                        | 7 and more days  | 298 | 74.8 |
|                              | NO. of previous visits | 0 visits         | 84  | 21.6 |
|                              |                        | 1 – 2 visits     | 56  | 14.4 |
|                              |                        | 3 or more visits | 249 | 64.0 |

Source: Own source

Respondents were asked whether they were familiar of the OT available at their current destination. Although Northern Adriatic is a well-known region for olive oil production, a relatively small proportion of 18.8% of respondents said they were familiar of the OT offer.

Respondents who said they were familiar of the offer were also asked what source of information they used to become familiar with the offer. The most significant source of information is the TB office (43.59%), which is indeed a link between tourists and the range of activities on offer at the destination. Acquaintances (30.77%), social networks (28.21%) and web portals (25.64%) also play a significant role in getting to know each other (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Source of information about olive tourism



Source: Authors

Respondents consume olive oil mainly daily (34.9%) or several times a week (34.7%), while 30.4% of the sample consumes olive oil monthly or less frequently.

The attitude of tourists towards OT is by and large positive. For 45.2%, OT is the preferred part of the offer at a Mediterranean destination. OT is an additional motivation to come to a destination for 21.6% of respondents, and the majority (48%) have no opinion on this statement, i.e. they rate the statement as neutral.

Table 4. Tourists' intention to participate in certain olive tourism activities during stay at destination

| Intention to participate in activities... | „Olive oil roads“ | Museums and interpretation centres dedicated to olives and olive oil | Olive oil tasting | Olive mills visit | Olive farms visit |
|---|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| M   | 2.94              | 2.87   | 3.29              | 3.26              | 3.27              |
| SD  | 1.379             | 1.393  | 1.408             | 1.368             | 1.381             |

\*1 - I have no intention of participating during this vacation at all

5 - I strongly have intention to participate during this vacation

Source: Own source

Respondents express moderate interest in the OT activities available at the destination. They express the greatest interest in participating in guided olive oil tastings ( $M=3.29$ ), which is also the main activity when visiting farms engaged in olive production and oil mills. Slightly fewer respondents are interested in the "Olive Oil Road" tours and visits to Interpretative Centres and museums of olives and Olive Oil (Table 4).

The intentions of tourists are not influenced by their respective gender, age, education, monthly income and country of origin. However, students were found to have the highest intention to participate in guided olive oil tastings ( $M=4.29$ ,  $F=3.646$ ,  $p=0.003$ ), compared to self-employed, employed and unemployed.

Respondents' type of accommodation is related to their intention to participate in the activity OT. Respondents staying in campsite ( $M=3.58$ ,  $F=3.540$ ,  $p=0.030$ ) are more inclined to participate in guided olive oil tasting than respondents staying in hotels. The length of stay at the destination also influences the intention to participate in a particular OT activity; respondents staying longer than 7 days at the destination have a greater intention to visit olive oil routes ( $M=2.98$ ,  $F=2.848$ ,  $p=0.015$ ) and olive and olive oil interpretation centres and museums ( $M=2.88$ ,  $F=3.836$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) than respondents staying up to 3 days at the destination.

### 3. 1 Verification of the hypotheses set

*H1: Familiarity with the olive tourism offer influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.*

Table 5. The impact of familiarity of olive tourism offer on the intention to participate in certain olive tourism activities

| Items  | I am familiar with olive tourism offer |       | I am not familiar with olive tourism offer |       | T –test value | p value |
|--|--|-------|--|-------|---------------|---------|
|  | Mean                                   | SD    | Mean                                       | SD    |               |         |
| Intention to participate in activities...                            |  |       |  |       |               |         |
| „Olive oil roads“  | 3.67                                   | 1.199 | 2.80                                       | 1.328 | 3.897         | 0.000   |
| Museums and interpretation centres dedicated to olives and olive oil | 3.64                                   | 1.267 | 2.73                                       | 1.330 | 4.094         | 0.000   |
| Olive oil tasting  | 4.00                                   | 1.100 | 3.16                                       | 1.385 | 4.396         | 0.000   |
| Olive mills visit  | 3.69                                   | 1.260 | 3.15                                       | 1.333 | 2.424         | 0.016   |
| Olive farms visit  | 3.79                                   | 1.218 | 3.16                                       | 1.352 | 2.807         | 0.005   |

Source: Own source

Respondents who indicate that they are familiar of the OT offer have a significantly higher intention to participate in all activities offered than those who indicate that they are not familiar of the OT offer. The tourist's familiarity of the OT offer has an influence on the intention to participate in the activities of OT during their stay in the destination. Respondents who are familiar of the OT offer at the destination are most interested in guided olive oil tastings and only slightly less interested in other OT forms. Respondents who are not familiar of the OT offer are equally interested in guided tastings, olive oil mill tours and visits to olive oil producing farms and less interested in olive oil routes and interpretation centres. The hypothesis is supported (Table 5).

*H2: Frequency of olive oil consumption influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.*

Table 6. The impact of frequency of olive oil consumption on the intention to participate in certain olive tourism activities

| Intention to participate in activities...                            | Frequency of olive oil consumption       | M    | F     | p value |
|--|--|------|-------|---------|
| „Olive oil roads“  | Daily <sup>a</sup>                       | 3.14 | 4.033 | 0.018   |
|  | Several times a week <sup>ab</sup>       | 2.97 |       |         |
|  | Monthly and less frequently <sup>b</sup> | 2.67 |       |         |
| Museums and interpretation centres dedicated to olives and olive oil | Daily <sup>a</sup>                       | 3.05 | 3.420 | 0.034   |
|  | Several times a week <sup>ab</sup>       | 2.90 |       |         |
|  | Monthly and less frequently <sup>b</sup> | 2.61 |       |         |
| Olive oil tasting  | Daily <sup>a</sup>                       | 3.24 | 3.938 | 0.020   |
|  | Several times a week <sup>ab</sup>       | 3.04 |       |         |
|  | Monthly and less frequently <sup>b</sup> | 2.77 |       |         |
| Olive mills visit  | Daily <sup>a</sup>                       | 3.22 | 5.477 | 0.004   |
|  | Several times a week <sup>ab</sup>       | 2.95 |       |         |
|  | Monthly and less frequently <sup>b</sup> | 2.67 |       |         |
| Olive farms visit  | Daily <sup>a</sup>                       | 3.52 | 5.015 | 0.007   |
|  | Several times a week <sup>ab</sup>       | 3.25 |       |         |
|  | Monthly and less frequently <sup>b</sup> | 3.00 |       |         |

Differences in values within a column marked with a different letter (a - b) are statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ).

Source: Own source

Respondents who consume olive oil on a daily basis have a higher interest and differ significantly from those who consume olive oil monthly and less frequently in terms of their intention to participate in the activities offered by OT. Respondents who consume olive oil several times a week did not show a statistically significant difference from the other two categories. The hypothesis is supported, i.e. respondents who use olive oil more frequently have a greater intention to participate in OT activity (Table 6).

H3: Attitude towards olive tourism influences the intention to participate in olive tourism activities.

Table 7. The impact of attitude toward olive tourism on the intention to participate in certain olive tourism activities

| Intention to participate in activities...                            | Olive tourism to me is an additional motive to come to the destination |      |        |         | Olive tourism is a desirable part of the tourist offer in the Mediterranean |      |        |         |
|--|--|------|--------|---------|---|------|--------|---------|
|  |  | M    | F      | p value |   | M    | F      | p value |
| „Olive oil roads“  | I disagree <sup>a</sup>  | 2.44 | 21.960 | 0.000   | I disagree <sup>a</sup>   | 2.18 | 20.038 | 0.000   |
|  | I do not know <sup>b</sup>   | 2.94 |        |         | I do not know <sup>b</sup>  | 2.77 |        |         |
|  | I agree <sup>c</sup>   | 3.64 |        |         | I agree <sup>c</sup>  | 3.33 |        |         |
| Museums and interpretation centers dedicated to olives and olive oil | I disagree <sup>a</sup>  | 2.22 | 27.654 | 0.000   | I disagree <sup>a</sup>   | 2.13 | 15.133 | 0.000   |
|  | I do not know <sup>b</sup>   | 2.98 |        |         | I do not know <sup>b</sup>  | 2.77 |        |         |
|  | I agree <sup>c</sup>   | 3.53 |        |         | I agree <sup>c</sup>  | 3.19 |        |         |
| Olive oil tasting  | I disagree <sup>a</sup>  | 2.79 | 19.945 | 0.000   | I disagree <sup>a</sup>   | 2.47 | 25.686 | 0.000   |
|  | I do not know <sup>b</sup>   | 3.30 |        |         | I do not know <sup>b</sup>  | 3.07 |        |         |
|  | I agree <sup>c</sup>   | 3.96 |        |         | I agree <sup>c</sup>  | 3.75 |        |         |
| Olive mills visit  | I disagree <sup>a</sup>  | 2.81 | 17.817 | 0.000   | I disagree <sup>a</sup>   | 2.56 | 15.160 | 0.000   |
|  | I do not know <sup>b</sup>   | 3.25 |        |         | I do not know <sup>b</sup>  | 3.14 |        |         |
|  | I agree <sup>c</sup>   | 3.89 |        |         | I agree <sup>c</sup>  | 3.59 |        |         |
| Olive farms visit  | I disagree <sup>a</sup>  | 2.77 | 19.391 | 0.000   | I disagree <sup>a</sup>   | 2.45 | 22.374 | 0.000   |
|  | I do not know <sup>b</sup>   | 3.30 |        |         | I do not know <sup>b</sup>  | 3.11 |        |         |
|  | I agree <sup>c</sup>   | 3.90 |        |         | I agree <sup>c</sup>  | 3.68 |        |         |

Differences in values within a column marked with a different letter (a, b, c) are statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ).

Source: Own source

Respondents with a more positive attitude towards OT have a significantly higher intention to participate in the OT activities offered during their stay at the destination (Table 7), confirming H3. Predictably, the more important the olive tourism motive is for coming to a destination, the higher the intention to participate in OT activities. Similarly, tourists who consider OT as the preferred part of the Mediterranean tourism offer are significantly more likely to participate in OT activities than tourists who have no opinion or disagree.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The agreement of olive cultivation and tourism is combined into a form of special interest tourism known as olive tourism. This selective form of tourism is particularly important for promoting rural development and the development of sustainable tourism, which is currently being pursued by an increasing number of destinations.

In this paper, the main objective is to identify the familiarity of visitors to Istria and Primorje-Gorski County of the OT offer and their intention to participate in a particular activity of this specific form of tourism during a visit to the destination. It is somewhat worrying that only 18.8% of respondents indicate that they are familiar of the TO offer, despite the fact that they stay in counties that achieve significant results in terms of olive oil quality and the number of PDO olive oils.

Guided olive oil tasting is an activity that most visitors want to participate in, and visiting olive oil farms and oil mills is also of interest. The link between these activities is important to form a high quality and complex tourist product that offers the visitor the experience of tasting together with courses on the specific characteristics of each olive variety, the way of storing and using the olive oil directly in the places where the olives are grown and processed. A possible sales strategy is the organisation of tastings in establishments, hotels and campsites with the aim of improving sales and bringing the products closer to potential customers.

The respondents who said they were familiar of the offer of OT indicated that their main sources of information were the offices of TB, followed by acquaintances and, lastly, social media and web portals.

The selection of a single OT activity is also influenced by the personal characteristics of the respondents. For example, students show the greatest interest in activities such as guided olive oil tastings and visits to oil mills. Respondents' behaviour at the destination influences their intention to participate in an activity. For example, tourists staying in campsites show a greater intention to participate in guided olive oil tastings than those staying in hotels. Respondents who stay longer in the destination are more inclined to participate in olive oil routes and interpretation centres and olive and olive oil museums.

Respondents who consider that they are familiar of the offer of OT have a greater intention to participate in the activities offered than respondents who are less familiar of the offer, and the two groups differ significantly. The set H1 is supported, that is, familiarity has an influence on the intention to participate in the activities of OT. A link to this result can be found in the study of Sanz-Blas et al, 2015, which confirms the influence of destination familiarity on future intentions.

The second hypothesis is also supported, that is, respondents who use olive oil daily in their diet or have a close relationship with the product have a greater intention to participate in the activity OT than those who consume olive oil monthly and less frequently. Similar results have been confirmed in previous studies on wine consumers, where consumers who consume wine frequently are more inclined to participate in wine tourism (Bruwer and Alant, 2009; Clemente-Ricolfe et al. 2012).

The last hypothesis is also supported, where respondents with a more positive attitude towards OT have a greater intention to participate in OT activities. It is well known that individuals with more positive attitudes towards the product also have more positive behavioural intention (Choe and Kim, 2018). The way attitudes are also influenced by external circumstances such as the availability of information and other promotional activities should also be emphasised to gain influence on visitors' attitudes and ultimately increase the number of visits to oil mills and olive farms that stay at the destination.

The specific feature of this study is that a survey was performed on a sample of tourists during their visit to a destination, which is also a olive-growing region offering various OT activities, and simultaneously the intention of tourists to be included in selected olive tourism activities in their destination was investigated. Previous studies have focused on exploring variables that influence potential tourists' intentions when choosing a particular destination (Oppermann 1999; Lam and Hsu, 2006; Di Pietro, Di Virgilio and Pantano, 2012), and the sample itself is very often composed of the resident population (Marzo - Navarro and Pedraja - Iglesias, 2009), so is not heterogeneous given the nationality of the respondents, unlike in this study.

The study has made an applicable contribution to the lack of familiarity of the OT offer in the respective counties, and OT providers, together with local and regional TBs, should make further efforts to promote and position these regions as OT -rich regions to encourage visitors to participate. Recommendations for drawing future marketing strategies for OTs include: Highlighting advertising at outlets where olive oil is offered, increasing awareness of the OT offer in tourist establishments through brochures, promotional events..., trying to use all advertising information channels to provide as many tourists as possible with sufficient information to form an opinion on the possibility of participating in the activities offered by OT and finally, converting the intention resulting from a positive attitude towards OT into a behaviour or participation in specific OT activities.

## **5. STUDY LIMITATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study was performed on a deliberate sample of tourists. The proportion of female respondents in the sample is slightly higher and is predominantly situated at hotels. Given the limited time period of data collection, it was not possible to offer all OT activities available in the Northern Adriatic to respondents.

The authors propose to continue research in this strategically important area of linkage between olive-growing and tourism. Future studies should focus on other OT activities, as well as research on motivation and satisfaction of OT visitors, and future intentions towards re-engagement, ensuring the sustainability and further development of this form of tourism of special interest.

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# ISTRAŽIVANJE NAMJERE TURISTA ZA SUDJELOVANJEM U MASLINARSKOM TURIZMU: STUDIJA SLUČAJA SJEVERNO – JADRANSKE HRVATSKE

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## SAŽETAK

*Cilj – cilj rada je istražiti upoznatost turista (N=452) na sjevernom Jadranu s lokalnom ponudom maslinarskog turizma i utvrditi njihovu namjeru za sudjelovanjem u odabranim aktivnosti maslinarskog turizma tijekom boravka u destinaciji. Metodološki pristup - u ovom preliminarnom istraživanju koristi se metoda ankete. Hipoteze se ispituju pomoću T-testa i ANOVE. Rezultati – rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da tek manji dio turista (18,8 %) je upoznat s aktivnostima maslinarskog turizma na sjevernom Jadranu pri čemu su najznačajniji izvor informacija o toj ponudi uredi turističkih zajednica. Upoznatost s ponudom, ali i učestalost konzumacije maslinovog ulja kao i stav prema maslinarskom turizmu pokazali su se značajnim prediktorima namjere sudjelovanja pojedinca u aktivnostima maslinarskog turizma. Originalnost istraživanja – znanstvena literatura u području maslinarskog turizma je oskudna. Rezultati ovog istraživanja mogu se koristiti u izradi daljnjih marketinških aktivnosti i strategija vezanih uz maslinarski turizam.*

**Ključne riječi:** maslinarski turizam, maslinarstvo, Sjeverni Jadran, Hrvatska, predviđanje namjere ponašanja

