

LOCAL COMMUNITY ATTITUDES ON GANGA AS A TOURIST POTENTIAL OF THE RURAL AREA IN THE WEST HERZEGOVINA COUNTY

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Abstract

The subject of this research is the local community's views on the intangible cultural heritage with an emphasis on the ganga, which could be a significant tourist potential of the rural area of the county. By entering the preliminary list of the intangible cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ganga becomes a recognizable part, but also an important factor in preserving the tradition of the people and the area in which it originated and in which it still lives. The analysis is based on data collected through empirical research from May to July 2021. The results of the research showed the dissatisfaction of the local community with the current evaluation of intangible cultural heritage, and it is considered necessary to integrate the ganga into the touristic offer of Herzegovina.

Keywords: *ganga; intangible cultural heritage; rural area; West Herzegovina County.*

Introduction

Numerous scientific studies have proven the importance of cultural heritage and its authentic heritage in the tourist offer of tourist destinations (McKercher, Du Cros, 2002; Vrtiprah, 2006; Petrić & Ljubica, 2006; Slunjski, 2018). Cultural tourism as a selective form of tourism is an important part of the tourist offer today, especially due to increasing

MARINA BAZINA*

JELENA PUTICA
DŽAJIĆ**

IVAN
PERUTINA***

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* dr. sc. Marina Bazina, doc., Fakultet prirodoslovno-matematičkih i odgojnih znanosti Sveučilišta u Mostaru, marina.bazina@fpmoz.sum.ba

** dr. sc. Jelena Putica Džajić, doc., Fakultet prirodoslovno-matematičkih i odgojnih znanosti Sveučilišta u Mostaru, jelena.putica@fpmoz.sum.ba

*** Ivan Perutina, viši asist., Fakultet prirodoslovno-matematičkih i odgojnih znanosti Sveučilišta u Mostaru, ivan.perutina@fpmoz.sum.ba

the level of education, i.e. the desire to meet new people and their cultures (Geić, 2011; Petrić & Ljubica, 2012). The basic precondition for the revitalization of rural areas is exactly the strategically planned and developed cultural tourism, which does not exist in the West Herzegovina County.

By introducing the intangible cultural heritage in the tourist offer, rural areas are often important sources of cultural heritage, but due to socio-economic processes, they are faced with numerous negative demographic and economic processes (Garrod, Wornell & Youell, 2006; Smolčić Jurdana, Soldić Frleta & Đedović, 2018). Intangible cultural heritage consists of traditional songs and dances, gastronomy, old crafts, customs, rituals, language, oral heritage and similar activities. All these elements are part of the identity of a nation and its cultural heritage. If they are not practiced, they are not passed on to younger generations and they become the past and the subject of history. Therefore, promotion in the field of tourism, but also among the local population, especially the younger generation, is very important for the preservation of certain parts of the intangible cultural heritage.

So far, an extensive scientific research on intangible cultural heritage on the territory of the West Herzegovina County is rare, so it should be singled out. Characteristics of musical heritage, types of tunes, and dances of western Herzegovina were discussed by Milićević, Katura, Kolobarić (2011). In the *Tourism Development Strategy of the West Herzegovina County for the period 2020-2027*, Kunst (2019) emphasizes the importance of cultural and historical heritage and points out the importance of the activities of over 30 art societies that pass on the tradition to younger generations. The intangible cultural heritage of western Herzegovina has plenty of musical tunes and forms, but the *ganga* certainly stands out in many ways. It is safe to say it is one of the symbols of the rural areas of West Herzegovina County and the most popular type of music that is gladly sung and listened to on various occasions.

Previous research related to the *ganga* has been primarily based on its historical origin and development, the way it is performed, its structure and text. This paper will try to present its importance in the tourist offer as well as inform the population about the *ganga* as an important part of intangible cultural heritage. Music in Herzegovina did not originate as a cultural movement, but developed and lived with the people. Numerous times it has been a means of depicting and describing life situations on that rocky and stony ground (Milićević, Katura & Kolobarić, 2011). The social role of music is

probably the most evident in songs, because they contain a linguistic part. Like other language forms, poems express common values, beliefs, and occupations. They have a variety of roles, and entertainment is just one of them.

1. Goal and methodology of the research

The aim of the research is to examine attitudes about intangible cultural heritage as a potential tourist resource in rural areas, but also to check its current position in the Herzegovina's tourist offer. This research intends to point out the characteristics and the possibilities of tourist evaluation of the intangible cultural heritage in the rural area of West Herzegovina County. An empirical survey was conducted among the population of the County in the period from May to July 2021, and the basic research method was a survey questionnaire. An online survey questionnaire was created in Google Forms, and a survey invitation and a link to access the survey were shared via email. The research was conducted through a questionnaire that sought to collect qualitative data. It is composed of 13 questions, some of which are of the closed type, and the rest are created based on the Likert scale with five degrees of intensity. The results of the research are expressed as a number and percentage, and medium values and standard deviation are calculated. The obtained results are shown in the tables and are textually described. The processing of the collected data was performed by the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 program.

2. Research area

The research area is the rural area of the West Herzegovina County, which is located in the southwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 1). This county was founded in 1996 and consists of the towns of Široki Brijeg and Ljubuški and the municipalities of Grude and Posušje. Its area is 1362.2 km². According to OECD criteria, 90% of the County is a rural area, i.e. out of a total of 102 settlements, 92 belong to the rural type of the settlement (Putica Džajić, 2020).¹

¹ The result was obtained by calculating the number/percentage of settlements with a population density of more than 150 inhabitants / km² out of the total number of settlements.

The rural area of West Herzegovina County, which so far has not been significantly valued as a tourist destination, was chosen as the subject of research because of its cultural identity. Given that rural areas have been exposed to negative demographic and economic processes since the middle of the 20th century², it is necessary to revitalize them through the concept of local community involvement and a more significant evaluation of natural and social factors.



Figure 1. Geographical position of the West Herzegovina County
Source: (Putica Džajić, 2020)

3. Intangible cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The mass nature of tourism and its monotonous offer has contributed to the development of certain selective forms of tourism, such as cultural tourism. According to the WTO, cultural tourism implies the realization of travel, exclusively for cultural motives such as historical and cultural heritage, artistic and cultural routes, and gastronomic heritage (WTO, 2012). The key element of cultural tourism, i.e. the main factor in the attractiveness of an individual area, its cultural heritage (Petrić, Ljubica, 2012). Since then, it has developed through programs and projects that tried to protect and preserve the intangible cultural heritage. In 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention*

² Abandonment of rural areas due to the process of industrialization and urbanization.

for the *Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which defined five types of intangible cultural heritage:

- oral tradition, including language
- performing arts
- social practice, rituals and festivals
- knowledge and practice related to nature
- traditional crafts and trades (Ištuk, 2016).

The Register of Preliminary Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina currently contains 34 intangible cultural assets, including the gonga. Out of the 34 properties, four are inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in chronological order:

- Zmijanje embroidery (2014)
- Konjic woodcarving (2017)
- The mountain germander grass harvest on Ozren (2018)
- The tradition of competing in grass mowing in Kupres (2020)

The cultural heritage of the rural areas of the West Herzegovina County certainly represents one of the basic preconditions for the development of tourism. The actual number of intangible cultural assets in the County is almost impossible to define. Each settlement has its own specific manifestations, religious rites, myths and legends, dances, melodies, ways of making tools, clothes, etc. Although they may not yet be included in special protection registers, they represent important tourist potential in rural areas of the West Herzegovina County.

4. Research results

For the needs of scientific work, an *online* empirical research was conducted, which included 240 respondents from West Herzegovina County. The results of the research show that the majority of the sample consists of women and respondents from the age group of 20 to 49 with a university degree. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Representation of respondents by gender, age and level of education

		Number of respondents	%
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Female</i>	146	60,8%
	<i>Male</i>	94	39,2%
<i>Age</i>	<i>-19</i>	32	13,3%
	<i>20-34</i>	109	45,4%
	<i>35-49</i>	75	31,3%
	<i>50-65</i>	24	10,0%
	<i>over 65</i>	0	0,0%
<i>Education level</i>	<i>High school</i>	84	35,0%
	<i>College degree</i>	48	20,0%
	<i>University degree</i>	108	45,0%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of empirical research.

The first thing the respondents were asked to do was to recognize what is meant by intangible cultural heritage. The majority of respondents, 147 of them (61.3%), answered that intangible cultural heritage means “The totality of artistic or symbolic intangible skills, performances, expressions, knowledge and skills inherited from the past.” The other 93 respondents, which is 38.7%, did not recognize the definition of intangible cultural heritage. The other answers offered were different from the correct ones. We can see that almost 40% of respondents are not familiar with some form of intangible cultural heritage.

More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents, to be precise 183 (76.3%) of them, state that they know some form of the intangible cultural heritage of their county, while the other 23.7% of the respondents point out that they are not familiar with it. With the question about the knowledge of the intangible cultural heritage of the West Herzegovina County, the respondents were asked to state what they know from the mentioned heritage. The question was open-ended, so respondents provided a multitude of different answers. The most common answer was the ganga, which was mentioned by 119 respondents out of 240, which is almost half of the respondents, 49.6% to be precise. Most respondents state that ganga is taught by word of mouth. This was pointed out by 209 out of 240 respondents, or 87.1% of them. A significantly smaller number of respondents linked ganga learning to sound recordings (53 respondents; 22.1%) and music learning (4 respondents; 1.7%). A high percentage

responded that ganga is taught orally and emphasized in some way the respondents' awareness of how important it is to transmit it as a vocal musical form through the oral transmission to younger generations. Only in this way it can be preserved from extinction.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents (174; 72.5%) state that they have heard gangas performed in the last year. In answer to the question about the event / manifestation where they heard the ganga, the respondents mentioned weddings, folklore manifestations, family celebrations, celebrations of parish patrons, house gatherings, but also TV, radio and internet / YouTube. According to the results, 72% of respondents have heard the ganga in the last year, but the question is to what extent this is enough to pass the ganga on to younger generations and save it from oblivion. Considering that the ganga is performed mainly by mature and elderly people, the authors suggest the need of organizing educational workshops and seminars where younger participants would learn the basics of performing the ganga as a traditional Herzegovinian song.

Almost all respondents believe that the ganga should be included on the UNESCO World Intangible Heritage List - 231 (97.1%) respondents gave an affirmative answer, while only 7 (2.9%) respondents didn't share this opinion.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to express their agreement / disagreement with the statement: "Learning and passing on the gang to younger generations is important for the preservation of tradition and intangible cultural heritage", and the results show that as many as 223 respondents, or 93% agree on statement (66.3% of respondents fully agree, the grade is 5, and 26.7% agree, grade 4). As expected, with a large share of respondents who agree with the statement, significantly fewer respondents expressed their disagreement with the statement - 10 (4.2%) respondents disagree, and 7 (2.9%) respondents stated that they "neither agree nor disagree". The high average grade of the previously mentioned claim ($M = 4.51$; $SD = 0.89$) speaks in favor of the importance of learning and passing on the ganga to younger generations in order to preserve tradition and intangible cultural heritage.

The average scores obtained on the questions that evaluated the ganga as a tourist resource in the rural area of the West Herzegovina County indicate the dissatisfaction of the respondents with the current activities related to the ganga. This confirms the large share of "I do not agree" answers, or more than 80% of all claims, and implies that respondents believe that the ganga is

insufficiently promoted as a tourist resource in rural areas of the West Herzegovina County. The respondents are also dissatisfied with the education of the local population about the importance of intangible cultural heritage as well as the care and protection of public institutions that express towards the ganga as intangible cultural heritage. The obtained results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Satisfaction with the evaluation of the ganga as a tourist resource of rural areas of the West Herzegovina County

Claim	Number of respondents (%)		M (SD)
	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	
<i>I am satisfied with the promotion of the ganga as a tourist resource of rural areas of West Herzegovina county</i>	198 (82,6%)	42 (17,5%)	1,81 (0,841)
<i>I am satisfied with the education of the local population about the importance of intangible cultural heritage</i>	208 (86,6%)	32 (13,3%)	1,75 (0,757)
<i>I am satisfied with the protection and care of public institutions for the ganga as an intangible cultural heritage</i>	209 (87,1%)	31 (12,9%)	1,76 (0,792)
<i>M (SD) – arithmetic middle (a standard deviation)</i>			

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of empirical research

The results obtained for the claims linking the ganga and the tourist offer of the West Herzegovina County show that most respondents believe that the ganga should be included in the tourist offer of the rural area of the West Herzegovina County because it is the cultural identity of the rural population in the County. By introducing the ganga into the tourist offer, in addition to expanding it, it is possible to get acquainted with the cultural characteristics of the area. In addition, respondents agree that cultural heritage can become a carrier of tourism development and revitalization of the rural area of the County. For all offered claims, 80% of respondents have a positive coherent attitude, and the exact results obtained by analyzing the collected data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' attitudes about the ganga as components of the tourist offer of the West Herzegovina County

Claim	Number of respondents (%)			M (SD)
	Disagree	Can't decide	Agree	
<i>The ganga should be included in the tourist offer of rural areas of the West Herzegovina county</i>	29 (12,1%)	10 (4,2%)	201 (83,8%)	4,35 (1,056)
<i>Ganga is the cultural identity of the population of rural areas in the West Herzegovina County</i>	24 (10,0%)	7 (2,9%)	209 (87,1%)	4,38 (1,011)
<i>By introducing the ganga into the tourist offer, tourists will get acquainted with the cultural features of the area</i>	23 (9,6%)	11 (4,6%)	206 (85,8%)	4,39 (1,004)
<i>Intangible cultural heritage can become a carrier of tourism development and revitalization of rural areas of the county</i>	28 (11,7%)	14 (5,8%)	198 (82,5%)	4,32 (1,044)
<i>M (SD) - arithmetic middle (a standard deviation)</i>				

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of empirical research

Conclusion

The existence of traditional music as intangible cultural heritage, in this case the ganga, depends on the local community that owns it, the continuity of the tradition, the behavior, customs and the way of life. It is more obvious to the rural population and this musical tradition is always a fertile ground for the preservation of other cultural traditions. Due to all the above, it can be concluded that the ganga is important to preserve, transmit, nurture and present because it is and will always be a part of the culture and one of the carriers of cultural values.

The intangible cultural heritage of the rural area of the West Herzegovina County as a tourist potential has been completely neglected, which was confirmed by the results of the research. The tourist development of the rural area of the County should be approached systematically and strategically, i.e.

the strategies of the development of rural areas must be based primarily on the revitalization and sustainability of cultural resources. The strategy should also include continuous education of the local community on the importance of tourism valuation of intangible cultural heritage as an important factor in the economic development of rural areas. Traditional ganga music, as one of the heritage resources, should be promoted as a unique tourist product and linked to other tangible and intangible resources of the rural area of the West Herzegovina County. A tourist product of cultural tourism may be a unique and distinct tourist product, and may be a part of another product. Given that religious, swimming, sports and recreational tourism have been developed in Herzegovina, the introduction of ganga in the tourist offer can certainly be one of the forms of tourism that will diversify the tourist offer and thus prolong the tourist season.

Preserving the ganga in its living form is the biggest challenge, but also the only way for it to survive. By being included in the tourist offer, the ganga, as a vocal polyphonic form, would certainly become attractive to younger generations, who could thus become representatives, transferers and guardians of musical heritage.

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STAVOVI LOKALNE ZAJEDNICE O GANGI KAO TURISTIČKOME POTENCIJALU RURALNOGA PROSTORA ŽUPANIJE ZAPADNOHERCEGOVAČKE

Sažetak

Predmet su ovoga istraživanja stavovi lokalne zajednice o nematerijalnoj kulturnoj baštini gangi kao važnome turističkom potencijalu ruralnoga prostora Županije Zapadnohercegovačke. Ulaškom na Preliminarnu listu nematerijalne kulturne baštine Bosne i Hercegovine ganga postaje prepoznatljiv i važan čimbenik očuvanja tradicije naroda i kraja u kojemu je nastala i u kojemu još uvijek živi. Analiza se temelji na podacima prikupljenim empirijskim istraživanjem od svibnja do srpnja 2021. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su nezadovoljstvo lokalne zajednice dosadašnjim vrednovanjem nematerijalne kulturne baštine, te predlažu nužno integriranje gange u turističku ponudu Hercegovine.

Ključne riječi: *ganga; nematerijalna kulturna baština; ruralni prostori; Županija Zapadnohercegovačka.*